

***NTUMBULUKO AND CHRISTIAN FAITH:*  
An Evangelical Perspective on Some Aspects of a Tsonga  
Worldview and the Implication for Christian Mission in  
Southern Mozambique**

**PhD Thesis**

**by**

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Under the supervision of:  
Prof. Anthony O Balcomb

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## **DECLARATION**

With the exception of the sources dully acknowledged in the text, this thesis is the original work of the author, and has never been submitted to this or any other university for whatever purpose.

**André Jonas Chitlango**

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**Signed at Pietermaritzburg this 11<sup>th</sup> day of November of the year of our Lord 2004**

**THE SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL**

As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis for submission.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

## **DEDICATION**

**To Angélica Zuca Mazive, my wife, Jonas Mangava Chitlango and Rocina Frengue Chunguane, my parents, and Jenny, Caris and Dinah, our children, for their love support and encouragement.**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of a detailed study of *ntumbuluko* (Tsonga life force or worldview) as it emerges from field research which investigated Tsonga traditionalists, academics, artists, Christian practitioners and Bible translators to establish the meaning and use of *ntumbuluko*. The aim of the thesis is to uncover the impact of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga Christianity by assessing its relationship with the gospel and to discern its influence in the apprehension of Christian faith among the Tsonga people of Mozambique; and finally to propose an evangelical perspective on the encounter between gospel and culture in Mozambique.

The study demonstrates that *ntumbuluko* is a very pervasive concept or worldview. It has a highly integrated view of life and reality, thus, resisting a dualistic conception of life, the universe and the reality thereof. It is in *ntumbuluko* that the Tsonga find the essence of life, reality and humanity in harmonious correlation with the cosmos. Thus, *ntumbuluko* is a heuristic key for interpreting reality, including Christian faith. It provides a system of meaning for everything. It is at this point that *ntumbuluko*'s relationship with the gospel needs to be examined. Tsonga people see *ntumbuluko* as the pre-established divine order of things and as a firm foundation of Tsonga existence. Tsonga society can be compared to a house built upon a bridge. Cracking the bridge is labouring towards one's own demise. Therefore, any affront against or disregard for *ntumbuluko* with modernist or faith argument threatens the centre of gravity of the Tsonga existence. Such an attitude warrants a counter response to maintain cosmic harmony to ensure a harmonious and balance existence. If Christians attempt to use the gospel to alter or disregard this principle, the gospel is viewed as "bad news." The peaceful encounter between and co-existence of *ntumbuluko* with the gospel is replaced with an antagonistic one.

All in all, *ntumbuluko* is very ambivalent; it can be either positive, negative or neutral. Regardless of the fact that *ntumbuluko* is so often used negatively in the Bible and in official Christian discourse, most Christians concur with their traditionalists counterparts in perceiving, describing and using *ntumbuluko* in a more positive and/or neutral sense rather than negative sense. Christian practitioners, although indirectly, join the traditionalist attack on modernity (colonialism), Marxism and Christianity (Western missionary Christianity) for having destroyed *ntumbuluko*, thus weakening the life force therein. The alleged result has

been humanitarian, ecological and environmental disasters (wars, droughts, flooding, disease, infant mortality, short life-span, etc.). Any religion and/or ideology which could be logically acceptable and desirable in Tsonga society would be the one that tunes into the *ntumbuluko* maintenance system or principle, thus ensuring cosmic harmony and an increase life force, with the subsidiary benefits thereof. This is why Christian faith is either resisted (the Tonga Mission 1560-1562 story) or undermined (as many informants indicated) in its encounter and co-existence (relationship) with *ntumbuluko*.

This researcher argues, therefore, that the depth, complexity and pervasiveness of *ntumbuluko* require an approach such as “translation” and “interpretation”, historically associated with John the Apostle. The gospel of John is the example *par excellence*. The author (John, for argument’s sake), translated the divine truth, revelation and incarnation into Hellenistic cultural thought forms (*Arche* and *Logos*) and interpreted his translation with Christian truth, thus giving these age-old known concepts new meanings, Christian meanings. In that way, *Arche* and *Logos* mediated a deeper understanding and apprehension of the Christian faith to the Greeks. In so doing, the author bypassed the question of the relationship between Jesus and the above concepts in the Greek thought. Dealing with *ntumbuluko* from an evangelical perspective will also require translating the divine revelation and incarnation into Tsonga categories of *ntumbuluko* and interpreting it with new meanings, Christian meanings, to enable or mediate a deeper and profound apprehension and understanding of the Christian faith in the Tsonga cultural milieu, thus producing a vibrant Tsonga evangelical Christianity in Mozambique.

## SUMMARY

This thesis seeks to uncover the impact of *ntumbuluko* in its relation with Christian faith in the Tsonga context of southern Mozambique. The study will attempt to suggest possible responses to the question of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith from an evangelical perspective. It is hoped that, in the process, the study will make a contribution to the contextual theological and missiological debate on the gospel and culture in Mozambique.

My basic argument is that *ntumbuluko* is so deeply rooted and integrated in the Tsonga consciousness that a Tertullianic radical and sharp discontinuity (Christ against *ntumbuluko*) offers a very little help. *Ntumbuluko* is also very ambiguous and highly complex, with the result that Clementine's positive continuity approach (*ntumbuluko* as *praeparatio evangelica*) and/or the Christ of *ntumbuluko* approach fail to see the ambiguity and complexity of *ntumbuluko*. In other words, both confrontation and adaptation in dealing with *ntumbuluko* offer very little towards solving the problem. There is no single approach that guarantees an appropriate solution to the problem; one needs to use a combination of approaches simultaneously. However, "translation" and "interpretation" in which Christ is the transformer of culture (*ntumbuluko*), promises a more significant interaction between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith. In this approach, the divine revelation (self-disclosure) and incarnation (self-authentication) were translated into *Arche*, *Logos* and *Kyrios* and interpreted into new frames of reference (the divine revelation and incarnation). This translation and interpretation spoke so deeply to the Greek consciousness and so loudly to the worldwide Christian consciousness that we think very little of the pre-Christian universes of meaning of the above concepts. Similarly, a deep and profound apprehension of the Christian faith in the Tsonga consciousness would require such a translation and interpretation of the divine revelation and incarnation in terms of *ntumbuluko* – thus a case of Christ transforming Tsonga culture.

The Introduction in Chapter one gives the background and motivation for the topic in the form of a personal and family story. The story gives a distinctive shape to the thesis by bringing into dialogue what and who I am, as a cultural subject and a Tsonga Christian seeking understanding of both myself and my faith in Christ. After problem formulation and analysis and research methods and models, I give a brief historical background of the Tsonga

people, dividing them into three different groups and languages (Shangaans, Varonga and Vatsywa).

Chapter two identifies various sectors of Tsonga society and aims the research at five sectors, namely (1) traditionalists, (2) academics, (3) artists, (4) Christian practitioners, and (5) Bible translators. An in-depth research was conducted in Mozambique and South Africa, the Tsonga [Shangaan] Bible having been translated in South Africa. Interviews according to Oral History methods were conducted and recorded. After the field research, the taped interviews were transcribed in detail in the vernacular before using them in this study. Various research methods were combined for richer collection of data. The descriptive analysis of the data in this chapter brought about a very pervasive, complex and ambiguous picture of *ntumbuluko*. This complex picture emerged from all aspects, such as Tsonga daily life experience of *ntumbuluko*; *ntumbuluko*'s relationship with Christian faith per se and its impact on the Tsonga apprehension of the Christian faith and life. This gave rise to ambiguous responses pertaining to its relationship with the gospel, since *ntumbuluko* is deeply entrenched in Tsonga consciousness, a depth that Christian faith has yet to enjoy.

In response to the complex and ambiguous picture of *ntumbuluko*, chapters three and four seek to interpret *ntumbuluko* using various social sciences and theological approaches. In chapter three, *ntumbuluko* is interpreted from an ontological approach, using Placide Tempels and Alexis Kagame's philosophical systems. *Ntumbuluko* is viewed as life force or vital force. We also use the phenomenological approaches of Berger, Horton, Turner and Kraft (Kraft's approach is a combination of phenomenological and missiological approaches) and interpret *ntumbuluko* as a symbolic construction of reality; explanation, prediction and controlling reality principle; finally, we interpret it as primal worldview and/or the worldview of the culture, to use Kraft's language.

Chapter four uses biblical and theological approaches to interpreting *ntumbuluko*. It gives a detailed study of the history of the translation of the Bible into Tsonga. In that history there is a very detailed study of the emergence, use and prevalence of the term *ntumbuluko* in the Bible. Various illustrative tables are presented with a summary of biblical meanings of the term. These tables and meanings provide basic theological possible meanings of the term *ntumbuluko* in the Bible. In this section the primary texts were the vernacular Bibles (Shangaan, 5 versions; Ronga, 2 versions; Xitshwa, 2 versions; and Txitxopi and Gitonga,

one version each) overall 11 vernacular Bibles including the earliest versions. After this study, the chapter applies to *ntumbuluko* various theological approaches such as the law and the gospel, *missio Dei*, powers and principalities, *arche* and *reshit*, theologies of identity, and the Pauline theology of the flesh. All these approaches offer some principles in dealing with *ntumbuluko* in its complex and various meaning and context. Being as complex as it is, *ntumbuluko* cannot be forced into one single approach or interpretation; and thus it poses a challenge to Christian theology.

Chapter five takes on the challenge of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel and attempts to reflect deeply upon *ntumbuluko* issues. The chapter gives an overview of the gospel and culture debate and provides a selected detailed literature review on the theme. Then it uses the classic Niebuhr types to suggest possible answers to the gospel and *ntumbuluko* challenge. The chapter ends with a critical assessment of the contemporary gospel and culture debate.

Chapter six proposes a way forward in the *ntumbuluko* and the gospel challenge, from an evangelical perspective. The main factor in the solution of the gospel and culture problem in the Tsonga context is the conscious use of the vernacular Scripture, and the development of a vernacular theology, or at least a theology that is vernacularly aware and informed. In relation to *ntumbuluko*, the Tsonga Bible mainly uses *ntumbuluko* in both negative and positive ways. In the Epistle to the Hebrews there are very interesting uses of *ntumbuluko*. One passage portrays Jesus as 'upholding all *ntumbuluko* with his word of power' (Heb 1:3), and the other says that Jesus is 'of the same *ntumbuluko* with us' (Heb 2:14). Here *ntumbuluko* is in relation to Christ himself. This paves a new way in the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. This chapter then proposes the "translation" and "interpretation" approaches to doing theology. Translation here is not textual or grammatical, but something slightly different. The theologian is here expected to go farther, beyond just contextualizing the message, but to translate the divine revelation and incarnation within a particular thought form and consciousness, in such a way that that population group is given "first-hand" experience of the divine disclosure. God reveals himself and incarnates into that population group's conceptual world and universe of meanings. This is what we mean by "translation" and, in this sense; the so-called "original" Hebrew text is also a translation, not from another text but from the experience to text. This chapter closes by highlighting the pastoral implications of this form of approaching theology.

Chapter seven, the conclusion, tries to sum up the research problem giving a synthesis of the research findings and their various implications to Christian life, mission, ministry and scholarship. In closing, the chapter advances some final remarks and proposals for both Mozambican church people and researchers for more effective Christian witness and scholarship which look into the issue of *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith interaction.

## GLOSSARY OF TSONGA WORDS

- 1 **Bandla** – court, homestead centre where the male of the family makes fire in the evenings, Christian church or denomination, political party.
- 2 **Damba ziyila** – the meaning of “*damba*” is probably of Ndau origin. Lit. it is “taboo-broker” medicine. Some people make this from a log found on a path, but others use a special plant.
- 3 **Dongonda** – heavy rain, desired for good harvest.
- 4 **Gandzelo** – altar. From *ku gandzela* (to worship), this is the worshipping place.
- 5 **Hloko** – “head” – meaning “slave.” This is normally a slave to a spirit.
- 6 **Hlungu** – magic powder for multipurpose use and prepared in various ways.
- 7 **Kanyi** – marula tree.
- 8 **Katamwani** – daughter-in-law.
- 9 **Khombo** – misfortune.
- 10 **Ku tlhava khombo** – “piercing/penetrating misfortune” – the first sexual intercourse after marriage.
- 11 **Ku tiva khombo** – “knowing misfortune” – the same as above.
- 12 **Kuve na ma khombo** – “there is misfortune” – this means someone has died.
- 13 **Ku khomba** – “first menstruation.”
- 14 **Ku kula** – “growing” – first menstruation.
- 15 **Ku ngenga ndlini** – “entering the house” – first menstruation and its house confinement.
- 16 **Kugandzela** – to worship.
- 17 **Ku lahela** – a protective ritual to counter the health-threatening *swiyila* and diseases.
- 18 **Ku loya** – to bewitch.
- 19 **Ku loyiwa** – to be bewitched.
- 20 **Ku pepejeliwa** – to be manipulated by magic or spirits, or be caused to lose one’s mind.
- 21 **Ku phahla** – to pour libation.
- 22 **Kuyila** – to be unclean or untouchable.
- 23 **Ku yilisa** – to apply prohibitory laws or declare something unclean.
- 24 **Ku swekelela** – “one’s cooking” – stiff porridge cooked with menstrual blood and magic powder, for the protection of a young girl.
- 25 **Ku fihla** – “to hide” – a ritual done to prevent young girls from becoming pregnant.
- 26 **Ku hlala** – Spirit dance or last breath.

- 27 **Ku tchela fole** – putting snuff – pouring libation or communing with the ancestors.
- 28 **Ku tchinga ndzaka** – ritual and cleansing sex with a widow, and consequent marrying of the widow of one's relative.
- 29 **Ku teka ndzaka** – “taking inheritance” – marrying a widow of one's relative.
- 30 **Ku hlamba ndzaka** – ritual bath and sex with the mother of a dead child.
- 31 **Ku tlulana** – “jumping over each other” - when brothers happen to have had sex with the same woman.
- 32 **Ku phahla pfula** – libation for rain, or rain-making sacrifice and rituals.
- 33 **Ku gomiwa** – sexual burn-out, resulting from engaging in sex too young with much older persons.
- 34 **Ku pswa** – to burn, this is the same as above. The symptoms are believed to be similar to HIV/AIDS.
- 35 **Kulungwani** – shout of joy, congratulation and celebration by women.
- 36 **Ku hlamba xirotha** – the ritual bath on the first night of marriage.
- 37 **Ku siyiwa** – “to be left out” – this happens when someone does not participate in a cleansing ritual after death, or one engages in sex before the cleansing. In doing so one leaves others out and allegedly causes them to be leprous or to develop other diseases.
- 38 **Ku tsemakanya mapswatsi** – “crossing over the women elders” – this means having sex on the first night of marriage before the ladies who brought one's wife have gone back home. This is a norm for those Tsonga who do not practice *xirotha* sex before the women elders.
- 39 **Ku fihlula** – breakfast.
- 40 **Ku amukela n'wana** – child reception at birth and related rituals.
- 41 **Ku tluta n'wana** – “sailing over the child” – a sex ritual for the protection of a baby.
- 42 **Ku tiva n'wana** – “knowing the child” – sex ritual by the parents to protect the baby.
- 43 **Ku boha n'wana** – “tying up the knot” – is the same ritual as above.
- 44 **Ku ti boha** – “tying up one's knot” – a sex ritual performed by a bridegroom whose father did not do the “tying up the knot” ritual while he was a baby. The bridegroom has to perform this for himself on the first night of marriage.
- 45 **Ku vuyisa n'wana xisutini** – “bringing one's child to one's waist” this is the same ritual sex for baby protection.

- 46 **Ku tsundzuka** – to remember.
- 47 **Ku xanisa** – torture or ill-treating.
- 48 **Ku xakela tiko** – polluting the land, misusing the land.
- 49 **Ku hlakana** – playing, playing around, having fun, free sex, sex for fun.
- 50 **Ku vuyisa mufi kaya** – bringing the dead home, also called unveiling the tomb.
- 51 **Ku pfuka** – to wake up, to wake up against, to rise against, to rise from the dead to avenge, to resurrect.
- 52 **Ku onheka** – spoiled, rotten, skin disease.
- 53 **Kukhohlola** – coughing or tuberculosis.
- 54 **Lipangu** – place of public sacrifice.
- 55 **Lithangu** – “face” – an invisible fence that one is accused of having broken if, for instance, one impregnates someone’s daughter without paying *lobola*.
- 56 **Lovolo** – *lobolo*, bride’s price as the essence of traditional marriage contract.
- 57 **Mabizweni** – namesake, either living or dead (spirit or person).
- 58 **Mativa zotlhe** – lit. “all-knowing” is a name given to a log on a path which is used to protect new-born babies and girls in their first period. The name alleges that it knows all women and can protect babies and girls from their impurities.
- 59 **Mapude** – magical drum of Mukambi-Feha.
- 60 **Matchowani** – rain-announcing bird, also called *tchowe*.
- 61 **Magandzelo** – altar, or the sacrifices to be offered on the altar.
- 62 **Makhombo** – sex-related uncleanness, lit. death, because such a state allegedly causes death.
- 63 **Mapswatsi** – women elders.
- 64 **Masungukati** – women counsellors or advisors, or advisory body or council of women.
- 65 **Matchingelani** – security guard and police.
- 66 **Mahewu** – traditional soft drink.
- 67 **Matimba** – power.
- 68 **Matimba manga vonekiki** – invisible power.
- 69 **Ma onhwa** – skin disease caused by defilement.
- 70 **Matsatse** – spots on the skin surface.
- 71 **Mapele** – leprous.
- 72 **Missa** – mass – used to mean ceremony for ancestors.

- 73 **Mu amukeli** – “receptionist” – this is the person who ritually receives the child and performs rituals for the introduction of a new born child to the world.
- 74 **Mbamba** – sea shell, also used like a watch to please mediumistic and namesake spirits.
- 75 **Mbita** – pot.
- 76 **Mbulu** – magic portion or power for agriculture, hunting and fishing.
- 77 **Mulumuzana** – male head of family.
- 78 **Mhamba** – sacrifice or ceremony for the dead and/or memorial for the dead.
- 79 **Muhliwa** – “eaten” – avenging spirit, allegedly of a dead person, who allegedly has been eaten by sorcerers and witches after death.
- 80 **Mukwembu** – “person-god?” [I am not sure of the meaning]. It is the spirit of a dead person in vengeance brought to surface by a medium attending the afflicted person or family.
- 81 **Mungoma** – magic forensic test.
- 82 **Mupfukwa** – “the risen one” – a spirit of a dead person that rises to avenge the person’s death or other unsettled matters.
- 83 **Mufeliwa** – “the bereaved one” or “widowed one” – also a widow.
- 84 **Mufelakazi** – female widow or widowed woman.
- 85 **Mukhuva** – habits or unacceptable conduct.
- 86 **Murhi** – tree and/or medicine.
- 87 **Mutchapi** – witchcraft eradication movement and its founder.
- 88 **Mutchapi** – witch and witchcraft-cleansing medicine.
- 89 **Murime** – agricultural and witch-cleansing movement.
- 90 **Murime** – the founder of the [name?] movement
- 91 **Mutototo** –drops of rain or scattered showers.
- 92 **Muphahlo** – libation-pouring ceremony or sacrifice.
- 93 **Ndina** – avenging spirit. This comes from Ndau “*ndini*” (I am, or it’s me) this is a phrase several spirits give when asked to identify themselves in a medium session.
- 94 **Ndoda** – man elder or member of the traditional chamber.
- 95 **Ndzaka** – “inheritance” – this means particularly inheriting one’s dead brother’s wife.
- 96 **Nawu** – the law, norms commandments.
- 97 **Ndlozi** – In the Tsonga context this is a mediumistic spirit of divination claiming to be of Nguni origin.

- 98 **Ndiki** – This is another mediumistic spirit which does the medium's work, claiming to be of Ndau origin.
- 99 **Ndumba** – “temple” – a very small house where the altar and sacred objects are deposited.
- 100 **Ndzovolo** – Tsonga wedding ceremony and party.
- 101 **Ngonikoni** – sea shell, longer than an *mbamba*, used by medium. Both shells are also part of the bones used for divination.
- 102 **Nguluve** – Lit. pig. Evil spirit.
- 103 **Nguvo yo basa** – white cloth – used to please spirits, including namesake spirits.
- 104 **Njiti** – colorful cloth predominantly reddish, used to please namesake spirits and mediumistic spirits that allege to be of Ndau origin.
- 105 **Nkosikazi** – “Female king” – female head of family.
- 106 **Noni** – widow - (*ku nona* is to be fat. I don't know whether there is a connection).
- 107 **Nyawkwave** – a girl given to spirits as wife for life.
- 108 **N'anga** – diviner and medium.
- 109 **Nyama** – meat, flesh, body.
- 110 **Ngoma** – drum, song, circumcision.
- 111 **Noyi** – witch and sorcerer.
- 112 **Ribye** – stone and rock.
- 113 **Palu** – colorful cloth, predominantly blue, used to please namesake spirits.
- 114 **Pfula** – rain.
- 115 **Pswatsi** – woman elder.
- 116 **Rito** – word, voice, argument, statement, message.
- 117 **Sinza** – bronze bracelet used to please mediumistic and namesake spirits.
- 118 **Sungukati** – woman elder, woman advisor, or counselor and/or member of the traditional chamber.
- 119 **Swikwembu swa laha kaya** – household gods – these are family gods or ancestors.
- 120 **Swikwembu swa laha mutini** – homestead gods – home gods or family ancestors.
- 121 **Swikwembu** – Gods, or gods, especially in reference to the spirits of a medium.
- 122 **Swiyila** – taboos and prohibitory laws or ritual laws.
- 123 **Tatana** – father, dad, Sir.
- 124 **Tinguluve** – “pigs” – evil spirits.
- 125 **Tipangu** – a collection of places of public sacrifice and libation or worship.

- 126 **Tindi** – this is a child’s shout, given while running and smiling to meet the mother coming home after a long day of gathering fruits or getting something to feed the little ones in a severe food shortage situation.
- 127 **Tchineliwa** – “dancing on one’s behalf” – ceremony for the girls after house-confinement.
- 128 **Vakokwani** – grandparents or ancestors.
- 129 **Vafi** – the dead.
- 130 **Va khale** – the ancient people.
- 131 **Vito la ntumbuluko** – *ntumbuluko* name or name of the ancestors.
- 132 **Vito la tinguluve<sup>1</sup> ta laha kaya** – family spirits’ name.
- 133 **Vito la xikwembu** – “god’s name” – this is an ancestral name given to a child through divination. Here God or god is an ancestor.
- 134 **Vito la mapswalwa** – birth name (given by the matron at birth as her compensation).
- 135 **Vure** – a king of spirits, or personified anger, or envy caught by diviners before *mutchapi* which did not speak.
- 136 **Vito la wu n’wanana** – childhood name – the same as above.
- 137 **Vito la wu ntombi** – feminine youth name – given after first menstruation at the end of house confinement.
- 138 **Vito la wu jaha** – masculine youth name – no known ritual for naming boys. From the 1500s to the 1700s the Roman Catholic Church gave Christian names to baptism candidates, which are interpreted as youth names in Tsonga. Also, young people came back from the mines in South Africa with such names.
- 139 **Wa mu vona nsati** – Lit. “Look at your wife”. Ritual statement of the mother of a newborn boy presenting the baby to the first new moon to protect the child from lunacy (moon-diseases).
- 140 **Wa mu vona nuna** – Lit. “Look at your husband”. This is the same ritual as above, for girls.
- 141 **Wa ngoma** - medium
- 142 **Wa nsati wa xitekwa** – Marriage-contracted woman – a term used for young married women by senior women and men (in-laws).

<sup>1</sup> In some Tsonga groups, when spirits are called *tinguluve*, it denotes their evil nature. The alleged evil nature here is attributed to the spirit by the family that the spirit is avenging against, whilst the family the spirit alleges to belong to, considers the same spirit and *xikwembu xa laha kaya* (family or household god), thus good. The concept of evil spirit(s) is relative to one’s relationship with a spirit.

- 143 Wu oswi – adultery.
- 144 Wu bayi – adultery.
- 145 Wu fendze – carelessness.
- 146 Wu hunguki – immorality.
- 147 Wu ngwavavani – prostitution.
- 148 Wu dambani – promiscuity.
- 149 Wu loyi – witchcraft and sorcery.
- 150 Xigodo – a log.
- 151 Xikwembu – “God” in the Christian sense.
- 152 Xinyamukwaxani – also called *xikwahlana*. Lit. salamander. A very powerful magic that animates inanimate objects of magic and is alleged to drink human blood.
- 153 Xintu – indigenous culture.
- 154 Ximunhu – African ways. Lit. human ways.
- 155 Xikwahlana – personified magic called “salamander.”
- 156 Xitsungulu – a charm, sewn to look like a sausage, which is used on the upper arms (for boxing) or waist and some people swallow it.
- 157 Xikhulu – beads, made and used like a rosary in the pronouncement of *ntumbuluko* laws to a girl at the end of house-confinement. These are pronounced while the girl is kneeling, carrying on her head a jar symbolizing the law.
- 158 Xibalweni – colonial forced labour.
- 159 Xirotha – ritual on the first night of marriage, including bathing and cutting off of the pelvic hair of the bridegroom by the bride in the presence of old women and, in some cases, sex in the presence of those women.
- 160 Ximuwu – baobab tree.
- 161 Xingomana tanda – spiritist.
- 162 Ximbitana – small pot.
- 163 Xikhuwana – small jar for water, etc.
- 164 Xilandi – African ways or indigenous ways.
- 165 Xilungu – western way of life.
- 166 Xidoropa – metropolitan life.
- 167 Xitchungwa – the top part of a traditional house.

168 **Zangu** – a charm, stretching from one shoulder to underarm, used by diviners and mediums.

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**PART ONE:****NARRATIVE**

I not only *am* many stories, but I also have many stories and know many other stories not my own. I am constantly balancing – or juggling – a number of ways of telling my own story.

(Brown 1975:167)

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview and summary

This overview and summary is intended to give: a) a general overview and summary of some important works in this field of study; b) point out the position of this present research in relation to the summarised works; and c) outline and clarify some technical aspects of the research that need to be considered when reading this research.

##### a) Some selected important works

In the broad discipline of theology there are many important works to be mentioned. Because of that reason I will narrow down from the general field of theology to the missiological and theological debate of gospel and culture for which I have a separate section in chapter five and need not be repeated here. Here I must further narrow down to gospel and culture research in Africa in general and particularly in the Tsonga<sup>1</sup> context which is the matrix of my research. But before coming to the Tsonga related research it is important to acknowledge some other African researchers on African culture and Christianity such as Idowu (1973) *African Traditional Religion*; Ela (1988, 2001), *My Faith as an African*; and Professor Mugambi with his numerous publications on the subject of Christianity and African culture such as, to mention a few, *The Biblical Basis for Evangelism: Theological Reflection Based on an African Experience* (1989), *African Heritage and Contemporary Christianity* (1989), *Critiques of Christianity in African Literature* (1992), *Religion and Social Construction of Reality* (1996), and *Christianity and African Culture* (2002).

In his book, *African Heritage and Contemporary Christianity* (1989) published by Longhorn and then by Acton with a new title: *Christianity and African Culture*

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<sup>1</sup> Tsonga here is used in its general sense but very aware of all the theoretical and historical issues about the origin, meaning and identity of the Tsonga people in Southern Africa. Matter will further be discussed in this thesis.

(2002), Mugambi makes an interesting historical argument of 'a two-way process of transformation' (Mugambi 2002:1) in which the gospel undergoes change as it effects change in a culture throughout history (from the transformation of Jewish culture by Jesus and Judaisation of Christianity to Africanisation of Christianity and Christianisation of Africa). This argument is very valuable to this study since it proposes the "interpenetration" notion in which we argue that as much as the gospel penetrates and influences the Tsonga worldview, so the latter penetrates and influences the gospel. This phenomenon of a two-way process of transformation as Mugambi argues, calls for appreciation, not necessarily uncritical adoption, of the cultural heritage that is responsible for that dynamic (:2). Moreover, in this process, the translation is crucial. In the process of Hellenisation of Christianity and Christianisation of Hellenistic traditions, Mugambi points out that:

The selection of that medium [Greek], however, also led inevitably to the translation of Hebrew religious concepts into Greek philosophical ones. This process of translation is exemplified in the preface to the Gospel according to St. John (John 1:1-18).

(Mugambi 2002:5)

This process requires good understanding of both Hebrew religious concepts and Greek philosophy such as we see in Paul who could argue with both Jewish theologians and Greek philosophers in his missiological and theological endeavour. The notion of translation based on the New Testament model that Mugambi presents here has been adopted in this study as a response to the challenge of the Tsonga worldview. In this translation, we also argue the need for a good understanding of both *ntumbuluko*<sup>2</sup> (Tsonga worldview) and Christian faith.

In another of his works, Mugambi (1996) argues that religion is 'a factor which greatly influence the way human beings perceive and describe reality' (:5) and that religion gives self-understanding and self-orientation to a community and to the individuals in different dimensions (:5-6). This book is an important study since it deals with social construction of reality which is also discussed in this study. Briefly

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<sup>2</sup> There are many different meanings to *ntumbuluko* in the different contexts and uses between and among different Tsonga subgroups. For now we will regard *ntumbuluko* as a worldview and we will discuss its nuances later.

looking at Mugambi's contribution in this study, we need to come to another important contributor.

Professor Maluleke, a South African Tsonga, did his DTh research on Tsonga culture and his research is a valuable aid to this study. The title of his thesis is: *A Morula Tree Between two Fields. The Commentary of selected Tsonga Writers on Missionary Christianity* (1995). His primary sources are the vernacular Tsonga literature on which he focuses his study. This work can be characterized as: a) a critical commentary on missionary Christianity; b) a source of and challenge to missiology; and c) a source of Black missiology of liberation (Maluleke 1995:vii).

Maluleke explores missionary instrumentality and the local response of the Tsongas to missionary Christianity. He uncovers both the missionary work and local response through the study mission literature and Tsonga vernacular literature, mainly of the Swiss Mission in South Africa. His Tsonga sources include different genres and present different responses to missionary Christianity. Some of the responses are very critical such as the one that is generally glad of the Christian "garment" because is it better than the previous "garment" (Tsonga tradition and religion), but complains that the garment of "light" (missionary Christianity) is too short, which implies that the "garment" of "darkness" (Tsonga tradition) was long enough (:166). Another example of a very critical response to missionary Christianity are the very direct questions of Mbolovisa to N'wa-Bembe which intend to indicate that Christianity is useless in protecting families and homes and that the faith of N'wa-Bembe is not genuine since Mbolovisa is confident he has traditional tattoos [of protection] (:169). Finally Maluleke critiques the missionaries for minimizing Tsonga history. However he recognises the work of Junod on Tsonga culture but also makes a critical evaluation of it. By choosing to hear the voices of the "receivers" he has demonstrated how the vernacular literature is a valid and authoritative commentary on missionary Christianity and thus a source of, and challenge to, missiology both locally and internationally. And finally we need to look at the monumental work of Junod on Tsonga culture.

Henri Alexandre Junod has written many books and articles on and about Tsonga people in French, English and Tsonga. Junod, a Swiss Mission missionary, worked in

Mozambique (Ricatla) and Northern Transvaal (Valdezia). He was in Mozambique between 1889-1895 and 1907-1921 (Harries 1994:xi). He was inspired by James Bryce, a British Ambassador in Washington who visited South Africa and Maputo where he met Junod and talked about the need of taking a scientific study about the primitive life of the natives (Junod HA 1912:1). That conversation became a revelation to Junod to see how the natives would be grateful in the course of time to know, by his work, what they were when they were still leading a savage life (:1). For he noted: 'The great bulk of the tribe [Tsongas] is still absolutely savage' (:3). He started gathering information using first two Rongas at Ricatla, then four Shangaan<sup>3</sup> (Guamba and Nothern) in Valdezia as his main informants. He had one more Ronga and his students at the Mission School that included adults at Ricatla. Among his three Ronga informants in Ricatla, two were diviners and those of Valdezia, one was also a diviner. The students were all from the Ricatla area (Ronga) (:3-7).

He started his scientific investigation with Spoon (a former diviner who converted after being an informant of Junod and teaching him the art of divination [:3]) and Mboza (another Ronga diviner) in 1909. He used Frazer's set of questions prepared for those collecting ethnographical material giving special attention to the question of taboo (:6). He regarded his work as being important for both government officials and missionaries. For Native Commissioners it would give 'a better knowledge of the tribe to which they administer in the name of civilised Government' (:8) because: 'To govern savages, you must study them thoroughly...' (:8). For the missionaries, the 1910 Edinburgh Conference recommended a sympathetic study of native beliefs and social customs. And he exclaim: 'For instance look how seriously the savage keep their taboo!...' (:9) and concludes that this disposition can become a powerful moral impulse for good when the taboos disappear with the spread of scientific knowledge (:9). As an ethnographer, he saw his duty as noting the facts carefully and describing them accurately (:11).

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<sup>3</sup> According to Junod HP (1938:43), Shangaan as a designation of Tsonga people is derived from So Tshangana also know as Manukosi who subdued the Tsonga clans and brought about their unity under his rule and he argues: 'To call the Tonga people Shangaans is definitely misleading, as the Ama Tshangana are the offspring of So Tshangana, and are really of Nguni origin, but the name is so widely accepted to-day that it is necessary to use it' (1938:43). It is in view to this wide acceptance that I use it in this study. Moreover, I use it with Mozambican meaning where it only designates those Tsongas in Gaza Province and those in Limpopo Province of South Africa and those in Zimbabwe. This helps to distinguish them linguistically and culturally from the Ronga and Tshwa speaking Tsongas of Maputo and Inhambane respectively.

Junod did the most complete detailed study of Tsonga culture. He started by giving historical and ethno-linguistic background of the Tsongas and then noted and described individual life (birth to death) of a Tsonga man and woman, family life, village life, national life, etc. He gives detailed descriptions of rituals and ceremonies. His study is very comprehensive in the sense that he studied thoroughly the culture of the group of Tsonga he interviewed and lived with. The differences in other Tsonga areas are very minimal. In fact, as he thought probable, some of the rituals among the Tsongas are also present in other Bantu groups. For example the Duala (Cameroon) Bantus also practice the cutting open (1912:349; 1913:166) of the belly of a dead pregnant woman before burial.

Junod gives a very comprehensive albeit extremely patronizing study of the Tsonga. He had a low view of the Tsonga as primitive savage and 'weaker race' (1912:3,10,11), but is very positive on the future outcome of the Tsonga's accelerated process of "evolution". It was as if he was in a "human laboratory" in which the theory of evolution is being tested and proven. He takes upon himself the defence of this growing humanity in the face of the adult race that can lead the child race into destruction if both (adult and child races) are not guided. The next question is: what is the position of this research in relation to all the above work?

**b) The position of this research in relation to the summarised work**

Mugambi's work is a study of Christianity and African culture in general which takes into consideration various aspect of Christianity and African culture including their social, economical and political aspects. The other work is a study of meaning and function of religion in social human existence. This present study is focused on a particular African context, the Tsonga context, and in that context I focus only on the worldview of that cultural context. My debate of the social construction of reality is thus focused towards understanding this particular worldview. My research takes general principles and applies them to the specific context.

Maluleke's work also focused on the Tsonga people. He opts for hearing their voices from the "under-side" by treating their vernacular literature as a critical commentary

of missionary Christianity and source of and challenge to missiology. While Maluleke's work is concerned with the nature of the Tsonga response to missionary Christianity and its value in missiology, this study assumes that the nature of the Tsonga response to missionary Christianity has been ably established and problematised (by such studies as Maluleke's) and it undertakes to uncover the philosophical basis and worldview from which the Tsonga response to Christian faith emanates. *Ntumbuluko* is singled out as a philosophical and paradigmatic base of the Tsonga response. This is done by listening to and recording various categories of informants from among the Tsonga whose response to Christian faith is profound.

Junod's work was a complete collection and preservation of culture and traditions that were doomed to vanish with the advent of science (:9-11). He did ethnographical work with all the details and photographs to illustrate ceremonies and rituals he describes. His was general a study of Tsonga culture, traditions and customs with special attention to taboo. His Frazerian model is descriptive and is concerned with the details of each ritual and ceremony. This study is done from a "transcendental"<sup>4</sup> and translation contextual theology which has a direct missiological motif. The information is recorded and the research uses a variety of categories (traditionalists, academics, artists, Christian practitioners [both lay and clergy], Bible translators). The informants come from the three main Tsonga group languages in Mozambique (Shangaan, Ronga and Xitshwa). It is a focused study of a particular word/concept in the Tsonga worldview. I only collected information on ceremonies, rituals and taboos as they mirror the internal working out of the worldview. To use Mugambi's language, I used the 'ritual dimension' (Mugambi 1996:7-8) as a vehicle to gain deeper understanding of the Tsonga worldview whenever the informant could not discuss *ntumbuluko* as an abstract concept. The rituals, ceremonies and taboos that I collected are generally similar to those collected by Junod and the difference accounts for the Save region and Xitshwa informants that were more dominant numerically among the informants and these two groups are not part of Junod's informants.

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<sup>4</sup> Transcendental here is in reference to a model of contextual theology as propounded in Bevans (1992). This model allows the use of a subjective personal experience and story as scientifically valid and not violating scientific objectivity. Further treatment of the model is given later.

Therefore, this study is context specific, comprehensive in its geographical, cultural and linguistic coverage in Mozambique, and focused on a particular word/concept which embodies the Tsonga worldview and serves as its hermeneutical key. The understanding of this key gives an insight into the basis of the Tsonga response to Christianity and thus is identified as a theological and missiological challenge to Christian faith in the Tsonga context.

**c) Outline and clarification of some technical aspects**

We need to advise the reader on some technical aspects and issues of the study. These aspects or issues are: (a) classification of Tsonga, (b) Tsonga languages and cultures, (c) Tsonga spelling, and (d) different Tsonga understanding of the notion *ntumbuluko*.

**(a) Tsonga or Thonga**

According to Bill (1983) there is less agreement over the issue of the origin and identity of the Tsonga. I will not concern myself with the etymology of the word Tsonga here since it is discussed elsewhere, but try to indicate what it means in general and in particular in this study. It has been used to designate and distinguish the Shangaan speaking people of Gaza Province in Mozambique and those in Limpopo Province in South Africa from the Ronga and Vatshwa speaking people of Maputo and Inhambane Provinces in Mozambique. Tsonga also designate Gaza, Limpopo, Zimbabwe and Thongaland Shangaan speaking people together with Ronga and Xitshwa speaking people of Maputo and Inhambane. But in Mozambique the general classification is well defined. Geographically Tsongas are made up of Rongas of Maputo Province; of Shangaans of Gaza Province; and of Vatshwa of Inhambane Province plus those in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Harries dismisses it as a confusing term invented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Ngunes and adopted by missionaries (Harries 1975:n72). In this study the term means, in general, all of the Tsonga people, but particularly the Vatshwa, Shangaan and Ronga of Southern Mozambique which is the geographical area of this research. It is to be noted also that the Tsongas in South Africa and Zimbabwe emigrated from Mozambique in the 1880s due to political, economical and ecological pressures (Harries 1983:160,170).

**(b) Tsonga languages and cultures**

Junod HA (1912) subdivides the Tsonga into six groups which speak various dialects. These groups are namely: (1) Ronga, (2) Hlangano, (3) Djonga, (4) Bila, (5) Nwalungu, and (6) Hlengwe. Junod HP (1936) speaks of proverbs of Tsangas (Shangaan) in Tsonga, Xitshwa and Ronga. This can easily lead one to think that all Tsongas are Shangaans and that Ronga and Xitshwa are dialects of Shangaan. Although the six divisions were reduced to three the positions of Ronga and Xitshwa were still dialects of Shangaan (Junod HP 1938:27) but finally as we can see in Bill (1983:10) Ronga and Xitshwa are languages and not dialects. It is now clearly established, at least in Mozambique, that there is a Shangaan language (Gaza), a Ronga language (Maputo) and a Xitshwa language (Inhambane) but all belonging to the Tsonga family. Each of these languages has their dialects like Xizingiri and Xindindindi (Ronga dialect), Xigwamba and Xihlengwe (Shangaan dialect), and Ximhandza (Xitshwa dialect). Although the Shangaans, Rongas and Xitshwas of Mozambique share some generic cultural and linguistic homogeneity, they have their distinctive features and each of these languages has Scriptures in their language as indicated in my tables of biblical verses using the word *ntumbuluko*. Therefore, although Tsongas can cross-communicate, there are linguistic and cultural differences not only in the major divisions (Shangaan, Ronga and Xitshwa) but also within each of these groups as we can see with regard to the Northern Transvaal Tsongas as Harries indicates: 'a dauntingly confusing *pot pourri* of refugees drawn from the length and breadth of coastal south-east Africa, who shared no common language and lived in scattered villages that were independent of one another' (Harries 1988:29). This background of Tsonga presents a problem in choosing a standard spelling.

**(c) Tsonga spelling problem**

Many linguistically influences were brought into the play in deciding the Tsonga spelling. French, German, English, Portuguese and Sotho<sup>5</sup> are some of the registered

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<sup>5</sup> The first Swiss missionaries to the Tsonga were accompanied by some Sotho evangelists and Maluleke thinks they are responsible for the introduction of the Sotho words in today's Tsonga language. The first translation of the Bible called *Buku ya Tsikwembu tsinwe na Tisimuo ta Hlengeletano* is, in Maluleke's view the classical example of the Sotho influence in the first written Tsonga (Maluleke 1995:31 footnote:29).

influence in the spelling of Tsonga. According to Bill (1983:6), Bleek did the first systematic attempt to organize written Tsonga. The orthography of Tsonga was disputed among missionaries within the Swiss mission (South Africa and Mozambique) and with other mission organizations (Nazarene and Anglicans) who chose their own orthography (Bill 1983:8). Spelling is an ongoing debate. The standard spelling in Shangaan is not standard in Mozambique; in fact scholars that are members of the former Swiss Mission church in Mozambique are among those who suggest different spelling in Shangaan in the academic circles. Ronga and Xitshwa have naturally different spelling and although there are attempts to unify spelling of all the three languages (Bill 1983:10) it is still in the very far future, at least for Mozambique. The three languages are well mixed in Mozambique and so is the spelling. We easily navigate from one type of Tsonga spelling to another in the same way we speak.

Furthermore, the fieldwork was done in four linguistic groups (Ronga, Shangaan, Txopi and Vatshwa) and has recorded the words and writing them down as they were said or pronounced. The Save region people mix Shangaan, Xitshwa and some Ndaus because they are located where the three languages meet. For those working in South Africa (from Save region) they also mix Tsonga with some English and Afrikaans words and ideas whilst the others in Maputo, Gaza and the Inhambane coastal area mix Tsonga (Shangaan, Xitshwa, Txopi and/or Ronga) with Portuguese. As a result, my transcripts are linguistically complex. One needs to know Ronga, Shangaan of Mozambique, Xitshwa, Portuguese, English, Txixopi and Ndaus. The South African Tsongas will find the spelling and languages used quite a challenge.

**(d) Different Tsonga understanding of the notion of *ntumbuluko***

Before commenting on the issue we need to clarify “the Mozambican understanding and use of the Tsonga Bible to its South African origins.” If we consider Tsonga to be all the three languages, then we ought to speak of Tsonga Bibles (Ronga Bible *A Biblia*, Shangaan Bible *Bibele ma nga Mahungu la Manene* and Xitshwa Bible *A Biblia go Basa*). If we use Tsonga only to indicate the Shangaan speaking people of Gaza and South Africa or even only the South African Tsongas, the Tsonga Bible would definitely mean *Bibele ma nga Mahungu la Manene* and its previous editions

of 1907 and 1929. Ronga and Xitshwa Bibles are of Mozambican origin even if done or printed outside the country. The Shangaan Bible is of course of South Africa origin, however Mozambicans participated from the beginning towards the end of the translation project in the editorial committee and then as regular readers and consultants that included people from Mozambique (Bill 1983:17). These people include some of my informants (Rev. Chamango and Rev. Matsombe). Mozambican ownership and participation cannot be completely excluded. Historically the Tsongas outside of Mozambique emigrated due to political, economical and ecological pressures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Harries 1983, 1988, Junod HA 1912, Maluleke 1995). Therefore there are some connections to such an extent that South African translators kept consulting and consolidating relationship with Mozambique. Nevertheless, there is South African Tsonga dominance in this process and there are of course words that have different emphases for South African Tsonga and Mozambican Tsongas. There are some expressions that are foreign to Tsonga that we find in Tsonga Bible because of its South African origin and the influence of other African languages (Pedi and Venda) and Afrikaans and English.

It has been brought to my attention that in South African Tsonga the emphasis on the meaning of *ntumbuluko* is that of nature and natural environment and secondly culture and tradition, whilst in Mozambican Tsonga the emphasis is on culture and tradition and then nature and natural environment. The sense in which *ntumbuluko* is used and interpreted in this study is regarded to be equivalent to what the South African Tsongas call *ndzhavuko*, a word not yet, to my knowledge, used in Mozambique which has no entry at least in one of the Tsonga dictionaries. *Ndzhavuko* is almost unknown in Mozambique. In South Africa it is being used in the media and government departments such as education, science, technology and culture. Khosa (1987:7) spells it '*ndhavuko*.' It has not made entry into the Tsonga dictionary (Duenod 1967 reprinted 1985).

A brief study of the notion in *ntumbuluko* South African extra-Biblical sources gives quite an interesting insight. Khosa (1987)'s *Tihlo ra Ntumbuluko*<sup>6</sup> uses the term seven times. He uses *ndhavuko* (used once in his book) and then *ntumbuluko* as above

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<sup>6</sup> This is a title of a small poetry booklet in Tsonga by Khosa.

argued (emphasis on nature and natural environment) (1987:7). But the other six uses the emphasis is on culture and tradition (1987:12, 20, 39, 47). Junod (1936:vi, vii) also used *ntumbuluko* and in his parallel English text rendered *ntumbuluko* as “tradition.”

Sihlangu (1975:44)'s quote of Bethuel Matinye speaking of his baptism saying:

Ndhwalo wa mbilu yanga a wu susiwile a ndza ha saleriwe hi ku rhwala mahungu layo saseka ndzi ya byela va ka hina ka Mpisana. Ekaya ka Mpisana, kereke ya Swiss Mission a yi nga ri kona. Vanhu a va hanya hi ntumbuluko, va hanya hi ku phahla, va ha landzela swikwembu swa vona swa le hansi. A va hanya hi ku n'wa mabyala...a ringe peli a munhu anga ti titimetakinga minkolo tikweni ra ka Mpisana.

(Sihlangu 1975:44)

Professor Maluleke translates this quote in the following words:

The burden was removed from my heart. But I still had to take the Good News to my people at Mpisana. Here the Swiss Mission church did not exist. People lived according to their natural culture, worshiping their gods. They liked drinking beer... Not a day would pass without an individual taking a drink.

(Maluleke 1995:80 footnote:38)

*Ntumbuluko* here is clearly in relation to culture and tradition. It indicates people who live in their culture and traditions which included worshiping their gods and drinking. But it is a personal preference of Professor Maluleke to add “natural” to culture.

Such personal preferences which determine the meaning of the term are also common in Mozambique. Some of my informers also put more emphasis on nature and natural environment as the primary meaning of *ntumbuluko* (Mavulule and Nhagumbe 2003, interview). *Ntumbuluko*'s nuanced meanings are subjectively decided and thus relative. I cannot claim what is in this work to be the Mozambican emphasis because there are different understandings and emphases. *Ntumbuluko* is one of those concept words that are well known and used but not sometimes explained, thus the attempt in this thesis to make a full explanation. Most of the informants used in this study struggled to explain its meaning and I was forced to take them into a ritualistic and ethical dimension to find the internal working of *ntumbuluko*.

Moreover, in this study we have other problems. The Ronga Bible and New Testament, the Xitshwa Bible and New Testament, the Txitxopi and the Gitonga New Testaments were also used besides the "Tsonga" (Shangaan) Bible and its different versions and portions (five in all). Only two versions use *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga-Shangaan. A comparative study of the use of *ntumbuluko* in the eight different biblical sources (two of each of the Tsonga languages plus one of each non-Tsonga languages [Txitxopi and Gitonga]) indicates that the earliest use of the term *ntumbuluko* in the three Tsonga languages is in fact the one emphasizing nature and natural environment. The contemporary use has shifted emphasis to that of culture and tradition in Tsonga-Shangaan and Tsonga-Ronga; in Txitxopi and Gitonga. Xitshwa still has the early emphasis since it has no new revised edition. But as soon as the revision of Xitshwa starts, this shift in emphasis will inevitably happen because it is consistent with the contemporary understanding of the concept, at least in Mozambique.

It is in fact this shift of emphasis that inspired my interest in studying the subject of *ntumbuluko*. There are many permutations to this notion. Recently I discovered the first use of the *ntumbuluko* noun in the Old Testament (throughout this study I only found it in verb form). This new discovery brings yet another dimension of the meaning to *ntumbuluko*. Ecclesiastes 7:24 reads: '*Ntumbuluko hinkwawo i xihundla eka mina, sha wona swi entile ngopfu, swi nga hlamuseriwa hi mani ke?*' (My translation: All [things] of *ntumbuluko* [wisdom] are secret to me, they are the most profound, and who can explain them?). Here *ntumbuluko* is associated with wisdom and biblically wisdom is defined as the fear of the Lord (Job 28:28). Since philosophy is "the love of wisdom," if *ntumbuluko* is used as wisdom, it can also be used as philosophy.

*Ntumbuluko* in this study is used according to its immediate context or as defined or used by each informant. It is used with the Mozambican understanding, use, emphasis and context. It is from that matrix that the research was conducted and thus for the understanding of the meaning of its use in this study.

## 1.2 The background and motivation for the topic

The background and motivation for the topic of my research has both an existential and missiological dimension. It is existential because it comes out of my personal struggles with *ntumbuluko* and Christian ways of life and the related issues. The topic is part of my personal story of how I came to terms with *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith-related issues, as well as my self-understanding as a Mozambican Tsonga Christian. It is also missiologically motivated because the issues that I raise and the proposals that I make in this study are part of my own experience in both theological education and pastoral ministry. These issues and proposals will eventually help us to take the gospel to deeper levels of life and consciousness among the Tsongas of Mozambique.

### 1.2.1 Existential motivation: A personal story

My use of the term “existential” here must not be understood as an endorsement of the secular existentialist philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard (Atkinson 1983:201), nor an endorsement of the existential theological systems and methods of Paul Tillich (Hägglund 1981:349) or Rudolf Bultmann (Hägglund 1981:351-354; Conn 1974:33-38). I will not discuss the relationship between existentialism and theology. I use the term “existential” in its simplest possible meaning, that is one’s being as a human in general and one’s existence, specifically, as a Tsonga and a Christian. It is from this use of the term that my personal story will elucidate the struggles of a personal participation in ‘being and existing’ (Hägglund 1981:202) as a Tsonga and a Christian believer.

Comstock (1987), introducing his study of “Two Types of Narrative Theology”, which asserts that narrative theology, as a reflection of religious claims embedded in stories, is one of the most significant western currents of thought in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and that this debate was initiated by Niebuhr’s (1941) *The Story of Our Lives*. Balcomb (2000:56) quotes Robert MacAfee Brown saying: ‘...I not only *am* many stories, but I also have many stories and know many other stories not my own. I am constantly balancing – or juggling – a number of ways of telling my own story’. Although the quote indicates several ways of entering into or identifying with the

stories of others, the portion quoted above serves to show that we humans are stories, we have many stories and know many stories and that there are many different ways in which we can tell the stories of our lives.

But perhaps, before presenting my life story, I need to grapple with the prevailing emphasis on academic “neutrality,” “detachment,” “objectivity” and related concepts. The question is; can story material be used in an academic work, where one should be “neutral,” “detached” and “objective?” Or in other words, does not one’s personal and family story violate the “neutrality,” “detachment” and “objectivity” expected or required in an academic work? This is a question of method and model in doing theology, which needs to be looked at within its context and model.

Bevans (1992), after arguing that “Contextual Theology” is a theological imperative, goes on to say that a contextual approach to theology is partly a departure from the notion of traditional theology. Although he indicates it to be also a continuity of traditional theology, he distinguishes the two, saying:

Classical theology conceived theology as a kind of objective science of faith. It was understood as a reflection in faith on the two *loci theologici* (theological sources) of scripture and tradition, the content of which has not and never will be changed, and is above culture and historically conditioned expression. But what makes contextual theology precisely contextual is the recognition of the validity of another *locus theologicus*: present human experience. Theology that is contextual realizes that culture, history, contemporary thought forms and so forth are to be considered, along with scripture and tradition, as valid sources for theological expression.

While classical theology understood theology as objective, contextual theology understands theology as unabashedly *subjective* [italics mine]. By *subjective*, however, I do not mean relative or private or anything like that. When I say that contextual theology is subjective, I mean it is a result of the modern appropriation of the ‘turn to the subjective at the beginning of modern times’ and points to the fact that a human person or human society, culturally and historically bound as it is, is the source of reality, not a supposed value- and culture-free objectivity ‘already out there now real.’ [Bevans’ italics].

(Bevans 1992:1-2)

Bevans considers the contextual approach to theology an imperative and he regards contextual theology as being more subjective than objective. Reality is not value- and culture-free objectivity, it is subjectively constructed by the subject. In this work my approach is “contextual” and I use various contextual models (the translation model, the anthropological model, the prophetic model, synthetic model and the

transcendental model) all together. I used what Bevans (1992:111) calls a 'healthy pluralism' of methodologies. Within this range of methodologies, the dominant methodologies are first, the transcendental model and second the translation model.

According to Bevans, to understand the transcendental method one needs a complete change of mind. 'Some things demand a radical shift in perspective, a change in horizon – a *conversion* – before they begin to make sense. Until we make this shift, whatever we are trying to understand will defy understanding' [Bevans' italics] (1992:97). What is important here is not the type of theology produced, but the fact that the theologian who is producing it operates as an authentic and converted subject.

Explaining the transcendental method, Bevans says:

[The] transcendental method proposes a basic switch in the process of coming to know reality. Instead of beginning with the conviction that reality is 'out there,' existing somehow independently of human knowing, it suggests that the knowing subject is intimately involved in determining reality's basic shape. One needs to begin one's quest for knowing what 'is' by attending to the dynamic of one's own consciousness and irrepressible desire to know. The switch is from beginning with a world of objects to beginning with the world of the subject, the interior world of the human person. 'Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity,'... Objective knowledge, knowledge of the real, can only be achieved 'by attaining authentic subjectivity.' It is in attending to one's transcendental subjectivity as it reaches out naturally toward truth that one finds oneself doing an authentic contextual theology.

(Bevans 1992:98)

As one can see, subjectivity is not counter to objectivity. It is authentic subjectivity that produces genuine objectivity. Following from this relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, the author outlines four basic assumptions of the transcendental model as follows:

- (1) A fundamental presupposition of the transcendental model is that one begins to theologize contextually, not by focusing on the essence of the gospel message or of tradition as such, nor even by trying to thematize or analyze culture or expressions of culture in language. Rather, the starting point is transcendental, concerned with one's own religious experience and one's own experience of self. When one starts with oneself, however, it is important to understand that one does not and cannot start in a vacuum. Very much to the contrary, as a subject, one is determined at every turn by one's context.
- (2) That which might seem private and personal can articulate the experience of others who share one's basic context – members of one's generation, one's culture, one's nation. Given the fact that ... the only true objectivity is through radical and authentic subjectivity, or given the fact that ... the most personal is the most general.

- (3) God's Revelation is not 'out there.' Revelation is not in the words of scripture, the doctrines of tradition, or even hidden within the labyrinthine networks of culture. The only place God can reveal Godself (sic) truly and effectively is within human experience, as a human person is open to the words of scripture as read or proclaimed, open to events in daily life, and open to the values embodied in a cultural tradition.
- (4) While every person is truly historically and culturally conditioned in terms of the content of thought, the human mind operates in identical ways in all cultures and all periods of history. When an Asian or an African inquires or understands, the concepts and images by which he or she understands will be radically different from, say, a North American or a European, but the basic cognitive operations will be the same.

(Bevans 1992:98-99)

With these presuppositions, the author argues: 'What might seem at first glance to be a very personal and even individualistic starting point is really extremely contextual and communal. From this transcendental starting point, theology is conceived as the process of "bringing to speech" who I am as a person of faith who is, in every possible respect, a product of historical, geographical, social, and cultural environment' (Bevans 1992:96). Based on psychologist Carl Rogers' argument, Bevans says: 'the practitioner of the transcendental model would argue that what might seem like a rather narrow starting point in individual experience is actually the best starting point for doing theology that speaks to other individuals – historically and culturally determined subjects – who share one's own worldview' (1992:99).

My personal and family story in this thesis will give it a rather radical and authentic subjectivity that ensures a unique and genuine objectivity. My starting point is contextual and communal rather than individualistic. It is a starting point that brings to speech who I am, as a Christian and as a Tsonga person, within my context. Starting with my personal and family story is not a narrow starting point, nor is it a breach of academic "neutrality," "detachment" and "objectivity". It is in my personal and family story that the best starting point for doing an authentic theology that

speaks deep into Tsonga people's and other people's lives. My experience and story become the locus of understanding and interpretation of reality. This work will only speak to others if it reveals the person that I am<sup>7</sup> to other individuals, not just what I say.

Mugambi takes this issue of subjectivity further; pointing out that any science is, in fact, subjective. Mugambi argues:

When the scientific method is applied in theology, the results of theological enquiry will depend on many factors, including the presuppositions of the theologian, and the level of competence in applying relevant skills to the operations pertinent to the enquiry. A scientist, irrespective of the branch of enquiry, formulates the hypothesis, chooses the method, sets the experiments, identifies the facts, analyzes those facts using chosen models, derives the implications, and draws conclusions. From this procedure it is clear that science is 'subjective' to the extent that its subject matter is arbitrarily circumscribed by the scientists themselves.

(Mugambi 1998:23)

Subjectivity in objectivity is not only an issue limited to contextual theology. It is the nature of theology as 'science of a religion' (Mugambi 1998:24) and of science in general, irrespective of the branch of enquiry. It is through radical subjectivity that objectivity is achieved in any branch of scientific enquiry and, more particularly, in contextual theology which seeks to reflect on the relevance of the gospel in the local and personal situation and culture (Mugambi 1998:25).

The subjectivity relating to my personal and family story in this thesis is a necessity for doing genuine contextual theology. It is also a necessity in doing any science, as Mugambi (1998) argues. My personal and family story makes it genuinely contextual and penetrating within my context. This also gives it a possibility of communicating profoundly in other human contexts.

To conclude my justification for using personal and family story in an academic work, let me quote Donahue (1988:24) highlighting the importance of stories with the following argument:

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<sup>7</sup> In his conclusion, Bevans says: 'What I have found particularly effective is the use of experiences from my own life. Such experiences tend to evoke similar experiences from the students and to help them do their own theologizing out of their own experiences' (Bevans 1992:139).

[I]t is the stories of the Bible which give it its distinctive shape. A people freed from Egypt told and preserved the stories, and the stories formed and preserved a people during centuries of exile and oppression. The stories became Torah and Testament for Jew and Christian...

(In Balcomb 2000:56)

This quote indicates that the Bible is shaped by stories of people. Although my story is not of such magnitude as the Bible stories, I find it fit to open up my own life, concealed within my life story. It is in my life story that one may find the context and background of the topic and it is in this story that the thesis will have its distinctive shape.

#### 1.2.1.1 My infancy and family struggle with *ntumbuluko* and the issues of the Christian faith

I was born into a Tsonga Christian family. My father was the leader of our local Baptist church and the congregation met in our home. My father and mother were baptized and married by the church; and we, their children, were given biblical names and dedicated to the Lord according to the Baptist practice. However, when each of us was born, there was something done before dedication and we were given other names before our youth names or biblical names. I was, according to *ntumbuluko*, marked (*ku lahela*) with *mativa zotlhe*<sup>8</sup> protective *muri* (medicine), shown to the

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<sup>8</sup> *Mativa zotlhe*- This protective medicine is also known as *madamba* or *madanga swiyila*. This medicine can be found in a specific tree called *mativa zotlhe* or *damba ziyila*. But it can also be prepared from a log found in the middle of a path. What makes this log important is that it has been stepped over by many women as they pass by, and thus it has seen many women's private parts, with all their *swiyila* (impurities). It protects new-born babies, teens in their first period called *ku khomba*, *ku ngena ndlini* or *ku kula*, and women during the first 8 days after giving birth. It protects them from the deadly effect of *vanuhu vo hisa* (hot men and women, that is those who have had sex recently) and from impure women who are menstruating or haemorrhaging, or who have undergone miscarriage or abortion. The medicine renders these ritual impurities or evils harmless to the baby, teen or mother (Thombeni 2001, interview with author).

moon, 'wa mu vona nsati'<sup>9</sup> and I was given *vito la xikwembu*<sup>10</sup> (the name of god) then I was presented in the family *ganzelo* (altar) to the *swikwembu*<sup>11</sup> *swa laha kaya* (household gods) in general and given artifacts and amulets<sup>12</sup> to symbolize my spiritual link with my *mabizweni* (namesake) or the god I was named after.

<sup>9</sup> *Wa mu vona nsati* or *kengelekeze*- This is a Tsonga rite called 'ku lahela', 'ku komba nyanga' or 'n'weti' (to show the moon). Among the Tsongas in the Save River basin (Gundani, Tangwani and Malindile), this rite consists of taking a baby at sunset to the west side of the homestead facing the new moon (the first since the baby was born), lifting up the baby and shouting, 'wa mu vona nuna' (do you see the, or your, husband?!) for a girl and or 'wa mu vona nsati' (do you see the, or your, wife?!) for boys. The moon is personified as the baby's wife or husband. If that does not happen, they believe the baby will be unwell whenever a new moon appears. These health hazards will include lunacy and epilepsy. Among the Tsongas south of the Limpopo the shout to show the baby the moon, as suggested by one of the Mozambican poets, is 'kengelekeze'. The poet depicts it as an important rite. After shouting, "kengelekeze" is represented in the poem saying "no one shall ever again say to you that your mother did not show you the moon". This suggests that someone who is not well accepted socially because of not having undergone this ritual, all his/her bad behaviour could be explained on the basis that he or she was not shown the moon.

<sup>10</sup> *Vito la xikwembu*- In Tsonga a person has three names. There is *vito la mapswalwa* (birth name) given immediately after birth by the matron, also called *mu amukeli*. The second name is given if the baby cries without ceasing and the family resorts to divination and finds that a *rilela vito*. This is called *vito la xikwembu* (the name of god). It is the name of one of the deceased from the father's or mother's family. However, some people do not have *vito la xikwembu*. The third name is *vito la wu jaha* or *vito la wu ntumbi* (youth name), which is carefully selected and given to teens.

<sup>11</sup> *Swikwembu*- This term in Tsonga has different uses in both its singular and plural forms. In the singular form *xikwembu* (the form adapted in the Bible for God with a capital 'X' or 'Š', or for god with a small initial letter [*Xikwembu* or *Šikwembu* in the new and old versions of the Tsonga Bible respectively]), means god, "God", a presumed spirit of the dead (also called *mukwembu*) belonging to the family but attacking the family for one reason or another, and/or one of various spirits that a medium has. In the plural form *swikwembu* (used in the Tsonga Bible for gods), means gods or spirits of mediums or shamans. If they say so-and-so *ana swikwembu*, it means that the person has spirits of divination or medium. But there is another use. *Swikwembu swa ka hina* ("gods of ours or clan gods"), *swikwembu swa hina* ("our gods") and *swikwembu swa laha kaya* ("gods of home or homestead gods") are the other uses. *Swikwembu swa hina* is a term that is used to deify parents and leaders. It is sometimes used in churches for pastors, superintendents or bishops calling for absolute submission and respect. *Swikwembu swa ka hina* and *swikwembu swa laha kaya* both indicate the deceased members of the clan or family, whose spirits they believe to be present and powerful in determining the course and future of the life and prosperity of the living.

<sup>12</sup> The artifacts and amulets that I was given were *palu* ("colourful piece of cloth") and *nguvo yo basa* ("white piece of cloth"). These cloths are covenant symbols which tie or link the person with the namesake gods or spirits. The name itself is a spiritual code of the person. It is with this name, or birth name, that a person can be 'tuned' supernaturally. A person exists in the spiritual realm only in this name. It is the name used in libation, spirit conversation, divination and spell. Otherwise, none of these acts can find the person; it is as if one was telephoning someone from another city or country without using the city or country dial code. As for the artifacts and amulets, there are many other types, depending on the namesake god or spirit's preference. These include *sinza* ("bronze bracelet"), black cloth, *mbamba* ("sea shell") and *zangu* ("a rope made of cloth with many other things attached which is worn from one shoulder and under the armpit").

Whenever we were ill, although my parents would pray, the ultimate thing to ensure our wellbeing was to do anything according to *ntumbuluko*. The next step was to visit a diviner for consultation and if necessary to invite a medium to mediate negotiation and deal between our family and the attacking spirit(s) called *nguluve* (singular) or *tinguluve* (plural). These spirits are believed to be sent by witches and are responsible for illnesses and all misfortunes. Two brothers and a sister of mine died mysteriously, and it was believed that the negotiation did not work and/or was delayed.

In 1970/71 my father was working in South Africa. My brothers, sister, mother and I suffered constant attacks from spirits and witchcraft. My mother gave birth to my sister at a medium's house. When we returned home, we found that in the evenings our yard was full of owls<sup>13</sup>. I became very ill and sometimes I was unconscious. One day my mother was walking on a path at around 5 or 6 pm and an owl hit her on her chest. From that incident it was believed that she contracted tuberculosis and coughed out blood. Her breast milk changed colour and looked mixed with blood and became poisonous, causing her baby to be ill. A few days later, the baby refused to breast-feed. (The next baby after this one, who insisted on breast-feeding, died).

#### **1.2.1.2 Deep disillusionment with Christian faith and dependence in *ntumbuluko***

Our Christianity was not able to protect or deliver us from the above problems. We had to go to diviners, prophets, mediums and shamans for help and protection. We all believed firmly in what the diviners and spirits said, even to the point of

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<sup>13</sup> According to Tsonga culture, owls are associated with witches. They are believed to transport witches in their astral travels. This belief was confirmed by Pastor Matlhombe, a converted ex-witch who claims to have attained very high position in a secret society of witches in Africa before his conversion. Matlhombe gave his personal testimony in the Igreja Assembleias de Deus (Assemblies of God Church) in Maputo, Mozambique in 1995 (Mavundza 1995, interview with author; Ribeiro 1995, interview with author).

giving away my sister as a slave<sup>14</sup>. These *ntumbuluko*-related issues were beyond the scope of our Christian faith. They belonged to the field of *xintu* (humanness or culture) and *ximunhu* (*ubuntu*) embodied in *ntumbuluko wa hina* (our *ntumbuluko*). This was the only way to preserve life and ensure continuity and prosperity with security. We feared and hated those who the diviners and spirits said were responsible for our situation. Our extended family was deeply divided.

So, as a result of this collective experience, Christianity was not appealing to me because it did not help me to live. The only good thing about Christianity was being able to read, wear nice clothes on Sundays, and drink tea from nice cups and to have all that was considered to be the ingredients of a civilized life.

We were never evangelized in the church. I was never taught about the power of God. I did not know that the power of God is above all other spiritual powers including that of *wuloyi* (witchcraft) and *tinguluve* (malevolent spirits). I did not know the nature of the victory of Jesus Christ (*Christus victor*)<sup>15</sup> on the cross over other powers, as indicated in Col. 2:15. We never knew that God could protect us

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<sup>14</sup> The term "slave" here is a translation of the Tsonga word "*hloko*", meaning "head". This term designates someone that is given away to another family as payment, restitution and compensation or appreciation. If a person has looted someone's wealth beyond his or her capacity to repay, he has to give one of his daughters as *hloko* in payment of the debt or damage. If a person has killed someone, whether by sorcery or homicide, the guilty person must pay a restitution to the victim's family. In this situation, even if the murderer is rich, money is not accepted, a human being is demanded. In most cases it is the supposed spirit of the dead that is demanding restitution. In a case in my village, a lonely man called Mufeketi came from an unknown land to live in our village. Some children regularly went to his *ndumba* (small temple or altar) and drew out his magic sword. He reported the boys to their parents, but they never took any action. Mufeketi could not take more provocation and went to the river and drowned himself. His supposed spirit demanded that one of those boys, or anyone in the family, be taken and drowned in the same spot where Mufeketi had drowned himself. The family could not do that, and many people died, one after another, as a result. Compensation or appreciation or acknowledgement is demanded magically, using spells and spirits, to claim payment for a good sacrifice or help that has benefited or blessed another person. This was mostly demanded by elder brothers who had given some money to help their younger brothers pay *lovolo* (*lobolo*). They demanded that the first-born girl of that marriage to be given to them. Some ancestral spirits that accumulated money through *kupfuka* (revenge) also give money for *lovolo* and demand to be given the first girl of the couple. My sister became *hloko* (slave) because she is the first daughter of my parents and, my father had been given part of his *lovolo* money by his brother. My uncle died before my father declared my sister his slave. When my sister married, her *lovolo* money was given to the surviving oldest son of my father's deceased brother, making him the virtual father of my sister, thus officially declaring her a 'slave'.

<sup>15</sup> Yung 2000:7 argues that *Christus victor* theology needs to be emphasized in dealing with spiritual powers. This theological model was popularized by the Swedish scholar Gustav Aulen (1970). There was an absence of such theology in our family's struggle with the spiritual powers operating in *ntumbuluko*.

against witchcraft (Num 23:23). The only thing we knew and dreaded was the harmful power of spirits, witches and witchcraft, and the *ntumbuluko* way of dealing with the problem, through the healing power of mediums, diviners, prophets and shamans to diagnose, mediate, appease, intercept, neutralize and extract spells or bewitching-matter, thus curing and protecting humans. However, after my conversion, this form of Christianity was to be challenged by the Bible.

### 1.2.1.3 A new beginning: My conversion

In 1983 Renamo guerrillas kidnapped me and I received Jesus as my Lord and Saviour whilst in captivity, as a result of reading a Bible that I found there. I escaped after three months, but was detained by the Military Intelligence for intelligence clearance. After the clearance period, I was conscripted to the army where I served for five years (1983-1988).

Mozambique was a Communist country and, for a soldier to be religious ('ideologist', as it was depicted), was a crime against the state and a stumbling block to its revolutionary motive. But this 'crime' seemed a good one for me to commit.

This decision was made out of enthusiasm concerning my faith, but I was very ignorant about the Christian faith. If I was arrested or interrogated by political commissars, I could not defend my faith and myself. So I decided to start a Bible course by correspondence. In the initial phase of my theological studies my motivation was apologetic. It was '*apologia pro vita sua*' (Bediako K 1992:32,129) as Bediako describes the Early Church theology. However apologetic the motive, the Bible confronted my type of Christianity. I read passages like Deut 18:10-14 and Isa 8:19. It became clear that the kind of Christianity we lived back home did not please God.

Now I wanted to please God, but I did not know what to do if I were bewitched (*ku loyiwa*) or if a *nguluve* (malevolent spirit) sent by a witch attacked me. The only solution I knew was to go to diviners and mediums. But God says no to this! It was a dilemma for me. I knew there was no scientific help for the above-mentioned health problems. Medical doctors refer such problems to so-called "traditional treatment" by

diviners and mediums. But I was sure there had to be a Christian way of dealing with the problem, because God loves us and because he cannot turn away from our problems.

In 1989 I joined “*Seminário Teológico Evangélico de Moçambique*” for ministerial training. I presented my question: “what shall I do if I am bewitched or am attacked by an evil spirit”? Many lecturers cleverly avoided my question until the end of my first year. I was getting frustrated, it seemed as if there was no real answer to my question and to be a Christian did not mean much either in life or in the spirit realm. What the Bible said was just idealistic, but not real enough to be lived here on earth. The earth seemed to have its own king, whose power God could not touch. I went home for the 1989/90 year-end holidays and the only new things that I brought home from my first year’s seminary training were some new songs and choruses. But, things were to change after my liberation in my second year.

#### **1.2.1.4 The paradigm shift: My liberation in Christ from the powers operative in *ntumbuluko***

In 1990, my second year at seminary, Dr. Henry Holmgren, a missiologist and a graduate of Trinity International University, where he’d been a student of Timothy Worner, joined the lecturing staff and introduced a course on spiritual power encounter. He led us through the Scriptures and I found the answer to my question. Through his teaching, counselling, life-style and ministering, I found the much-needed liberation from fear and the dominion of spiritual powers.

Following the itinerary of my theological formation, the beginning is likened to an apologetic reason. I wanted to equip myself to defend my faith against the Communist hostility to Christianity and Christians. But, along the way a question on witchcraft and spirit attack arose from my *ntumbuluko* or cultural background and worldview. Then my theology became a search for the answer to the question and a solution to the problem. Once I found the answer and the solution to the problem I felt a missiological call to take this gospel, the answer and solution I’d found, to my parents, brothers, sisters, sisters and brothers-in-law, and then to the church in general. Finally, my theology became a missiological task and pastoral duty in context.

## 1.2.2 Missiological motivation

During the 1990/91 holidays, in my second year, I once again went home. This time I had something really new, something that would change the lives and history of my family, the local church, the clan and the chieftaincy. I had the missiological task of transmitting the answer to our problem, the zeal to preach and teach this gospel with power, and I had the pastoral compassion and duty to minister to them. I was motivated to take the liberating gospel to my father's household and the church.

The war was intense, and my father moved from one hiding place to another with a group of people following behind him, like Moses in the desert. But this did not prevent my mission. I organized Bible studies every evening around the fire for more than 30 days. My parents, my brother and my sisters-in-law and some members of the local church participated. We challenged and put to the test the old dictum: 'A prophet is respected everywhere except in his home town and by his own family' (Mat 13:53-58 GNB).

### 1.2.2.1 A prophet in his home town and in his own family: The liberation of my parents, family and church

*Loko u hi xi loyi, loya nyine wa wena*

(If you are a powerful witch, bewitch your own mother)

This quote is an interpretation of a Tsonga *teketelo* (riddle) that indicates two things, first that it is difficult to convince one's own mother and, second, that in order to test whether something will work, try it on your own mother. Her reaction or the effect/impact of that thing upon her is indicative of the success or failure of that thing in the community. It was a struggle for me to be my parents' pastor, teacher and counsellor. But it worked, and it prepared me for that kind of ministry at different levels.

After a month of teaching, my elder brother made his commitment renouncing all his involvement with the spiritual powers operative in *ntumbuluko* and asked that I minister liberation/deliverance to him. Soon after that, he was asked to preach on a

Sunday and chose to preach on the subject of spiritual powers. As he stood up to preach, his mouth became paralysed for a while, he could not open it to say a word. He prayed silently against evil forces and, on finishing his prayer, his mouth was released from paralysis. I did not understand what was happening until he told me about it later on. When he gave his altar call, my father, mother, two sisters-in-law and some members of our church (about 15 people in all) committed themselves to the Lord, renouncing their *ntumbuluko* involvement with spiritual powers. I set aside a day to minister liberation/deliverance<sup>16</sup> to them, this being my second session of ministering to people in this way.

This personal and family story is an example of different attempts to solve spiritual problems and to achieve security, wellbeing and prosperity through different means. Our superficial Christian faith did not work, we used *ntumbuluko* with all its ingredients (rites, divination, charms, amulets, mediums, etc.) but all these only aggravated the situation. We found no way out until we experienced the gospel as the power of God to save (Rom 1:16) and to deliver us from the evil one (Matt 6:13), which became a new experience in the Christian faith gospel.

#### **1.2.2.2 New experience leading towards a new theological paradigm for the understanding of *ntumbuluko* and the Christian gospel**

This experience, from both my personal deliverance/liberation and my ministry to others, led me into a new understanding of the nature of the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross as a new paradigm for the understanding of the gospel or Christian faith as a whole in relation to *ntumbuluko*. This experience pushed me far beyond the scope of my theological and ministerial training and landed me in deeper layers or areas of life, culture, faith and ministry; areas of which I had little knowledge.

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<sup>16</sup> When the day came for ministering liberation/deliverance I started with individual counselling, then family counselling to assess the situation diagnostically and give to appropriate guidance and Scriptures. After that I preached and destroyed all amulets and artifacts and, finally, I prayed for each of them and then for their families to stand firm in the gospel of Jesus Christ, cutting their link with spiritual powers.

Therefore, my motivation for choosing this topic is to explore more deeply the Tsonga culture in order to enable myself and others to minister effectively to the Tsongas. It is also my aim to produce an instrument that can help Tsonga Christians who live the kind of Christianity portrayed in my family and personal story above, to grow spiritually, and to find their liberty and freedom from the oppressive forces and elements operating in their lives and cultures. The kind of Christians that I am alluding to here would be the majority of Tsongas, as my research has revealed.

There is no other Tsonga concept more comprehensive than *ntumbuluko* that could be investigated and studied for this purpose. Other significant sub-concepts are *xilandi*; *ximunhu* (*ubuntu*) and *xinto*, but all of these and other concepts as well are incorporated in *ntumbuluko*.

*Ntumbuluko* is the Tsonga word which represents the Tsonga worldview. It comprises the whole Tsonga concept of religious beliefs and practices, the practical set of beliefs and their administration for the welfare of society and humanity as a whole. *Ntumbuluko* is the whole set of natural and 'divine' or mystical laws governing life and life activities, wherever they exist. *Ntumbuluko* belongs to the very essence and vitality of life. It operates to preserve life, as well as granting its continuity by ensuring the cosmic harmony between nature and its phenomena; humans and their activities in relation to nature; the spiritual world in its relation to nature and humanity in its totality. In summary, *ntumbuluko* can be seen as a hermeneutic tool or theoretical construct of reality, on the basis of which Tsonga people perceive, interpret, explain, predict and control reality (Horton 1993).

It is also necessary to explain what is meant by the term "the gospel" in this study. The term can be problematic since it may be understood differently by different cultures (Western, African, Asian, etc) and traditions (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Charismatic, AICs, etc). However controversial the term is, it will proceed from the premise that there is a gospel, common to all humankind, based on the revelation of God through Jesus Christ and able to be appropriated universally. This is the essence of the evangelical theology of which I am a proponent. In other words the term "the gospel", as used in this study, is universal, although it has cultural/contextual form. I accept this as a premise because only in its universality it

can effectively interact *ntumbuluko*. The terms 'Christian faith' or 'Christian faith gospel' and '(the) gospel' are used interchangeably in this study. This is the basic understanding from which we will be viewing interaction between the gospel and *ntumbuluko* within the context of gospel and culture.

The problem of gospel and *ntumbuluko* has never, to my knowledge, been explored deeply in any academic inquiry at this level from an evangelical missiological and theological point of view among the Tsongas in Mozambique<sup>17</sup>, particularly so in my own denomination, the *Igreja União Baptista de Moçambique*. The relationship between faith and culture is sometimes an area of conflict between nationals and missionaries, between clergy and congregation, and sometimes even among the clergy.

As indicated above, Mozambican Tsonga culture and worldview can be summarized by the concept *ntumbuluko*. My experience suggests that *ntumbuluko* has more power and authority over the lives of many Tsonga Christians in Mozambique than the gospel or Christian faith has. In times of crisis many Christians resort to *ntumbuluko*. This research will clarify the ways in which *ntumbuluko* impacts Christians in Mozambique, with a view to assisting them to understand and live their culture and faith better.

### 1.3 Problem formulation and analysis

#### 1.3.1 The research problem

What should the missiological and theological response be towards *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith as an existential and relationship problem from an evangelical perspective?

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<sup>17</sup> However, there are many studies on Tsonga culture from both theological and non theological academics. Junod HA (1912, 1913) is a monumental ethnographical work on Tsonga culture. His son, Junod, HP (1936, 1938, 1977) also contributed with valuable research. There are also some recent works such as Langa (1992), Silva (1995), Silva & Laforte (1998), Helgesson (1995), Luciano (1999).

Since we are both Christians and Tsongas, it is of primary importance to understand our *ntumbuluko* as well as our Christian existence. We ought to know the kind of relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel if we are both truly Christians and also truly Tsongas. To be a true Christian and a true Tsonga is not just a theological hypothesis and missiological possibility, but it is the whole purpose of the divine revelation and incarnation into Tsonga *ntumbuluko*, life and culture. But, in order to deal with the problem of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the Christian faith, we must first tackle other problems surrounding the main problem.

### **1.3.2 Research sub-problems**

#### **a) What is *ntumbuluko*?**

We must answer this question before attempting to solve the problem of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the Christian gospel. We need to hear from the Tsongas what they understand *ntumbuluko* to be. With that information we will describe, interpret and explain the concept of *ntumbuluko* and relate it to parallel concepts.

#### **b) Are there any related concepts or interpretative approaches that can help us understand and interpret *ntumbuluko* from different disciplines?**

*Ntumbuluko* is not a well-known and researched concept either in Christian scholarship or in academic inquiry. Being a little-known concept, the description of the research findings needs to be studied and interpreted for the wider audience, with aid from different human and social sciences. After understanding, explaining and interpreting *ntumbuluko* from different approaches and disciplines, we will be better able to assess the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel.

- c) **What challenge does *ntumbuluko*, as described by the informants and interpreted from different approaches, pose to Christian faith among the Tsongas of Mozambique?**

This question will eventually lead us back to the main research problem, i.e. the way people relate *ntumbuluko* to the gospel or to their faith in Christ. Our understanding of the kind of challenge that *ntumbuluko* is to the Christian gospel will lead us to suggest what the acceptable and healthy relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel should be.

- d) **From a Tsonga evangelical perspective, what should a distinctive theological and missiological response be to *ntumbuluko* and the Christian gospel challenge?**

As a Tsonga evangelical I am dissatisfied with the present understanding of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. In my theological and evangelical response I will suggest another form of relationship. In the process I will do some exegesis of scripture on the biblical use of the *ntumbuluko* concept in the new and old versions of the Tsonga Bibles. I will analyse Hebrew and Greek concepts that are parallel to the Tsonga concept of *ntumbuluko* in OT and NT theology. Based on these analyses, my suggestion for a new paradigm in the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith will take shape.

### 1.3.3 The assumptions of the research

- All Tsongas in Mozambique encounter the gospel from the same cultural milieu or theoretical construct of reality, i.e. *ntumbuluko*. However, different backgrounds and contexts mediate the interaction between the Tsonga and Christian theoretical constructs of reality.
- Since all Tsongas in Mozambique are in the same milieu of *ntumbuluko*, they face similar problems and crises, whether their background is traditionalist, modernist or Christian. In the Tsonga encounter with the gospel, the problem of

*ntumbuluko* and crises add to the “conversion crisis”, and it is at this juncture that the question arises of how to relate one’s existence in *ntumbuluko* as a Tsonga to the new existence in the gospel of Christ as a Christian.

- The issue at stake is that both Christians and practitioners of traditional religion respond to *ntumbuluko* in the same way. The gospel is therefore in a precarious position in its relation to *ntumbuluko*. In solving or handling problems and crises, many Tsonga Christians obliterate their faith in the gospel of Christ, or give it a marginal, dormant position, and *ntumbuluko* takes or is given the dominant position.
- The way that Christians experience *ntumbuluko*, highlights issues around gospel and culture and surface age-old questions about the relationship between them. This thesis attempts to clarify some of the dynamics in this relationship.

#### **1.4 The aims of the thesis**

This thesis aims to shed light on the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel and thus to assist other Tsonga Christians in Mozambique to resolve the problems that are associated with practicing the Christian faith.

Chapter one, the introduction of the thesis, aims to argue for the topic of research based on personal story and experience. The assumptions made by the author are tested by the appropriate research method chosen. After giving the research methods to be used, the chapter ends with a historical background and geographical delimitation of the area of research.

Chapter two aims to present the findings of the research, thus describing and explaining the conceptualization of *ntumbuluko* in the different segments of Tsonga society. Based on the data, the chapter will also assess the role, place, importance,

value and impact of *ntumbuluko* in the life events, activities and consciousness of the Tsonga people. Finally, the chapter aims to find out how much impact *ntumbuluko* has in the Christian understanding of daily living, doctrine and mores of Tsonga Christians in southern Mozambique.

Chapter three aims to understand, analyse and interpret *ntumbuluko*, using a multidisciplinary approach. We will use a philosophical approach, analysing *ntumbuluko* ontologically, based on the work of both Placide Tempels and Alexis Kagame. We will also analyse *ntumbuluko* from the phenomenological, sociological, anthropological and missiological approaches of Horton, Berger, Turner and Kraft. These approaches will help us to see *ntumbuluko* as the basis of being or vital/life force, as a theoretical construct of reality, understanding, explanation, prediction and control of reality, worldview, spiritual powers, invisible being or power etc.

Chapter four gives biblical and theological interpretations to *ntumbuluko*. It studies the use of the term *ntumbuluko* in the history of Bible translation into Tsonga languages and other languages using the term *ntumbuluko*. Various theological debates and approaches like, law and gospel, *missio Dei* and others are discussed and various interpretations of *ntumbuluko*, including *praeparatio evangelica*, are suggested.

Chapter five will address the problem of the challenge between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, as described and interpreted in chapters two, three and four. The chapter aims to take a positive look at the problem as an invitation for deep theological and missiological reflection in Mozambique. The chapter starts by locating the problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel in the wider gospel and culture debate. After locating *ntumbuluko* and the gospel in the wider gospel and culture debate, we use Niebuhr's typologies of Christian response to gospel and culture. The chapter ends with two questions on the strength of *ntumbuluko* and the weakness of the gospel in the relationship between them. The questions demand a theological response, which is the aim of this thesis.

Chapter six aims to present a theological and missiological response to the problem of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. The response or the solution to

the research problem reflects an evangelical attempt to reflect theologically and missiologically on the vernacular Scriptures from a Tsonga perspective and to understand and interpret *ntumbuluko* or Mozambican Tsonga culture from that perspective. The chapter will suggest some practical theories for the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, theories which account for the pastoral and inter-cultural implications of the encounter between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel.

Chapter seven is the thesis conclusion, and aims to sum up the thesis. It gives summaries of the research problem and the research findings. Finally, it includes some remarks about the problem, the research, and the findings and also includes recommendations for further research. It is with these aims that we have an appropriate research method.

### **1.5 Research design and research methodology (methods and models)**

According to Tienou (1990:22) 'We have learned to think of our customs as pagan'... "We" here stands for 'evangelicals'. This learned thinking becomes one of the main issues one needs to grapple with methodologically. Evangelicals in Africa adopted 'Tertullian's sharp disjunction between Christian theology and philosophy' (1990:21) in relation to African culture. But culture is increasingly becoming an issue for theological debate among evangelicals in Africa. The 1973 Bangkok Conference on Salvation Today, the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization and the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches discussed culture intensively (1990:19). One of the questions asked in those conferences was: 'How does culture affect and shape the expression of the Christian faith?' (1990:20).

However, the evangelical study of culture is always done against the background of the evangelical boggy of syncretism. Methodologically speaking, the study of culture in theology is part of the contextual theological method. 'Contextualization' is a term commonly used in evangelical circles, more so than 'enculturation' or 'indigenisation'. However, evangelicals still quarrel about contextualization. According to Tienou:

Tokunboh Adeyemo thinks that Rene Padilla advocates a contextualization which will result in a dynamic-equivalence theology. The end product of dynamic-equivalence theology is not desirable, according to Adeyemo, because the "message becomes relativistic, existential and situational." He himself proposes "Biblical theology in an African setting", in place of contextualization. One asks "How does this differ from contextualization?" The answer must be: "Very little indeed."

(Tienou 1990:28)

Byang Kato published his "Contextualization and Religious Syncretism in Africa" in July 1974. He did not condemn contextualization, but warned that 'theological meaning must not be sacrificed on the altar of comprehension' (Kato 1985:24). Cultural Revolution in Africa has been named in his list of 'the reasons for growing syncretistic tendencies in Africa' (1985:25).

But, although there are warnings and fear about the negatives in culture among evangelicals, there is a theological and missiological resolve to study African culture. Kato (1985:36-7) says: 'Since Christianity is truly [an] African religion, Africans should be made to feel it so. What remains to be done is to help Africans feel very much at home in the Church.' Here we see Kato asking us to do what is necessary, which involves studying African culture. The identification of the role of culture in human perception (Imasogie 1993:16) makes the study of culture an imperative for African evangelicals. Imasogie goes on to suggest the use of the "transcendental" model in contextual theology in Africa, which takes culture seriously (1993:36-7).

After pointing out that evangelicals are taught to think negatively of their culture, Tienou is more emphatic in saying that: 'Missionaries and pastors need to have a right attitude towards culture, and a sympathetic understanding of it, if they are to help Christians out of this devastating syncretistic way of living' (1990:22). But then he asks the question: 'how will missionaries and pastors develop this right attitude towards African culture?' (1990:22), and he also answers: 'We must start, in our ministerial training institutions and theological seminaries, to make our students aware of the cultural conditioning of all theologies. We must make them aware that culture is not bad in itself' (1990:22-3).

According to Tienou:

We must ... study our own culture, the cultures of the biblical world and western cultures. To be a good theologian in Africa requires that one be competent in the traditional theological disciplines, and also well-read in cultural anthropology and sociology. We need to examine African culture very closely to see what elements are compatible or incompatible with the Gospel message. Evangelicals need not be afraid of the fact that we are moving toward culturally differentiated Christianities. This trend is not new in the history of the Christian church movement, and it is no more dangerous today than it was in ages past.

(Tienou 1990:23)

In this process of learning African culture, Tienou warns us against making absolutes of our own scriptural interpretations, but to trust the Holy Spirit to guide the evangelical church in Africa into all truth (Jn 14:26; 16:13) (1990:23). Tienou challenges evangelicals, saying: 'It is now, or never, that African evangelicals must begin reflecting on such issues in order to provide the appropriate answers' (:23). He calls the evangelicals to 'develop a theology of culture, because Christian faith is lived in culture' (:23).

The Lausanne Congress produced "The Lausanne Covenant" on culture. This document states that: 'The development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture' (LC:6) and, at the end of the paragraph on culture, it says: 'and churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God' (LC:7). After the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization the evangelicals gathered at Willowbank, Bermuda, in a consultation on "Gospel and Culture."

The call on African evangelicals to change attitudes about African culture and to study it as part of their theological and ministerial training has been responded to around in various ways the continent. Just one example is the African Theological Fellowship's *Journal of African Christian Thought*, which deals with various issues in African culture. The journal has already published two issues, in 1999 and 2001, dedicated to the theme "Gospel and Culture." They have also published issues on

related themes such as “The Challenge of Mother Tongue for African Christian Thought” (2002) and “Biblical Exegesis in African Perspective” (2003). The African Theological Fellowship (ATF) has also developed academic programmes on African Christianity and Bible Translation and Interpretation in Africa.

Concerning the encounter between gospel and culture, Bediako points out that: ‘Gospel and culture will be constantly engaged, until we can speak of the conversion of cultures, the redemption of cultures captured in the vision of Revelation 7, when every language and culture will be present in heaven for the one purpose of glorifying God’ (Bediako 1999:12). The importance of this statement is that an evangelical approach to the issue of gospel and culture has at its heart the missiological motive of conversion.

However it is clear that evangelicals are taking the study of African culture seriously. They are resolved to change attitudes and engage in contextual theology, which takes culture and human experience as *loci theologici*. The question that arises is What should be the roles of “others” outside the context in the development of this theology?

Bevans quotes Emerson, saying: “If, therefore, a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not.” This suggests, for example, that a ‘non-Ghanaian,’ (Bevans 1992:14) cannot do Ghanaian theology. Similarly, we can say that a non-Tsonga cannot properly study Tsonga culture.

The weakness of the study by the “other”, within evangelical Christianity in Africa, is mostly due to a less critical view being taken of the “other’s” culture, and a generalized condemnation of African culture. It is the call, as Bediako says that: ‘some of us do not go through any crisis. We assume it is enough to be brought up in the church. We have no “crisis” with Jesus, and therefore fail to realise that the very coming of Jesus presents a problem’ (Bediako 1999:11). Without self-awareness of

what challenges the gospel poses to their cultures, the “others” are only helping those cultures that face a crisis with the gospel. But the insider, when doing a study of African culture and religion, is able to come to terms with what he/she is as Christian and as a cultural subject.

Cochrane, interrogating contextual theology in South Africa, points out the problem of “otherness” in relation to Afrikaners, saying: ‘otherness on its own is insufficiently penetrating, for it easily leads merely into an acceptance of difference without any analysis of what constitutes that difference outside of anthropology’ (Cochrane 2001:74). The “other” in Cochrane’s analysis is the oppressor (2001:75). In different contexts the “other” is an expatriate (i.e. missionary) doing theology for “insiders” or indigenous people.

However, methodologically and in practice, contextual theology does allow room for the contribution of “others”, provided they work honestly from the “acknowledged” cultural conditioning of their context. This can only happen in honest sharing of one’s humanity with the insiders, which may communicate to the insider’s context and help in developing understanding of one’s cultural background. This genuine dialogue between the “other” and the insider may help to develop contextual theology with deep understanding and sensitivity of culture (Bevans 1992:16).

How does one respond to all the issues arising from studying African culture as an evangelical in Africa? This calls for the identification of an appropriate theological method which will provide a good theoretical framework for the study. I can find this only in the contextual theological method.

In discussing “Issues in Contextual Theology,” Bevans argues that the contextual theology’s addition of culture as well as social change to the traditional ‘*loci*’ (Bevans 1992:11) of scripture and tradition marks a revolution in theological method, as compared to the traditional way of doing theology (Bevans 1992:11). According to Bevans (1992:11) ‘culture and world events become the very source of the theological enterprise along with, and equal to, scripture and tradition. Both poles – human

experience and the Christian tradition – are to be read together dialectically.’<sup>18</sup> I found in the contextual method a useful theoretical basis for my study of *ntumbuluko*. However, the adoption of this model is done with an awareness of dangers as indicated by the critics of the model. The positive criticism concerning the model points out that it leads to a new way of doing theology, with an emphasis on theology as activity and process, rather than as content. In the words of Anselm ‘It provides room for faith to seek understanding’ (1992:101). ‘The “turn to the subjective” espoused by the transcendental method clearly includes a turn to the historical and the cultural as genuine theological sources and loci of revelation’ (1992:101-02). But more serious critics ask: ‘if subjective authenticity is the criterion for authentic theology, what or who provides the criterion of subjective authenticity?’ (:102). They also warn that excessive attention to subjectivity in the transcendental sense might easily degenerate into subjectivity in the sense of relativity or ‘expressive utilitarian individualism’ (:102). The use of this method in this thesis is done with a consciousness of the danger that the critics point out, and with all the care and criticality necessary.

The second model of contextual theology used in this thesis is the translation model. This model emphasises Christian identity over cultural identity, although not exclusively (Bevans 1992:35). This model provides a framework for self-criticism of the thesis. According to Bevans (:36) ‘the person using the translation model will realize that not everything that is “genuinely African,” for instance, is automatically good’... A development of such criticality is called for and considered as necessary maturity for the Church in Africa. ‘The African Church will come of age when it becomes self-critical, and grows out of self-congratulation’ (Mugambi 1998:26). However, ‘the translation model can neither be rejected nor accepted uncritically’ (Bevans 1992:37). Here we are also aware of critical questions raised against the model. But the combination of the two models, as well as other models, gives the thesis the solid theoretical framework necessary for the topic. Within this theoretical framework I use various research methodologies.

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<sup>18</sup> See Bevans (1976).

I will use these models in interpreting my data. The transcendental model allows one to have a section on personal and family story as part of a scientific study. The translation model will be used to approach *ntumbuluko*, with a view to its transformation (Christ, the transformer of culture).

The Research Methods seminar led by Professor Addo-Fening, Dr. Allison Howell and Rev. Professor Kwame Bediako in 2000, describes the course as:

An examination of research methods and tools necessary for the study and analysis of African Christian life and thought, as expressed in the past and manifested in the present through both written and oral sources. The methods incorporate library-based research and practical fieldwork. Attention will be focussed on the development of tools that will enable students to most effectively benefit from the course, explore the particular research topic the student has chosen and contribute to the students' personal transformation.

(Akrofi Christoller Memorial Centre 2000:1)

This course is aimed at introducing students to methodological issues in researching African Christianity. It aims to help students develop methods for researching African Christianity and theology, even in topics without a written material. For that matter, the approaches in African Christianity research include methods and tools from various disciplines (history, history of religion, theology, phenomenology, missiology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, geography, and environmental studies) (ACMC 2000:1).

The above method helps students become competent in working with both written and oral sources. For dealing with oral sources the method presents a list of technical research devices, namely: (1) camera, (2) cassette recorder and (3) video. Two remarks made during the seminars were important for this research. Professor Bediako indicated that the shift of gravity of Christianity has implications for research as well as on pastoral and missiological ministry (Bediako 2000, lecture notes). This implication, particularly for research, has to do with the shortage of literary sources on theology, history, doctrine and the ministries or practices of mainline churches in Africa. Researchers have to develop new tools that will enable them to research

topics which have no written material. Furthermore, Bediako (2000, lecture notes) said that Bible translation in Africa is the shaper of theology. As the Bible is being read in different languages, we need to wrestle with various issues that come to surface and various understandings of the word of God.

This is the case in this thesis. I am wrestling with the concept of *ntumbuluko*, which comes from the *Mahungu la Manene* translation of the Tsonga Bible and Tsonga language Bibles in Mozambique. The study of this concept takes the research into various issues in the life, belief, life cycle and practices of the Tsonga people and their apprehension of the Christian faith. When it comes to *ntumbuluko*, there are no written sources, and so I had to choose a method and tools that would enable me to do research and to create sources for the topic. I adopted a combination of various methods and used a cassette recorder as my research device. The combination of various search methods, as suggested in the programme on African Christianity research methods, allowed the collection of the necessary data through interviews, cultural knowledge, symbols and songs, etc. For that reason, my research was conceived and organized as a combination of library- and fieldwork-based research to be conducted among the Tsongas of Mozambique.

From the research methodology of Neuman's (1997) *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, I used the qualitative research method, which allows one to analyse existing theories and to generate new theories. The data collection method records what people say, including gestures, tones and sounds. It also allows the observation of specific behaviours, social events, ceremonies, documentation of real events, themes and motifs. In this method the data receives a rich description, with colourful details of events in concrete social settings and life stories. This method is used in the study of cultural concepts in order to find how people describe their world. Since the concepts are expressed not only in speech, actions and behaviour, but also in the cultural knowledge of symbols, songs, etc., the description makes use of explanatory diagrams.

These theoretical framework choices helped the research to make use of oral history research methodology, as developed and used by the Oral History Project (Sinomlando) of the Department of History of Christianity at the School of Theology, University of Natal. This methodology was used in accordance with the Guidelines and Principles of the Oral History Association.

According to Mogashoa (1999:1) oral history is 'a pre-written form of history (all written documents were once oral).' The importance of the oral history method for this research lies in the fact that it helps one to work academically with unwritten sources of information. Mogashoa highlights the importance of oral history as a methodological approach with the argument that oral history methodology:

- 1) is valuable because it elaborates on existing written evidence
- 2) provides a "fresh" and "un-diluted" insight, and that
- 3) recording is far more reliable and provides an accurate account of the interview meeting (Mogashoa 1999:4).

Thompson (1992:98) argues for recording saying: 'All exact words used are there as they were spoken and added to them are the social clues, nuances of uncertainty, humour, or pretence, as well as texture of dialect.' With the privileged position of recording as we see here, I chose to collect the primary information on my research topic through interviews. I chose to use semi-structured interviews to allow my informants (or interviewees) respectful flexibility (Mogashoa 1999:6). In "methodological concerns unique to Africa" Mogashoa (1999:8) recommends the use of the vernacular language, especially when dealing with the older generation. Since my research is on a Tsonga cultural concept, the majority of my informants had to be of the older generation, with the exception of Christians, intellectuals and translators within my target categories or segments of Tsonga society. With this reality, I decided to do my interviews in the vernacular language, Tsonga, the language of *ntumbuluko*. Here, at this juncture, the oral history methodology is resonant with the African Christianity Research Method. We will discuss its contribution to this research following this discussion.

Finally, Mogashoa (1999:10) speaks of gender sensitivity in Africa in relation to the oral history method. This was a limiting factor in my research. Some of my

informants were women and I was investigating issues that are not easily discussed with men in Tsonga culture. It was possible to have good interviews because all my female informants were elderly people, and Tsonga culture considers their age as "sexless" and so they are allowed to discuss any issues with young people. Furthermore, most of them related to me in a culturally permissible relationship to discuss any private issue.

Maybe one of the questions we need to ask is the relationship between my research and oral history methodology. We can find an answer to the question from the "Guidelines and Principles of the Oral History Association" which says: 'The Oral History Association promotes oral history as a method of gathering and preserving historical information through recorded interviews with participants on past events and ways of life' (42). Using this method for my research falls under Tsonga "ways of life" here included in the gathering of information through recorded interviews. However, one needs to respect the guiding principles. The oral history association:

[E]ncourages those who produce and use oral history to recognize certain principles, rights, and obligations for the creation of source material that is authentic, useful, and reliable. These include obligations to the interviewee, to the profession, and to the public, as well as mutual obligations between sponsoring organizations and interviewers.

(Neuschwander 1985: 41).

My interviews were all done in accordance with the principles that apply to the use of oral history methodology in creating source material. My informants were clearly informed of the purpose of the interviews, as well as of their rights. All the interviews are well documented, transcribed in the original language and cited according to the standard norm applied to other sources. The informants were asked to decide on the status of confidentiality of their information (41-44). We also have incorporated narrative theology methods.

Based on the above theoretical framework, I organized my research to follow transcendental and translation models, using all the relevant research methods. I used a qualitative approach from both African Christianity and social sciences research methods in a culture member participant observation approach. I planned and conducted field research. In the field I tape-recorded and transcribed the interviews.

Being qualitative research it was concerned not with the number of informants interviewed, but with the quality of information collected. The field research included the collection of some songs concerning the theme of *ntumbuluko*, and archival research. Based on the interviews, the songs, the archival information and the Bible, the description of *ntumbuluko* was deduced, including its application to life events, life activities and life cycle, as is presented in the Appendix. The description is in detail in order to give a clear picture of the concept and its importance to or impact on daily life, assessing its challenge or impact upon Tsonga Christianity.

All the interviews conducted in this research have been transcribed in the original languages in which the interview was done (Tsonga and Portuguese). The complete transcriptions are presented in the Appendix section of this thesis as evidence of the research done and the findings thereof. They are in their original languages, with the exception of some sample translations of some transcripts in each category of the research.

Tsonga society in Mozambique may be divided into different perspectives, namely traditional, modernist, artist, Bible translator and Christian practitioners, I decided to use these five as the targets of my research. Dividing Tsonga society in southern Mozambique into these segments or categories and the targeting of each for the research of *ntumbuluko* is advantageous when one considers the historical background of the Tsongas and the historical encounters of *ntumbuluko* with various theoretical constructs of reality such as Islam and Christianity.

#### **1.6 Historical background, geographical location and delimitation of the research area**

The Tsonga people have one of the most fascinating histories in Africa. Junod H P (1977:9-15), in his introduction to the Tsonga history (1498-1650), is very romantic about Tsonga people, language and history. The geographical area of the Tsonga is also unique in Mozambique as well as in southern Africa. In this section we will try to find out who the Tsongas are in Mozambique, as well as in southern Africa in general. We will also locate the Tsongas historically and geographically, so as to understand the background to the development of *ntumbuluko*.

### 1.6.1 The origin of Tsonga people

The study of the origin of the Tsonga people is a complex one. According to Bill (1983:1) there is less agreement over the origin of the Tsonga people. It is not only the origin but even the name of this people group is disputed. Junod H A indicates that there was no true conscious national unity and therefore no name for the whole group. He adopted the name Tsonga and spelled it Thonga. He suggests that the name Thonga was applied to them by the Nguni invaders between 1815 and 1830. He also thought that it originated from the term Ronga (Orient or dawn) by which the clans in the Maputo area called itself (1912:14-15). Junod says that the term is equivalent to slave as used by the Zulus and the people do not like to be called Thonga, but he adopted it because he knew 'no other name which would be preferable to it' (:15). But then he says:

Strange to say, the Thonga of the Northern Clans, especially those of the Bilene and Djonga groups, like to call themselves *Tjonga*, the *Hlengwe* Tsonga. This word is perhaps originally the same as Ronga and may have meant also people of the East, although the R of the Ronga dialect does not permute regularly in Tj and Ts in the Northern clans; but this meaning is doubtful and has at any rate been forgotten. Another name which is much used amongst white people to designate the Thonga is the word *Shangaan*. Shangaan or Tshangaan was one of the surnames of Manukosi, the Zulu chief who settled on the East Coast and subjugated most of the Thonga at the time of Chaka. It is possible that this name was even older and that it belonged to a chief who lived in the valley of the Lower Limpopo before Manukosi. At any rate, this valley was called Ka Tshangaan and its inhabitants Matshangaan. But this name term was never accepted by the Ba-Ronga who considered it as an insult.

(Junod H A 1912:15)

Junod H P (1938) calls them 'Shangana-Tonga' (1938:43) and says that this name applied to the tribe is very ancient and he argues that: 'It ought to be written Va Tonga and not Va Thonga, which is the orthography accepted by my late father in his great monograph on the life of the people' (:43). He says that:

No people of Africa has been more completely described, and we already find their name in *Ethiopia Oriental*, where João dos Santos writes: 'In some of these lands other tongues are spoken, especially the *botonga*, and it is the reason why they call these lands *BoTonga* and their inhabitants *BoTonga*.' And again: 'From Sofala to the south the kingdom of Sabie, which is also called *BoTonga* towards the Bay of Inhambane. In the west one finds the kingdom of *AButua* (Ba-Tswa).' Even before João dos Santos, Dom Gonçalo da Silveira, in his letters to his Superiors, gives many interesting details about our tribe [Junod's italics].

(Junod H P 1938:43-44)

But in Junod H P (1936) we find yet another spelling. The Thonga of H A Junod and Tonga of H P Junod is now Tanga (with dot under T which is pronounced as Tsonga). In Junod H P (1977) the name is spelled "Tsonga." What is not clear from my sources is whether this change is the permutation of Thonga and Tonga or the adaptation of Tjonga (Tsonga) ignored by Junod HA (1912). Junod gives two theories of the origin of Thonga and Shangaan, one as Zulu (foreign) and the other as Ronga; for Shangaan he also advances Soshangaan (Zulu) and a possible Tsonga chief who stayed in the Limpopo valley before Manukosi.

It was in fact strange for H A Junod to say there was no other name to call this people where there was Tsonga which was more neutral and was from the people themselves. Junod's quotes of dos Santos and da Silveira are doubtful. The geographical area described and the spelling used are more consistent with the Gitonga people of Inhambane Bay who boarder with Vatshwa. It is to be noted that the Vatshwa also call the Gitonga as "Vatsonga." But the people call themselves "Ntonga" and their language "Gitonga."

Anywhere, the name for the people I am studying is now established as Tsonga or Vatsonga people. In Mozambique, this means the Vatshwa people of Inhambane, the Shangaan people of Gaza (including those in Limpopo province of South Africa and Masvingo province in Zimbabwe), and the Ronga people in Maputo and Natal's Thongaland.

The Ronga are named after *wuronga* (dawn or east, which equivalent to *Mphumalanga*), and are simply called "easterners". Geographical and linguistic criteria were the methods of classification used by HA Junod, and adopted by HP Junod (1977) and Feliciano (1998). Their classification was based on cardinal points and the position of each territory in relation to the Indian Ocean; however, for Hlengwe or Vahlengwe (Junod HA 1962:597; Junod HP 1977:98-106 and Feliciano 1998:36-39) there is no known meaning although Junod HA (1912:17) suggests it means wealth and others suggest it means tributary people and territories, there is no certainty. In Mozambique generally people don't like being called Vahlengwe, they ones in Inhambane want to be called Vatshwa and those in Gaza Vashangaan. The

Tsongas of the Save region are unaware that they are also classified as Vahlengwe. They use this term with nuanced meaning. They use it to mean territories without water source (rives or ocean). It takes the meaning of semi-desert or arid terrene and the people dwelling those places. Those so designated hate the term very much because it has a connotation of "uncivilised" and "unhygienic" and "without culture or good manner."<sup>19</sup>

If Tsonga has its origin in the people themselves and the meaning is regarded as long forgotten, could we add some other speculation? The geographical hypothesis that Junod gives, "Eastern people," can be added with another possibility of, "Southern people" (Dzonga). Moreover, a tent or temporary dwelling and military barracks are called *ntsonga*. Removing "n" one remains with *tsonga*, and makes very little difference in the spoken Tsonga. As for Tshwa there is no attempt in giving its meaning and origin in literature that I consulted.

According to Junod HA (1912) the myths of origin among the Tsonga says that the first human beings emerged from reeds (1912:21). For the Ronga people, according to Junod, the first humans are 'Likalahumba and Nsilambowa' (:21); for the Djonga the first humans are 'Gwambe and Dzabana'<sup>20</sup> (:21). To these of origin one can add the Xitshwa in which, 'Khubyanyani and N'wa-Xikuvanyani' (Ndzukule 2001, interview).

The Tsonga, according to their ancient migration legends, immigrated into southeast coast (southern Mozambique) coming from the north of Save River from the Kalanga country (Valoyi, Makwakwa, Tembe and Malulke clans) and the others came from

<sup>19</sup> The so called Hlengwe in Inhambane and Tswa as well as the Chibuto Shangaans and the Ronga use the singular first person to address anyone. In the Save region and probably in South Africa and Zimbabwe, to address someone in singular first person is regarded as lacking respect. Adults and respected people are addressed in the plural second person. This plural is a singular plural of respect also used by the Ndaou and all Kalanga related languages. So, in the Save region one speaks of "*n'wina bava or tatana*" not "*wena bava or tatana*." All the Tsonga languages Bibles use *wena* to address God, but the Save region find this very hard to respect humans but not respect God. If they could find their way, they would translate "*wena Xikwembu*" into "*n'wina Xikwembu*."

<sup>20</sup> Gwambe is sometimes spelled "Gwamba" and Dzabana sometimes "Dzavani" (Maluleke 1995:30 footnote:26). This myth (Gwambe and Dzavani) is consistent with the legend the Baloyi and the Nwanati as well as the Tembe come from the north of Limpopo and that they are from the Nyai or Kalanga (Ndaou and Shona). Gwambe and Dzavani in Mozambique are surnames or family names of the Vaxopi (Chope) people whose origin is Kalanga. Maluleke points out that Gwambe and Dzavani were the main Tsonga gods in the Spelonken area of South Africa (Maluleke 1995:30,160-62).

south and southwest of Dalagoa Bay now Maputo, from Zululand and Swaziland (Nkuna, Mpfumu, Khosa and others). But in the 19<sup>th</sup> century many Tsonga groups emigrated to different parts of South Africa and Zimbabwe due to political, economical and ecological pressures (Junod 1912; Bill 1983; van Warmelo 1975, Harries 1975-1976, 1983, 1994).

According to a text on history called "*Historia*" (1981:4-8), based on the works of Guthrie, Greenberg and Heine the date, 1700, indicated for Bantu expansion is preceded by the establishment of the Tsongas south of the Save River. However, Ferreira (1987:37) indicates that Bantu groups arrived in the Manica region in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Manica is on the north side of the Save River. Hildebrandt (1996:49-50), however, doubts that any group of so-called Bantu could have crossed the Zambezi River before AD 1000, and feels more comfortable with the view that such crossing only took place after AD 1000, though he does not rule out the contrary. He only argues that the majority were still the group of people he calls 'primitive, "stone age" Bushmen' (:50). However, he admits that the period of that expansion is to be located between 100 and 1000 AD (:3-4,50). This allows for an earlier settlement of the Tsongas to the south of the Save, which oral history seems to suggest.

For further study one can consult Junod HA (1912) who did a monumental study of Tsonga people and their culture, Junod HP (1938, 1977), who builds upon and amplifies the work of Dr. Henry A. Junod, presenting Tsonga history from 1498 to 1650, Harries (1975-1976, 1983, 1988, 1994) who focus mainly on the Tsonga emigration from Mozambique to South Africa, Feliciano (1998), who investigates the economic anthropology of the Thongas (Tsongas) of southern Mozambique, and others.

### 1.6.2 The three groups of the Tsonga people

Wee Mutsonga, wee Mutshwa, wee Muronga, wee Muchangana, wana hi matsolo, u gandzela Mumbi wa tilo ni misava, Mumbi wa tiko ra wena ro xonga! U ri vumbile hi voko ro tala tintswalo. Ri sasekile kukota wansati wa mpama. Ri ni xivumbeko xo hlamarisa.

(Junod H P 1977:9)

Translation:

You Tsonga, you Mutshwa, you Ronga, you Shangaan, fall on your knees, and worship the Creator of heaven and earth, the Creator of your beautiful country! Its beauty is like a woman of *mpama*. It has an amazing appearance.

In the first section of his book, H P Junod (1977:9) gives a *Xiviko* (preface) under the heading '*Vutsonga byi hlola swo saseka*' (Tsonga-ness stands for goodness or beauty). He is very poetic and romantic about the Tsongas in that section. After saying that Tsonga (ness) stands for goodness, he contrasts the Tsongas with other peoples, those that use guns, wars and military might, to dominate and impose themselves and their cultures, languages and customs upon others. His attack was generally applied to Portuguese and other Europeans, but soon he turned his attack specifically on the Ngunis, contrasting them with the Tsongas. He down-played the Nguni victory over the Tsongas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In stead, he regarded the Nguni loss of their linguistic and cultural identity in Mozambique as an Nguni defeat and a Tsonga victory over the Ngunis and other ethnic groups that had immigrated into or invaded the Tsonga territories in Mozambique.

Be that as it may, what serves our purpose here is the fact that in Junod's praises we find that the Vatsonga are made up of three groups called Vatswa, Vatchangana and Varonga. Tatana Khosa (2001, interview), a lecturer on Tsonga language at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, when asked who the Tsongas were, immediately replied '*A va Tsonga Vatshwa, na Varonga na Vatchangana* (Tswa, Ronga and Shangaan).'

However, there are small subdivisions in each of the three languages as we can see in Junod H A (1912) and Junod H P (1938). In South Africa there is another variation called Xigwamba speaking by the refugees from south east coast (Mozambique) also called *knobneuse* or *Koapas* (Maluleke 1995:30). But in southern Mozambique they are clearly defined as Vatshwa, Varonga and Vatchangana (Shangaan).

### 1.6.3 Geographical location and delimitation of the Tsonga area researched

According to Junod:

The Thonga tribe is composed of a group of Bantu populations settled on the Eastern coast of South Africa, extending from the neighbourhood of St Lucia Bay (28° Lat. S.) on the Natal Coast up to the Sabie<sup>21</sup> River to the North. Thonga are to be found therefore in four of the present South African states: In Natal (Amatongaland), the Transvaal (Leydenbourg, Zoutpansberg and Waterberg districts), in Rhodesia and mostly in Portuguese East Africa (Lourenço Marques, Inhambane and Mozambique Company districts).

(Junod HA 1912:13).

Junod HA explains this geographical distribution of the Tsonga pointing to ancient migrations in which the Baloyi, N'wanati and Tembe came from the north in the Kalanga or Nyai<sup>22</sup> country and people. These three groups include the present Valoyi or Baloyi, the Makwakwa and the Maluleke clans mainly in Gaza and Inhambane; and the Tembe (Matutwini and Maputo) clan who are dwelling south of Limpopo up to Ponta d'Ouro in the boarder with South Africa (Kwa-Zulu Natal) (1912:20-23). He indicates that most of the other clans point to Zululand or Swaziland as their origin and emigrated to the low country of the coast. He names the Mpfumu and Matsolo (sons of Nhlariti); the Nondwane; the Nkuna, Khosa, Hlabi all claim to originate from west and south west Maputo (:23). Junod says that the 'Hlanganu and the Hlengwe seem to have no tradition of this kind' (:23). Among the Hlengwe group, Junod only collected the legend of Chauke and Sono (Hlungwani) about fire and *humba* which he connects to the Ronga Likalahumba (:23-24). Although Junod suggests that "Tshauke" (Chauke) is the first king of the Hlengwe, there are other two kingdoms that boarder with Chauke along Save River. They are the Chitlango (Xitlhangu) and Chichongue (Xixonge) kingdoms. Chitlango kindom (called Mabungele kingdom) boards with Chauke in the southwest, west and northwest; with Mazive in the south; with Chichongue in the east and with Ndaui Maringa kingdom north of Save river.

<sup>21</sup> There were two rivers with this name. There is one from South Africa that joins Nkomati River near Moamba, and the other from Zimbabwe and flows into the Indian Ocean 'not far from the 21° Lat. South' (Junod 1912:13). This one is the one referred here and it has been changed from Sabie to Save River.

<sup>22</sup> In Junod's Mape (Junod 1912:17), Nyai people are located in the present Zimbabwe area whilst the 'Ndjao' (Ndaui) in Mozambique north of Save River.

Chichongue probably goes to the coast and other Tshwa kingdoms. The Chitlango claim Nguni origin in Zululand. They also seem related since Xipalo (Chitlango who conquered the Save region) and Covane (Kovane) who conquered also the Save region for the Chichonge did not fight each other when they met in Zinave. They exchanged Nguni warrior greeting and salutation with their *tlhari* and *xithlangu* (spears and the shield), then they exchanged snuff (*ku dzahisana fole*) of peace and established the boarder<sup>23</sup> between their conquered territories in a *nkany*<sup>24</sup> tree.

But for the present geographical distribution of the Tsonga, Junod indicates that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was a result of Zulu (Nguni) invasion. Manukosi left Shaka and invaded and conquered the Tsonga territory. Many Tsonga clans emigrated into Transvaal between 1835-1840. This emigration was also followed by the one caused by war of succession between Muzila and Mawewe from the death of Manikosi in 1856 which ended in 1862 with Muzila's victory over Mawewe (Junod 1912:26-27; Harries 1983:160,170). These emigration due to wars, were increased by emigration due to economical reasons. In 1852-1853 Natal Naïve Affairs Commission suggested the importation of Tsonga labour to South Africa. By 1858 Tsongas were brought to Pietermaritzburg and in 1875 the Portuguese and the Natal governors celebrated a treaty on migrant labour to South Africa (Harries 1975-1976:61). These economical

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<sup>23</sup> One of the fascinating things about these boarders is the fact that there are no physical boarders, but the people (the royal family and their nduna and other officials) know it very well. One of the marks they use are trees.

<sup>24</sup> While Maluleke is speaking of a *nkanyi* (morula) tree between two fields, this one is between two kingdoms. This tree is still there and if we back, the story could have taken place in the late 1700s to the early 1800s. My father was born between 1910 and 1912 and is fifth child of my grandfather. Since children were separated by at least three years, the first child of my grandfather was born at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century (1897-1899). My grandfather is the last son of his father Xipalo (Chipalo). My grandfather was so young that most of Xipalo's grandchildren were older than him. He was born around the 1850-1860s since they married between 30 and 40 years old. His fathers grandchildren that were older than him could have been born between 1820-1840s and his elder brothers born between 1790-1815. Xipalo could have been born in the 1750-1760. He died soon after having Mangava, my grandfather with his marriage alliance young wife N'wa-Papele that was from the conquered Ndaue people of the Save region, the Ngwenya family. As result of this marriage, he gave back the conquered land of northwest of Save river to the Ngwenya clan of Madika and his son, Mangava also married a Ndaue girls (Mathepswa clan) and gave the remaining northwest Save river territory to the Maringa subclan of Mathepswa. To this day, there is no Mabungele (Chitlango) territory north of Save, it is only Chauke who goes across Save to Manica (Chidoko now called *Posto Administrativo de Save*).

and ecological reasons had many Tsonga people emigrate not only to Natal, but also to Nelspruit, Barberton, Rustenberg, Orange Free State, Pretoria and townships of Johannesburg as well as in south eastern Zimbabwe (Bill 1983:5-6; van Warmelo 1974:70-71).

The area of focus in this study is southern Mozambique. Within the southern Mozambican context, the Varonga (Ronga) are located south of the Limpopo, in Maputo province. The Vashangaana (Shangaans) are in the Limpopo valley and in the interior, north of the Limpopo and south of the Save, in Gaza province; whilst the Vatshwa are located north and west of Maxixe, in Inhambane province. It is important to take note of the geomorphology and precipitation patterns and the climate of the region, in order to relate them to the development of the *ntumbuluko* concept and its application in life. In the southern African landscape, Mozambique is the plain of the region. That plain covers the whole of southern Mozambique, the land of the Tsonga people.

In this area there are intense agriculture and cattle breeding activities. These activities require big families, which leads to polygamy. Also, there is a need for protecting and increasing the productivity of crops and animals against witches and plagues. This made room for some new rites, like “*Murime tobacco*” agriculture-related rituals (Junod H A 1962). The valleys of the Save, Limpopo, Incoluane, Nkomati, Maputo, and other small rivers have periods of severe flooding, as happened in 2000, and also of severe droughts, as in the 1980s. Rain is very irregular in both quantity and distribution in the region (Feliciano 1998:47). This leads to rain-making rituals, rain-stimulating songs or words (e.g. (1) *mu tototo pfula nga yi ne*; (2) *hi hanyile hi mu bave pfula ya wuya tindi, pfula ya wuya tindi*; (3) *wuya dongonda!*). Song number 2 is a praise song indicating that, without rain which produces the wild vegetable (*mubave* or *kaka* or *kakani*), people would die. Besides the climatic background, we have a remarkable history that shaped the cultures and spirituality of the Tsongas.

#### 1.6.4 A history of Tsonga people contact with world religions and ideologies

Islam was the first non-indigenous religion to reach the Tsonga in southern Mozambique, but it had very little impact<sup>25</sup> on *ntumbuluko*, since it confined itself to the coast, and also because of its Arabic cultural transplant. The first direct encounter with Christianity was that between *ntumbuluko* and Portuguese Catholicism in the form of the Tonga Mission of 1560-1562 (Baur 1994:79). The initial phase of this encounter was very friendly and fruitful, producing hundreds of converts within one month. This success led Da Silveira to conclude that those people were: 'like *tabula rasa*, hold no pagan rites and that their souls are easy to teach and impress with whatever doctrine' (Baur 1994:94). With this naïveté, he concluded that the job was finished among the Tongas of Inhambane, and he decided to leave his colleague Fernandes Andre there and to go to Mwenemutapa. However, both the Tonga Mission and Mwenemutapa Mission ended in disaster. When Fernandes Andre was left alone in Inhambane he decided to study the language and the culture of the people and, in so doing, he discovered that the people were deep in their beliefs (*ntumbuluko*) and that he could not penetrate that depth with his concepts of the "soul", "God", "heaven" and "hell" (:79-80). Realizing this, he started to act with anger and became confrontational towards the king, until one day the royal military guards almost killed him and the king banished him to death by starvation. He was rescued back to Goa before his death, but his friend Da Silveira was executed by Mwenemutapa on charges of witchcraft. Some years later another Franciscan, Monclaro, concluded that: '[T]he Bantu could not become Christians...they were too deep in their pagan way of life...' (Baur 1994:82). It was as a result of these experiences and reflections that the Portuguese Catholics adopted conquest and assimilation as their missiological methods in Mozambique. The education system was the prime tool to combat superstition and bring about civilization.

Protestant Christianity reached the Tsongas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)" was the first Protestant mission to establish itself in Mozambique. From their base in Zululand they established Missão Cambine in Inhambane, a mission which now belongs to the United Methodist Church

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<sup>25</sup> Its lasting impact is only the practice of circumcision which is practiced by some Tsonga groups, mainly those on the coast (Junod 1938:44).

in Mozambique (Butselaar 1987:16-17). Unfortunately, ABCFM had a very poor view of Africans. In their 1880 annual report they said: 'The African family is simply a cattle kraal on a slightly elevated scale' (Krass 1980:244). In this regard, both Catholics and Protestants were engaged in a civilizing mission better known as *missão civilizadora* (Henriksen 1978:100,143-44), combating superstition or *ntumbuluko*. In fact, it was under the pretext of civilizing mission that the Portuguese allowed Protestants to come to Catholic Mozambique and to open missions, comprising school, clinic and chapel complexes, a model that was used by the Catholics and Protestants alike. This went as far as prohibitions<sup>26</sup> to converts and the outlawing of some legal, ritual and medical aspects of *ntumbuluko* by the Portuguese Catholic government. There was no forced abandonment of *ntumbuluko* in the way one would see later in the Mozambican revolution. These Christian encounters with *ntumbuluko* were soon followed by two remarkable primal religious movements which had a powerful impact on *ntumbuluko*.

The first of these movements was the *Murimi* movement (Junod 1962) which added to *ntumbuluko* new agricultural and anti-witch rituals, giving it an added value in life's activities. It made tobacco a sacred herb and the taking of snuff a religious act, as tobacco became an element of worship and *ku tchela fole* (to pour tobacco) synonymous with prayer, worship and libation. But the movement that had a lasting impact on *ntumbuluko* was *Mutchapi*. Prior to *Mutchapi*, there was no spirit-conversation<sup>27</sup> through the mediation of a medium. Diviners sniffed and sneezed<sup>28</sup> *vure* spirits without talking. It was in the teaching or doctrine of *Mutchapi* that the concept of life after death adopted the new notion of *kupfuka* (resurrection, rising up against, rising for vengeance). This notion indicated that, with *mutchapi* medicine, no

<sup>26</sup> See Silva & Laforte (1998) on Christian prohibition of the traditional rituals among the Tsongas in their study of the rites of passage in southern Mozambique.

<sup>27</sup> However, the phenomenon of alien spirits Ndiki, speaking Ndaui, and Ndlozi speaking Nguni or Zulu afflicting people, most of the times, as a calling to these people to be diviners was already present when Junod did his study of the Tsonga people (1913:439-45).

<sup>28</sup> My father, who lived some time before *Mutchapi*, says that before *Mutchapi* in our *ntumbuluko* people did not have a direct communication with the dead through mediums. He indicates that the known spirits were called *vure* and that the diviners sniffed and sneezed them out of their victims. Sniffing and sneezing is described by Kiernan (1995:15-27,72-83) as the Khoi and San methods of dealing with spirits by the diviners before the settlers came to southern Africa. The notion of *kupfuka* (resurrection, or rising up against or in vengeance) which gave rise to the notion of talking with the risen spirits through the mediums, is based on *Mutchapi* notions and teaching.

one dies. After death the person continues to live and to control his family affairs (wife, children and goods), and that person can rise up as a vengeful spirit to strike the person's and the family's enemies, including witches. The spirits of the dead could now be contacted and talked to through a medium. Although *Mutchapi* is a witch-hunting and witchcraft eradication movement (Richards 1935; Willis 1968; Palian 1971; Ranger 1972; Stuart 1972; Mtenje 1976/77; Chakanza 1985; & Helgesson 1994), its notion of the power of *kupfuka* (Langa 1992:29-30,32) and its transmission through an initial *mutchapi* ritual and thereafter through blood transmission, the change of the function of diviners and new methods for mediums with the possibility and ability to connect the dead with the living, led to many new *ntumbuluko* rituals (such as bringing the dead home), with a lasting impact on *ntumbuluko* and Tsonga society. This strengthened *ntumbuluko*. Now the elders, both living and dead, could work together to preserve and enforce *ntumbuluko* in all spheres of Tsonga life. This helped *ntumbuluko* to counteract Catholic, Protestant and colonial attacks, Christians were even threatened with death if they did not take part in *mutchapi* rituals (Helgesson 1994:243). But, towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *ntumbuluko* was to suffer the most aggressive attack from the Marxist revolution.

When Mozambique became independent in 1975 it embraced Marxist philosophy, also known as Communism; adhering to Scientific Socialism. Scientific Socialism views religion as superstition and as a dangerous opiate to the people. It is also seen as a stumbling-block to the revolution and even a counter-revolutionary ideology which serves the dominant class interests of Capitalism and Imperialism. On account of these views, religion came under stress, with a considerable degree of persecution. While that was the general picture of the relationship between the Mozambican revolution and Christianity and Islam, Marxism was at war with *ntumbuluko*. The government organized national campaigns of witch-finding and eradication in the

same style as prophesied<sup>29</sup> by the *Mutchapi* movement and in the Tanzanian fashion (Larson 191976:90-96). In the area in Tanzania where the liberation movement of Mozambique stayed there was a subsequent *Mutchapi* movement during their stay and, to a point that movement had links with Julius Nyerere and his movement (Larson 1976:88,95-96). Using the same style, they collected and burned all charms and artefacts of diviners and mediums. Diviners and witches were commanded to confess and to explain the function of each object and their magic or witch activities in public. Divination, incantation and consultation with spirits were prohibited. No one could be a diviner or medium. Libation and sacrifices were prohibited. Kingship and all traditional government systems were criminalized and abolished, and *tipangu*<sup>30</sup> were destroyed and stopped. The kings and chiefs were replaced with political local leadership and militia replaced the traditional police. So there were no rain-making rituals or any form of public ceremony or libation. The diviners who replaced their confiscated bones and other objects were arrested. Anyone with the royal surname could not be elected to the new governing system. When he heard the new political order being read at a political rally, the supreme king of the Mabungele kingdom could not accept that he was no longer king. He said that it was impossible and was punished in public for that statement. On his way home, he had a stroke and died. It was too much for him.

A few years after independence, the country faced the most severe of natural calamities. There were successive droughts resulting in severe and prolonged famine for more than a decade, which intensified in the 1980s. As if natural calamities with

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<sup>29</sup> According to Richards (1935:449), *Mucape* (*Mutchapi*): 'was nothing less than the complete removal of witchcraft from the territory. A man who had drunk the *Mucape* medicine, and returned to his evil practices, was liable to instant death – a grisly death in which he was to swell to enormous proportions, his limbs crinkled with dropsy, and his body too heavy to be carried to the grave. Nor could a cunning sorcerer escape by refusing to pass in front of the magic mirror. He would merely be caught at a kind of second coming of the founder of the movement, who was to return beating a mysterious drum outside each village at night. At its sound all witches and wizards as yet undetected would be compelled to follow to the graveyard where their crimes would be finally unmasked. Some told of the coming of a mythical woman with one breast in front and one behind, the good she would snekle (sic) in front, while the wicked would find themselves following willy-nilly behind'.

<sup>30</sup> *Tipangu* is plural of *Lipangu*. It is a place of public religious activity in Tsonga culture. One *Lipangu* exists in each community where there is a king or chief, and is the place where sacrifices and prayers, libations, presentation of seed, first fruits gifts and harvest presentation are done for the community.

many plagues were not enough (one of my cousins lost six children in two days), civil war whipped the country brutally. For all these, the people blamed the government's assault on *ntumbuluko*. Interestingly enough, even Christians said that. As part of their preparation for peace talks, in 1990 the government changed the Constitution and abandoned Marxism, giving freedom of religion. With this change, the government restored traditional leadership. Through its Ministry of Culture it urged traditional leaders to restore *tipangu* and to offer sacrifices and prayers for their community and the nation for rain, productivity and prosperity. Nowadays, project inauguration ceremonies are combined with libation and it is common to see the President pouring libation in a community. Mediums and diviners now work under a government umbrella in the *Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais de Moçambique*, which is now represented in all communities. *Tipangu* and diviners are now sponsored and protected by the government. This change was followed by good rains from 1992 to 2001 which climaxed in the floods of 2000. People feel vindicated in what they were saying about the causes of the droughts of the 1980s. The President is reported to have said that it rained in 2000 because people went to their *tipangu* and offered libation and sacrifices for rain-making, called *ku phahla pfula*. However, in the year 2002 there was a severe drought in the whole of the Tsonga area in Mozambique, and it will be interesting to hear what people's understanding and interpretation of that will be.

It is against this background that I decided to divide my informants into five categories. The traditional category includes those with *Mutchapi*-influenced notions of *ntumbuluko*; the modernist category includes members of academia or intellectuals, whose education has exposed them to enlightenment and Marxist philosophy; the artist category deals with those expressing their notions of *ntumbuluko* poetically and lyrically (songs) which represents both traditionalist and modernist influences; the Christian practitioners' category includes those with a distinct Christian influence on their notions of *ntumbuluko*; and finally the Bible translators' category is comprised of those directly and indirectly involved in the translation of the 1989 Tsonga Bible and those working in translation of other southern languages in the United Bible Society of Mozambique.

**PART TWO:****DESCRIPTION**

We try hard to find ways to express our thoughts in our own languages. And it is Jesus himself who puts us into this problem by becoming human, taking on our nature and communicating with us. We used *ntumbuluko* [as nature] to demonstrate that it is in human nature that Jesus wants to communicate.

(Nhagumbe 2003, interview)

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2 *NTUMBULUKO*: Towards a Definition

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed description and analysis of the data collected on the concept *ntumbuluko* from different categories or segments of the Tsonga society. Tsonga society is grouped into five categories in this study, as indicated below. Researching *ntumbuluko* by means of these categories of Tsonga society afford the study a variety of Tsonga perceptions and descriptions of the concept, which would be impossible if one was to work with only one category or segment of Tsonga society. Thus, the understanding of *ntumbuluko* that emerges is more comprehensive in the sense that it takes into account diverse and complex situations and contexts of Tsonga society.

As we aim to find a comprehensive picture of what *ntumbuluko* is we need to uncover different perceptions and understandings of the concept, with varying degrees of insights. With this in mind, the research targeted:

- 1) the traditionalist to find the traditional perception of *ntumbuluko*;
- 2) the academics or modernists to find the educated perception which blends modern sciences, ideologies like Marxist philosophy and democracy;
- 3) artists who sing about the theme of *ntumbuluko* to express their feelings, thus revealing their understanding of it;
- 4) the Christian practitioners, principally those with an evangelical bias in their perception of *ntumbuluko*; and
- 5) Bible translators with linguistic, theological and conceptual awareness;

Interviews with societal categories one to four were tape-recorded and transcribed. Each category makes a distinctive contribution to the understanding of *ntumbuluko*.

After the description, using the interviews and songs, the chapter analytically presents and assesses the importance or place of *ntumbuluko* in everyday life, based on the information from the data. The chapter finally gives an appraisal of the impact of *ntumbuluko* on Tsonga consciousness in general and in particular on Tsonga

apprehension of the Christian faith, as reflected in some aspects of their Christian daily living, ethos and doctrine. This brings us back to the basic question in this thesis - the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel.

## **2.2 *Ntumbuluko* – the traditionalist perspective**

The traditionalist category comprises people without complaint against *ntumbuluko*. These people are mostly in rural areas. They are also found among the aged people in urban centres. For this category of society, *ntumbuluko* is still their life and their way and means of understanding and interpreting the world around them. I have four informants in this category and will give a profile of each and present some of what each person said in describing *ntumbuluko*. In giving the profile of each informant, the first name will be the personal name and the last the family name of the informant. The complete transcriptions of all the interviews used in this thesis are given in the Appendix.

### **2.2.1 Profile of Mr. Chilombani Josayi Ndzukule and his description of *ntumbuluko***

'Chilombani' is this man's *vito la xikwembu* (name of god), his youth name being 'Jonas'. He has been a migrant worker in South Africa since he was young, and at the time of the interview was in his early 60s. Mr. Chilombani Ndzukule is known in South Africa as Souly Nkuna, because illegal Mozambican migrants change their names and acquire South African identity documents, however, he preferred to be recorded as Chilombani. He is the first-born of his parents, was born in Phandzila and, at the time of interview, was residing at Chivulamasava, Gundani. He has since moved to Massangena, but still on the Save<sup>31</sup> River bank. He is the one who makes sure his family and clan follows *ntumbuluko* and is the one who pours libation on their behalf. In the past he was a Zionist, and then he joined the Baptists, and now he has abandoned both and returned to his traditional religion. When he comes to South Africa he joins the Modise AIC church (International Pentecostal Church [IPC]), but

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<sup>31</sup> Henriksen (1978:250), speaking about the Tsongas living along the Save says: 'Inhabiting the region along the Save are the Hlengwe, who have experienced little outside influence and have retained many ancient practices'.

in Mozambique he conducts *ntumbuluko* rituals for his family. He has no formal education but reads in the vernacular.

My first question to him was “What is *ntumbuluko*?”. His answer was:

Aka hloko ya kona ya mhaka ya ku a ntumbuluko ixini, a ka side ya mina, loko nivile kolaha misaveni, ... a ntumbuluko hi xona a xilo xinga xi nkulu ka swilo hikwaswo hansi ka misava, a ka munhu; mani na mani, na mani. Hita hi laha loko nitaku a ntumbuluko ixilo xa xinkulu laha misaveni. Nito loko ni sungula ku tlhariha mina ku sukela hi 1951, ku ta fika namutlha leswi yinga 2001, ni swi vona kahle aku lava vanga landzela ntumbuluko va na wu tomi. Hiku ntumbuluko wu rwele swa yila, wu rwele kufa, wu rwele ku hanya a ntumbuluko. Wu rwele a muti wa mina lowu ni hanyaka na wona [nsati wa le Joni], kumbe mamani loyi ninga teka (nsati wa tiyiso), kumbe n'wana wa mina intumbuluko. A ntumbuluko ilithangu leli li biyaka muti. Loko n'wananga o huma a naweni wa ntumbuluko, a xikona anga ta xi endla, a nsati wa mina loko a huma naweni wa ntumbuluko axikona anga ta xi endla, kumbe hi mina nuna wa kona ni tsika leswi venge te, Xidindi, leswi se unga wa hombe, hanya hi ntumbuluko, u tchava swa yila; itlhata ya kona ya ntumbuluko leyo. Swa yila a suka ka ntumbuluko.

Ntumbuluko wa fana na xidyoho xa mavelekelo, hi tivaka leswaku loku u kula u fanele ku teka. Xidyoho lexo anina nandzu ka xona loko ni teka a nsati wa kona. Kambe loko ni gangisa a nhanyana nje ni etlela na yena mu vona hi nyimba a ni onhi? Ni humile a naweni wa ntumbuluko. Ni tsikile ntumbuluko, a ni tchavanga swa yila, ni dilizile a muthangala wa wu tomi la mina hikwalo, wa *family* ya mina ya ka Ndzukule. A va nga ta rivala na vana va mina aku vaku, kokwani wa wena waha tsamile a endla swo kari. Hiku swa yini, swa ntumbuluko...unga fa, a swi heli a ka nyimba leyi ya n'wina. Ntumbuluko inawu lowu wu kulaka hi wona laha kaya. U nga dyi lexi xa yila...ani va vutisi *why* hinga tsiveli a tsondzo laha kaya? Hiku, i ntumbuluko waka Ndzukule, kumbe wa tiko legi ninga aka ka lona.

Leswi aswi lavi hi swi sola, hiku swi tira aka ka Xitlhangu, *no*, hi ku ni yakile laha tikweni laka Xitlhangu; kula kuza ni endla leswi. Va swi kuma kwihhi? I ntumbuluko wa Xipalo, hikusa, a muti wakwe lowu, akuza u nga hlakalangi, ku ni ntumbuluko lowu anga hanya hi wona. Lowu anga wu nyikiwa tolo va n'wani va wu papalatile, se Xikwembu xi va khatisa.

Loko a wu ngahi ntumbuluko, hi 1957 inge ni xurisile a va nhanyana hambu va nharu, va nga ta a mabangeni. Se kambe mamani a vulile aku hinga xurisi nyimba na hinga lovolangi (bava a ari xibalweni) – aku, lowu i ntumbuluko wa hina vaka Ndzukule, loko wo ala sweswo, uta fa! [Uta fa] wa hi xitsananani. Hiku landza a ntumbuluko, a vaku u ta psawa wena mufana ndziwena, u nga huhi na va nhanyana. Hi ntumbuluko ku laveka u hi na 21 *year*, u thomba; loko se u thombile, u sungula a pfuka waka 25 *years*, hi kona vaku vonaka aku a mufana luyani a kulile. Loko a nhanyana a veleka a hi na 15 *years* anga na ndlela ya ku huma n'wana.

(Ndzukule 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

The crux of the matter, from my point of view, on what *ntumbuluko* is, and my experience since I existed in the world, is that...*ntumbuluko* is the greatest thing, above everything on earth for humans, to everyone who ever exists. This is what I mean when I say that *ntumbuluko* is the greatest thing on earth. When I started to be wise [growing] from 1951 to this day 2001, I see clearly that those who followed

*ntumbuluko* have life; because *ntumbuluko* has *swa yila* (prohibitory laws), *ntumbuluko* carries death and carries life. *Ntumbuluko* upholds my family that lives with me, the woman I married and my child's family. *Ntumbuluko* is a fence around a home. If my child [son] gets out (sic) of *ntumbuluko* law, there is nothing he will do; if my wife gets out of *ntumbuluko* law, she will do nothing, or if it is me the husband who abandons what they said: 'Xidindi [his nickname], now that you are an adult, live by *ntumbuluko*, be fearful of *swa yila*'; this is the young brother of *ntumbuluko*, *swa yila* comes from *ntumbuluko*.

*Ntumbuluko* is like birth sin (sic) (i.e. original sin), we know that if one grows one must marry. That sin I am not guilty<sup>32</sup> of if I have married a wife. But if I propose to a girl and I sleep with and impregnate her am I not sinning? I have gone out of *ntumbuluko* law. I have abandoned *ntumbuluko*, I did not fear *swa yila*, I demolished the wall/fence of all my life, of all my family and Ndzukule clan. My children will not forget relating the story to my grandchildren. Why? Because *ntumbuluko* has been broken, even after one's death the clan will bear the disgrace. *Ntumbuluko* is the law that one is instructed in as one grows in each household. 'Do not eat this *xa yila*...' I do not ask them why we should not use *tsondzo* tree (firewood) in our home because this is the Ndzukule family *ntumbuluko*, or *ntumbuluko* of the land in which I settled.

We must not play these things down, saying: 'this is only relevant to the Chitlangos'. No; I have settled in the Chitlangoland and I must do all that. Where does this come from? It is the *ntumbuluko* of Xipalo. For his family or clan not to be worn out (to become extinct), there is an *ntumbuluko* that he abided by and lived by. This *ntumbuluko* was given to him yesterday [immemorial past or the beginning of time], *ntumbuluko* which others have wasted away or wandered away from, and God punished them.

If it were not for *ntumbuluko*, in 1957 I could even have made pregnant three girls who used to come to the palm wine camps. But mother said we should not make anyone pregnant before paying *lovolo* (father was in *xibalweni* [colonial forced labour]). She said that was the Ndzukule clan *ntumbuluko* and that if I refuse to listen, I will die prematurely [the informant was very emphatic on this]. According to *ntumbuluko* they said, 'you will burn'<sup>33</sup>, young man, do not have fun with girls'. According to *ntumbuluko* one must be 21 years old to mature. After maturing, around 25 years old, that is when they consider a boy to be grown...

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<sup>32</sup> My informant considers sex as a sin, but a sin that is the duty of humans. No one is to be excused from it. If one marries properly one is not guilty of that sin of sex. From this belief he then equates *ntumbuluko* to the sin of sex to imply that whenever one does something for or of *ntu* or in obedience to it, though the act might appear sinful, he/she is not committing a sin. He is just fulfilling the human duty (which is natural or divinely created and ordained as sex and marriage). Sin is to be re-defined as what contradicts *ntumbuluko* and if the Bible disagrees that becomes the departure for the Tsongas for they never think they sin when obeying *ntu* and never feel guilty and ashamed of whatever they do in obedience to *ntumbuluko*.

<sup>33</sup> Ndzukule believes that *ku pswa* or *ku gomiwa*, which I translated as "burning", is what, according to him, Whites call HIV/AIDS because of ignorance. He stated categorically that diviners can cure AIDS. He then said that Nkosi Johnson could have been cured in three weeks if the Whites had not refused the request of the Zulus and Shangaans for them to be given the boy for treatment for three weeks.

When I asked him what constitutes *ntumbuluko*, this is what he said:

A ntumbuluko u akiwa hi nawu lowu u nga vekwa le ka vanhu. Loko Xikwembu xi endlile a munhu, xi mu nyikile a muganga, [n]a ma tsamele ya kwe, ku nga ku mu nyika a mungana wo tsama naye; kwala ka mungana yaloyi, se xi mu vekela nawu lowu a faneleke ku hanya hi wona. Laha ka nawu lowu, hi kona ku nga na gula la kona, la ku, loyi a to phazama a ntumbuluko lowu ni nga ku nyika ni ku tsama u endlisa leswi, u endla leswi; kambi leswi u nga swi tchitchi, loko wo tchitcha leswi u onhile. Lelo irito linga vula leswo; hi yena matchingelani wa kona a gadileke ntumbuluko. A ku na munhu a ku gadileke. Vaku nyika rito u tsama na lona wena, uli hlayisa wena....

A ntumbuluko imbita ya kona. A nawu wa wu tomi la munhu hi kwalo wunga yaka kona; a ntumbuluko ifawundexeni, ifawundexeni ya yindlu. A nawu wu n'wani ni wu n'wani wuta a hehla ka fawundexeni leyi. A xitina xin'wani ni xin'wani xi vekwa a hehla ka fawundexeni leyi. Hi xona a ribye la kona la ku tiya hikuva, xona xi khomile xi hi xoxe. A mutini wa n'wina xi khomile, a mutini wa mina xi khomile, a mutini wa mun'wani xi khomile. Se hikona ku to huma mu nawu hikwayo leyi na yi huma laha ka fawundexeni leyi – yinga ntumbuluko.

(Ndzukule 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

*Ntumbuluko* is built by the law given to people. When God made humans, he gave the human a friend, with her moods and ways of living; this was a friend to stay with. With this friend, God gave the man the law<sup>34</sup> to live by. In this law, it is where the calabash is: 'the one who will make a mistake against *ntumbuluko* that I gave to you, saying always do this and that this way and that this must never be changed. If you change this you have done wrong/sinned.' The word which said that is the police<sup>35</sup> that guard the observance of *ntumbuluko*. There is no one who will police you, they give you the word and the word stays with you and you keep the word...

...*Ntumbuluko* is the pot. It is the law in which the whole of human life exists. *Ntumbuluko* is the foundation. It is like the foundation of a house or building. Any, each and every law is based on this foundation. As in building, each brick is laid on this foundation. *Ntumbuluko* is the firm rock or cornerstone because it holds everything together. Can you lay bricks without a foundation? When the rain comes the building will fall down. In your home *ntumbuluko* is upholding, in my home it is upholding; *ntumbuluko* upholds all homes or families. Then, all the laws proceed from this foundation. This foundation is *ntumbuluko*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ntumbuluko* is the law given to humans. This law is given because of the impurity of the woman so it regulates man's relationship with her in a protective manner for the man to remain pure, healthy and enjoy longevity.

<sup>35</sup> This is the very key to *ntumbuluko*. No one will police you, only the word they gave to you. But if you think no one sees and violates *ntumbuluko*, it catches you. The punishment is immediate and that is why they respect it more than anything else.

When I asked him about what is done at a funeral according to *ntumbuluko*, he started by indicating that each area has its variation of *ntumbuluko*. But he said that no one is buried before *ntumbuluko* of that area or territory has been followed. He then said that, by following *ntumbuluko*, the ancients caused rain to fall (he was very emphatic and repetitive about this). He argued that those who followed *ntumbuluko* carefully could make rain.

I also asked Ndzukule on many aspects of *ntumbuluko* in different life events and life activities. His descriptions of various applications of *ntumbuluko* in life will be reflected on later.

Ndzukule said that *ntumbuluko* is the biggest of all things on earth to every individual person. He also said that his experience from 1951, when he turned adult enough to observe, leads him to conclude that those who follow *ntumbuluko* have life. Because *ntumbuluko* carries *swa yila*; *ntumbuluko* carries death; *ntumbuluko* carries life (Ndzukule 2001, interview). To emphasize his point, he then said that if anyone abandons *ntumbuluko*, laws could do nothing. An adult must live by *ntumbuluko* and observe *swiyila*, which is next in importance after *ntumbuluko*.

To summarise Ndzukule's perception of *ntumbuluko*, it is perceived as the pot, foundation, and the rock or cornerstone. The function of *ntumbuluko* is to give and preserve life; upholding everything (especially families) and it makes possible human survival, continuity and progress.

The idea of foundation and cornerstone or rock seems to come from my informant's modern constructions as well as the influence of biblical imagery rather than Tsonga tradition itself. But the idea of *mbita*<sup>36</sup> (pot) is genuinely Tsonga. It is from the pot that we cook our food. From the pot, food comes forth and nourishes a family. We can consider *mbita* to be a symbol of life. To say that *ntumbuluko* is *mbita* is to say that *ntumbuluko* is life. Ndzukule said that those who obey *ntumbuluko* have life.

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<sup>36</sup> *Mbita* – *Mbita* metaphor can lead us to other dimensions that will be more important later on. This dimension is what I call the mystery of *mbita yo funengetiwa* (the covered pot) or simply that *mbita ayi vonekeli* (pot is not transparent). This mystery misled Westerners like Da Silveira to conclude that Africans were *tabula rasa* (Bau 1994).

Later on, we will come back to this idea of *ntumbuluko* as life, life-giver and life-protector. Two of my informants make this point clear.

Ndzukule also sees *ntumbuluko* as originating for the purpose of protecting people from the deadly effects of women's impurity. The majority of dangerous diseases like leprosy, hernia, tuberculosis, vomiting blood which is followed by immediate death and others, are blamed on women's improper handling of their impurity<sup>37</sup> according to *ntumbuluko*. Most diseases and deaths of infants and men are blamed on women. Women are looked on as chambers of death or killers; the strict observation of *ntumbuluko* is the only way to live with a woman and survive.

### 2.2.2 The profile of Mrs. Makhawukani Bosopa Mathepswa and her account of *ntumbuluko*

Mrs. Mathepswa is an illiterate, old, blind widow in her late 70s. She was born and raised under *ntumbuluko*. However, in the 1980s she sometimes joined her sons in some AIC churches. She was born in the Save region, but moved to Maputo in the 1980s due to the civil war. I must indicate that Mathepswa is her surname (in Tsonga married women retain their family names), her maiden surname is Chauke, and she belongs to the Mabaso clan.

When I asked her what *ntumbuluko* is, she said that she does not know *ntumbuluko* very well. I asked the second question about anything she knows that was done in *ntumbuluko*. She said that she was in between the ancient days and now, and that she was not so old and that she would give me something of the middle for she does not know ancient *ntumbuluko*. Then I realized that when I addressed her in my first question I used the term *va khale* (elderly/ancient person) and I again used the term in my second question meaning ancient *ntumbuluko*. From my third question onward, I

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<sup>37</sup> My research showed that others share this view on women that Ndzukule presents here. It is a degrading picture. One can see how this contributes to the fact that most witchcraft suspicions and accusations are directed at women. If a suspicious death takes place, a woman is likely to be the prime suspect. This can also lead to unhealthy relationships in the family context, with verbal abuse, in reference to the believed evil nature of women and their perceived poisonous periods.

decided to change my questions from “what” to “how” and “why” *ntumbuluko* is administered in various life events and life activities. She then started to speak and explain everything about *ntumbuluko*.

Mrs. Mathepswa started by explaining to me the concept of *ku kula* (puberty) and each step that is followed in the instruction and counselling as well as supernatural protection for the girl. She then explained, giving the reasons and rationale of each and every ritual in *ntumbuluko* up to *ku tchinelwiwa mbutsa* and *chikhulu* (beads) and *chimbitana* (small pot) *ntumbuluko* law symbols. After puberty rituals, she explained the *ntumbuluko* wedding called *xirotha*, the pregnancy rituals, birth rituals and death (when I interviewed her, her grandson had just died and they were still under a sex ban and she use this as an example in her explanations), funeral and widowhood rituals. However, she did not know much of widowhood rituals because her husband died when she was living in Maputo and he in Manica (over 1000 km away)<sup>38</sup>.

Although I tried, unsuccessfully, to get her to define *ntumbuluko* in my first questions, if one analyzes the full transcript of her colourful descriptions of *ntumbuluko* in life events and life activities, one comes to the conclusion that, for her, *ntumbuluko* is life. It is a way of seeing things, a way of understanding them and facing the reality of life. The next informant is also an old woman who has lived all her life under *ntumbuluko*.

### 2.2.3 The profile of Mrs. Kalamano Veyane Thombeni and her account of *ntumbuluko*

Mrs. Kalamano Veyane Thombeni is married in the Sithole family. She is in her mid-80s and has been a widow for many decades. Two of her four sons have also died and her daughter-in-law was in the midst of the widowhood rituals and was waiting for the cutting of reeds ritual, which is also called *ku tchingiwa ndzaka*, involving a cleansing bath followed by cleansing ritual sexual intercourse. She was born in Chitlateni, Save

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<sup>38</sup> According to *ntumbuluko*, if a woman has sexual intercourse after her menopause, her belly will swell and she will die. So, all women abandon the beds or bedrooms of their husbands when they reach menopause age and sleep with the grandchildren. Their husbands stay with their younger wives, if polygamous, or go to extramarital sex in the case of monogamous couples. At such an age, the woman can go and live with her children if they live far from the parents. The separation is not divorce, nor a serious one. It is this kind of separation that Mrs. Mathepswa had with Mr. Muthembi Chauke.

valley, Inhambane and now lives in Maputo. She does not attend any church, although her sons are Zionists.

From my pre-interview conversation with her I realized that she would have problems defining *ntumbuluko*, so I started by asking her about *ntumbuluko* rituals. I also asked her why each ritual was done. She started by complaining that her memory was not good, but when I asked her questions related to the administration of *ntumbuluko* in life, she started to explain.

She started explaining the puberty rituals and all the *ntumbuluko* laws that a woman must keep or observe after puberty. She also explained about the practice of hiding a girl who reaches her puberty too young. In the same way as Ndzukule and Mathepswa, she explained about the *xirotha*, pregnancy and sex ban when a baby is born. She was the only one who gave me the complete explanation of the widowhood ritual and some *ntumbuluko* diseases and deaths. She used a concrete story of a family that all died, one after another, as a result of "jumping" each other. "Jumping" is a term which means brothers sleeping with the same woman, an act believed to cause ritual-related death.

Once again, the informant was not explicitly saying what *ntumbuluko* is, but her description, her synonyms for *ntumbuluko* were *nawu* (the law) and *swa yila*. However, it comes to the same conclusion as that explained by Ndzukule, that this law or *ntumbuluko* must be observed or obeyed; if not obeyed, death follows. The obedience to *ntumbuluko* is life and disobedience is death, *ntumbuluko* has death and life in its *swiyila* and one chooses what one wants. But more importantly in her description *ntumbuluko* is life-giving and life-saving.

#### **2.2.4 The profile of Mr. Johane Juvanise Mazive and his account of *ntumbuluko***

Mr. Johane Mazive is in his early 40s and is also a migrant worker in South Africa from Malindile, on the banks of the Save River. He and Ndzukule are both polygamous. In the 1990s he had joined the ZCC and the 12 Apostles church but had now left both. He is also illiterate.

Mr. Mazive also had a problem defining *ntumbuluko*, so I asked him how it was observed and administered in everyday life, and in death or burial thereafter. Among other things, he explained to me about *ntumbuluko* laws for women during their menstrual periods, and the notion of hotness (Comaroff 1991 speaks of related laws). The notion asserts that if one has had sexual intercourse in the past 24 hours one is ritually hot and dangerous. He/she must not visit a sick person; the patient will become worse and die. This is interesting to note because in the 1980s, Pastor Aniva Chitlango, then Provincial Superintendent of Igreja Uniao Baptista de Moçambique in Inhambane, sent a pastoral letter or circular from his home in Mabote to the Malindile/Gundani local Baptist church giving the command that hot people must not be allowed to go on church visitation to sick people.

On the administration of *ntumbuluko* in death and funerals Mr. Mazive explained that, according to *ntumbuluko*, when death occurs the elders of the land are called; these elders must be the servants or consuls of the king. They will inspect the dead to determine the cause of death, the nature of death, the condition of the person and to determine the appropriate burial and to report back to the king on their findings.

**Discussion of findings:-**Neither Mazive, Thombeni nor Mathepswa gave a definition *per se*, but gave accounts of how *ntumbuluko* is experienced in the daily life and life events, life activities, including the whole of the life cycle. In their accounts, one finds the recurring theme of *ntumbuluko* as life-giver, life-preserver. To obey *ntumbuluko* is to choose life in a life and death situation. They used predominantly *ntumbuluko*'s synonyms "nawu" (law) and *swi yila* (prohibitory laws and taboos). Ndzukule gives us a wealth of metaphors in his definitions and description of *ntumbuluko*.

In summary, I will outline what my informants in this category thought explains *ntumbuluko*. According to traditionalist informants, *ntumbuluko* means:

- 1) *lithangu* (fence, wall)
- 2) *nawu* (the law)
- 3) *rito* (the word)
- 4) *matchingelani* (guard or police)

- 5) *mbita* (pot)
- 6) *fawundexeni ya yindlu* (the foundation of a building)
- 7) *ribye lo tiya* (cornerstone) and
- 8) life-giver and life-preserver.

*Ntumbuluko* is a fence in relation to a homestead or family life and an existence protection; it is the law that regulates human life from its beginning to the end; it is an eternal, intelligent and powerful word which, once it is said, passes into and lives within the person. This word becomes the police or guard who monitors ones' life, conduct and behaviour, rewarding faithfulness with life and health and punishing disobedience with illness and death. *Ntumbuluko* is the pot in which the law of all human life dwells; it is the foundation and cornerstone of a building, it is upon this foundation that each stone is laid and the cornerstone that holds everything together in human life, existence and family.

Besides these metaphors, Ndzukule also described *ntumbuluko* as the greatest thing on earth. He said that those who follow *ntumbuluko* gain life, for *ntumbuluko* upholds *swiyila*, death and life. He also indicated the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and *swiyila*, saying that it is the second most important thing after *ntumbuluko* and that *swiyila* proceeds out of *ntumbuluko*.

### **2.3 *Ntumbuluko* – the academic perspective**

This is a category that represents the intellectual and modernist approach of people in the academia among the Tsongas. Initially I targeted only the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. But, in the field, I found that the *Departamento de Línguas Modernas* (Modern Languages Department) had only two Tsonga Language lecturers. One was very cooperative and I could secure an interview with him. The other seemed cooperative initially but, when I was about to secure an interview with him, he became uncooperative. He wanted me to have authorization from the Faculty. I tried to contact him several times, without success. So, I expanded beyond the university to include the Media professionals in the category, especially those involved in the production of Tsonga cultural programmes.

This category comprises those people with a modern educational and scientific background. They represent people who do not depend on *ntumbuluko* for everyday life; they have modern medical services which distance them from *ntumbuluko*. They do not depend on rain and crops but on cash. On top of this, they have a different way of seeing and understanding reality, which depends on science and modern philosophies without reference to *ntumbuluko*. Nevertheless, I conducted my interviews in Tsonga with this category also.

### **2.3.1 The profile of Mr. Félix Khosa and his definition and description of *ntumbuluko***

In the University Mr. Khosa is formally addressed as Tatana Khosa. The Tsonga term *tatana* means 'father', but it is used as a title of respect in the same way as "Sir" is used in English. Tatana Khosa is a lecturer of the Tsonga language in the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) in Maputo, Mozambique. UEM is the oldest institution of higher learning in the country.

Tatana Khosa was born in Ka Pfumu (Maputo). He is 69 years old. Before joining the University staff he worked as a pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique, but he was seconded as a United Methodist pastor. Since his service in the Swiss mission or Presbyterian Church in the 1960s, he has remained with the Presbyterian Church. The University respects him more as pastor than as lecturer. Some of Tatana Khosa's degree studies were done in Portugal. I first met Tatana Khosa in the Scripture Union Mozambique meetings in the early 1990s when he was already an established Tsonga language lecturer at the University.

I asked Khosa to define the term or concept *ntumbuluko* for me. He defined *ntumbuluko* with the following words:

A ntumbuluko iswilo leswi hikwaswo hi swi endlaka swi khumbaka ngopfu a wutomi la hina la mapswaliwa. Hinga vula leswaku ntumbuluko intamu lowu hinga wu voniki, lowu wu swi kotaka a ku hundzulusa a wu tomi la hina; wa swi kota a ku li onha; wa swi kota a ku li lulamisa. Hikwaswo leswo swi endleka hi loko hi kholwa ka swona. Kambe a ntamu lowu wuta hile ka va kokwani va hina. Wu hi tela loko hi kholwa ka vona, hi hleketa leswaku loko hi endla leswi, kumbe ni phahla, kokwani uta ni pfuna. Loko ni tsika ninga mutsundzuki, a wotomi lamina lita hela. A xikombiso xa matimba lawa imimoya ya vafi. A ntumbuluko wa hina imimoya ya vakokwani.

(Khosa 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

*Ntumbuluko* is everything we do that deeply touches our birth life (natural or traditional life). We can say that *ntumbuluko* is a power that we do not see (an invisible power), power that is capable of changing/turning or converting our lives. This power can spoil or break our lives down; it can straighten or fix up our lives. All this happens if we believe in this power. This power comes from our grandparents. It comes to us if we believe in them, thinking that if I do this or if I pour libation and pray to my grandparents, they will help me. But if I do not remember them, my life will end. The signal or symbol of this power is the spirits of the dead. Our *ntumbuluko* are the spirits of the grandparents.

In his definition, Khosa said that *ntumbuluko* is an invisible power that can harm or help. I asked him to explain in which ways *ntumbuluko* is a harmful or a helpful invisible power. Before I finished my question he quickly answered saying: 'It can be harmful if one jokes with it, if one messes with it' (Khosa 2001, interview). When I finished my question he then gave an expanded answer saying:

Nita sungula hiteswi manga onhaka. A matimba lawa ya ntumbuluko ma onha loko wena unga va tsundzuki lava vanga hi siya. Ku laveka leswaku karhi ni karhi uva tsundzuka wena. U phahla. Hi laha ma onhaka kona laho. Se loko unga mahi leswo vataku anga vatsundzuki a vafi, se vanhu vataku, 'wa vabya, wa xaniseka, hambu a lava a ntiro a nga wu kumi na kuve van'wana vawu kuma' aswilo hi kwaswo swinga mufambeli kwatsi. Kasi loko vaku vona uva tsundzuka, hi ku phahla, kumbe hiku va nyika a xifihlulu, a wu mahele a xifihlulu ka vona, wo maha wu vitana a maxaka ya wena, uku, tanani hitata kumbuka manyani. Ata swivona leswaku i pela hi kona ha mu tsundzuka. Leswo hitala ku swi endla, hambu hinga humeleliwanga ha tchumu, ha vula leswaku a hi tsundzukeni manyani. Kambe a vu nyingi bya hina hi maha loko swinga fambu kwatsi. Loko swilo hi kwaswo swa wutomi swinga fambu kwatsi, va li a vaka vona va mutsikile, kambe loko swi famba kahle, vataku, ati nguluve taka Khosa ti na mina.

(Khosa 2001, interview)

### Translation:

I will start by showing how this power [*ntumbuluko*] can harm. The power of *ntumbuluko* can harm if one does not remember the departed ones. It is necessary that one remembers them from time to time. One must pour libation. This is the way in which this power harms. If one fails to do that, it will be said that s/he does not remember the dead and people will say: 'S/he is ill, is suffering, even if s/he looks for a job s/he does not find it, while others do find jobs'. Everything goes wrong. But if they see one remembering them [the dead] through libation or by giving them breakfast, one is not giving that breakfast to them, but one calls his/her relatives saying: 'come, let us remember so-and-so, or let us have a memorial for so-and-so'. The one to whom the memorial is dedicated will see that we truly remember him/her. We usually do that even if there is nothing critical that has happened to us, we just decide and say, let us remember so-and-so. But most of us do that when things are not going well. When everything in life goes wrong, it is said that 'his [dead] have forsaken him/her', and when everything goes well, they say, 'Khosha spirits are with me'.

After asking him to explain his understanding of what the Tsongas think about the destiny or the place where the spirits of the dead go, I then asked him about the function of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga daily life. His answer was:

Se nivulile leswaku a ntumbuluko wunga ku pfuna, naswona wungaku tsika wuhohloka. A mapfunela ya ntumbuluko, hihina vanhu hiti nyiketaka. Swin'wana wunga tsuka wuswivona hiku lorisiwa, se loko wu lorile swaku karhi, uku, a muloro leyi ningave nayona, swikona nibyeliwaka swona. Se wulava a tlamuselo wa kona (hitihlolo). A ntumbuluko wa hina waku lungisa a swilo, a hiwaku onha. Kambe kulaveka a mhamba a kan'we hi lembe 'o coelho só engorda uma vez por ano'. Ko laveka mun'we a ka lixaka loyi anga vulaka leswaku ahi maheni a mahewu hi tsundzuka vakokwani. Kambe le xi ni hlamalisaka, ku, avafi vahina vala hansi, kambe loko a pfula yingani, hili, lowalehehla a hi tsikile.

(Khosha 2001, interview)

### Translation:

I have already said that *ntumbuluko* can help one, but it can also leave one crumbling. The way in which *ntumbuluko* does help is based on our human commitment. Some of the things one sees by being caused to dream (sic), then, after dreaming something, one says: 'The dream I had is something I am being told'. Then one looks for the interpretation of the dream through bones-casting divination [*astragalomancy*]<sup>39</sup>. Our *ntumbuluko* is for mending/fixing things and not breaking things [relationships] down. But there is a need of *mhamba*<sup>40</sup> once a year (the rabbit gets fat once a year)<sup>41</sup>. There must be one person in a family or clan who can say: 'Let us make *mahewu*

<sup>39</sup> I found this technical term for the bones casting divination in Hiebert, Shaw & Tienou (1999:184).

<sup>40</sup> A family or clan religious gathering to speak with the ancestors through prayers, libation and mediums.

<sup>41</sup> This is a Portuguese saying which he used in order to enforce or underline the importance, validity and logic of the clan or family annual religious gathering with or for the ancestors.

drink and remember the grandparents'. But what amuses me is the fact that our dead are underground<sup>42</sup>, but if it fails to rain we say: 'The above-one has forsaken us'.

Finally I asked him about the position or place of *ntumbuluko* in public life in Mozambique after Marxism. Marxism, as indicated in the historical background, tried to eliminate *ntumbuluko*. His assessment of the place of *ntumbuluko* in the post-Marxist and democratic Mozambique is:

Kambe lom u tikweni, ndzaku ka Marxismo, leyi yinga pfukela awu khongeli, sweswi a ntumbuluko ni wun'wanga swi fuma hintamu ngopfu. A magandzelo ma pfuxiwa hi ntamu wa mufumu, a maprojecto ma khanguliwa hi mhamba, a ti n'anga ti nyikiwe a vito ripswa, tina *associação* (*Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais Moçambicanos*). A va ha vuli leswaku iti nyanga, vali, vadokodela kufana na van'wani lava vanga dyondza a xikoleni, kambe vona lava i vadokodela va ntumbuluko.

(Khosa 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

Now, here in this country [Mozambique], after Marxism, which was against religion, *ntumbuluko* and divination are ruling/dominating very powerfully. *Magandzelo* (places of libation, worship also called *tipangu*) are re-established with the government support/authority, projects are inaugurated with *mhamba* (an address of thanksgiving prayer to the dead), diviners/mediums were given a new name and they do have an association (*Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais Moçambicanos* [AMETRAMO] the Association of Mozambican Traditional Doctors). They are no longer called *tinyanga* [plural of *n'anga*] (diviners/mediums), they say these are equally doctors in the same manner as those trained and graduated from schools, these ones being doctors in *ntumbuluko* or *ntumbuluko* doctors.

Khosa indicates the privileged place of *ntumbuluko* in the new political dispensation in Mozambique. It is hard to believe that the government which is now sponsoring and promoting *ntumbuluko* is the same government that waged war against *ntumbuluko* in the mid 1970s and through the 1980s. *Ntumbuluko* was frontally attacked and the government believed to have wiped it out after burning all amulets, and artefacts, and by prohibiting divination, libation, polygamy, kingship, witchcraft and magic, etc. In the meantime, Christianity and Islam were allowed to operate

<sup>42</sup> Khosa says that: 'We, in our Tsonga culture, the spirits of the dead go nowhere. Our family or clan (the dead) is here with us. It was for this reason that the dead were buried in the homes. When it is time for libation, prayer or worship, we pour drink and tobacco on the ground, for they are with us here'. See the full translation of the transcript in the appendices.

under some restrictions, but now *ntumbuluko* has taken control in the public life<sup>43</sup>. The government represent the elite and most educated people of the country. Part of this change can be explained by the fact that *ntumbuluko* was deeply involved in the civil war and became a political tool in the democratization process and electoral campaign<sup>44</sup>. This move has caused much unrest in different denominations, including mine, from 1990 to this day. Many Christians, including clergy, want and live publicly an *ntumbuluko*-centered Christian life and push for a synthetic<sup>45</sup> Christianity or a form of *ntumbuluko* Christianity or culture Christianity. This causes friction, break-away and many open conflicts and expulsion of people and clergy, which never happened during the Marxist or even the colonial periods.

Summarising Tatana Khosa's definition, we can say that *ntumbuluko* is a power, an invisible power. This power operates deeply in the traditional life of Tsonga people. It is a life-touching and life-changing power. For this power to operate there is an element of faith (believing in the power) and that faith is to be expressed in remembrance (*mhamba*) and libation to the spirits of the dead grandparents who are the channel or symbol of the invisible power.

From Khosa's definition or conception, *ntumbuluko* is an invisible power that manifests itself through the spirits of the dead, the grandparents. Khosa highlights the

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<sup>43</sup> Under the present dispensation, public ceremonies include *ntumbuluko* rituals. The government does everything in its power to promote *ntumbuluko* in the public and community life. Projects are now inaugurated with libation. In my village, CARE International dug a manual water pump well, but it broke down so often that they came and asked that the king should pour libation. A king and a chief argued over the right to pour libation over the well and the chief died as a result of that spiritual power struggle. The chief was also a Zionist bishop. But, unfortunately, the well is now permanently broken down; in fact the real problem is that it is too deep.

<sup>44</sup> One of the arguments of the rebel movement that was fighting the government was that it had obliterated Mozambican culture, thus dehumanizing the people. Renamo started to use traditional government systems in its controlled zones at the local and district levels (Cline 1989:50-56). Whenever the Renamo guerrillas entered a zone, they looked for the king or chief of the area to pour libation on their behalf before they went to engage the government army in battle. They also used to have a diviner or a Zionist prophet to provide them with *ntumbuluko* supernatural guidance. Renamo used this after the war to prove its respect for the people and their culture and accuse the government of disrespect and abuse to the people and their cultures. As an electoral tactic, the government started to reinstate kings and allow the public administration of *ntumbuluko* rituals to prove its political opponent wrong in his accusations.

<sup>45</sup> Niebuhr (1951) uses the term "synthetic Christianity" to refer to a kind of gospel and culture relationship in which one synthesizes faith and culture, producing culture Christianity. Culture Christianity is a technical term that Niebuhr adopted from Karl Barth's definition of what is popularly called "liberal" or "liberalism" in relation to Christian orthodoxy.

*mhamba*<sup>46</sup> (*missa*) (a Portuguese/Latin word [mass] used to mean the memorial ceremony for the ancestors) aspect of *ntumbuluko* as the most important and helpful aspect of *ntumbuluko*. According to his account, it is with this aspect of *ntumbuluko* that one ensures that everything goes well in life (business, employment, promotion, good relationships etc.). He seems positive on *mhamba* or *xifihlutu* (breakfast) for the dead, he sounds unhappy about the privileged place *ntumbuluko* has in public life in Mozambique.

The next informant of this category had a different opinion on *ntumbuluko* and public life.

### 2.3.2 The profile of Mr. Roberto Mario Mundlovo and his definition and description of *ntumbuluko*

Mr. Mundlovo is 32 years old, was born in Magude, Maputo, and resides in the city of Maputo. He is a broadcaster journalist. He is working in the national headquarters of Radio Moçambique (RM), Maputo, which is the National Broadcasting Radio and authority. All the provincial broadcasters are branches of RM in Maputo. Mundlovo is also a Christian who attends the Swiss Mission (Presbyterian) church.

Answering my question on what is *ntumbuluko*, Mundlovo says:

Nikhesile, kambe aniswitiwi leswaku ninga swikota aku tthamuselela ni hetelela aku a ntumbuluko i swini. Hayini? Hikuva, loko uku ntumbuluko swini tthamuselelo wunyingi. Hayini niku a ntumbuluko wuni hlamuselelo wunyingi? Hi Xiphutukezi xaka hina hili a ntumbuluko *é apartir de formação da pessoa, até quando chaga a fase de falar como pessoa, no entanto que pessoa. Uma pessoa que tem cabelo branco continua a ser pessoa porque teve o seu principio*. Hinga vula leswaku a ntumbuluko *é o principio*<sup>47</sup>. Kuni ma vulavulela hinga nawo namutlha, hi randza aku a ntumbuluko wa vanhu lavaya, kumbe hiku, levaya va dawukisile sweswo a ka ntumbuluko wa vona. Na swi lava aku hlamusele leswaku kuna leswi va swi endlaka vona swi hambeneke na leswi hi swivonaka hina. Leswo i swilo leswi va swi

<sup>46</sup> In fact *mhamba* is the part of *ntumbuluko* most frequently observed by highly educated businessmen and women, politicians, academics and even Christians among Tsonga people. The spirits can excuse them for their modernized or westernized lifestyle but not from annual audience with spirits in a *missa* or at least paying homage *missa*, even if a medium is not invited to mediate spirits' conversation with humans.

<sup>47</sup> Tsonga readers will notice that Mundlovo mixes Tsonga with Portuguese here and there. This is the habit of many Mozambican intellectuals.

endlaka na vaku i ntumbuluko wa vona. A mhaka ya ntumbuluko, yi tisa na ta masungulu ya munhu, leswinge, a munhu a tumbulukisile kuyini? Wanitwa, nipatsa na ntumbuluko loko ni vulavula hiku mahiwa ka vanhu. A Ntumbuluko i ma sungulu.

(Mundlovo 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

Thank you, but I am not sure if I will be able to explain all about what *ntumbuluko* is. Why? Because if one says “*ntumbuluko*”, that has many meanings. Why am I saying that *ntumbuluko* has many meanings? In our Portuguese we say that *ntumbuluko* is the formation of a person from the beginning until when the person reaches the phase of speaking as a person. A person with grey hair is still a person because that person had the beginning. We can say that *ntumbuluko* is the beginning. There is a saying we use today (these days), we like saying that *ntumbuluko* of those people, or that that family originated like that in their *ntumbuluko*. This means that there is something a particular group or clan does that is different from what we do. These are things they do saying they are their *ntumbuluko*. The concept of *ntumbuluko* includes the beginning or origin of the human race, meaning what was the beginning or origin of humans? Do you hear me? I include *ntumbuluko* when I speak about the formation or creation of humans... [He used the evolutionary theory of human origin at this point]. *Ntumbuluko* is the beginning.

In his definition of *ntumbuluko*, Mundlovo used terms like “human formation”, “the beginning”, “principle” and “*modus vivendi*” and “*modus operandi*” of the Tsongas. I asked him to clarify what he meant when he defined *ntumbuluko* as the beginning and he said: ‘*Loko niku a ntumbuluko wula ku hlamusela a masungulu, ni vula nityisile leswaku a ntumbuluko u kombisa a tamu lowu wungave kona a kuzi ku humelela xokari* (When I say that *ntumbuluko* means the beginning, I mean that *ntumbuluko* is the power that caused the beginning or which causes the beginning of anything)’.

Then I asked Mundlovo to describe to me what constitutes *ntumbuluko*, from his understanding and point of view. His description is:

Loko ni vulavula hiti mhaka ta ntumbuluko, ni vulile kwala niku ku ni swihena, anitivi aku kumbe maswitiva a swihena. Kuna swihena swa vanhu, leswi hiku famba ka mikarhi, swinga engeteliwaka kumbe swikhohliwa. Tani hi leswi a Bibeke yi vulaka leswaku hi fanele a ku rivala a swakhali, leswi swinga mahiwa hi va kokwana va hina, hive vanhu vapwsa a timbilwini ta hina. Laha a va vuli leswaku hi fanele ku tsika a va kokwani vahina, kambe a swi hena swa va kokwani. Kasi aku ni khanyisa a hlamulo wa mina, nitaku; leswi hinga swi endla a khale a kaya i ntumbuluko. Laha unga twaka vaku ‘lava va dawukisile kutani’. Kunge hi ku leha ka hina vaka Mundlovu, Mundlovu loyi wo sungula a a lehile kutani, na lava vaha velekiwaka valehile hi mhaka ya ntumbuluko wa vona. Laha a ntumbuluko wu vula *transmissão*

*de genes*, se a vanhu va vula vaku lava va dawukisile sweswo ni le entubulukweni wa vona a va lehile. Hikola, leswi hi nga xi swona namutlha hikolaho ka va kokwani.

(Mundlovo 2001, interview)

**Translation:**

When I define *ntumbuluko* I said there were customs, I do not know if you know what customs are. There are human customs which in the course of time may be added to or forgotten. Such as the Bible saying that we must forget the old ways of our grandparents, and that we become new in our hearts. It does not mean that we must abandon our grandparents, but their customs. To make my answer clear, I can say that what we used to do at home (Magude district) in the past is *ntumbuluko*. There you can hear them say 'these ones originated this way'. Like the height of Mundlovos, it is because the first Mundlovo was tall; therefore all Mundlovos are tall because of their *ntumbuluko*. Here *ntumbuluko* means genetic information transmission and the people will say that this people originated like that in their *ntumbuluko*. What we are today is because of our grandparents [ancestors].

Based on his description, I then asked him about the meaning of a popular outcry that has developed during and after Marxist Communism in Mozambique. It is common to hear a general critic saying that the people have, or a particular person has, abandoned *ntumbuluko*. This was much used to explain the calamities and natural disasters of the 1980s in Mozambique. So, I wanted Mundlovo to explain what he understood of the phrase "*a vanhu va tsikile ntumbuluko*" (the people have abandoned *ntumbuluko*), he said:

Wa vona a vanhu lava va pswaliweke a ti handle ka madoropa, nyamutlha loko va fika doropeni va sindzisiwa hi doropa a kuva va hanya xidoropa [Khosa ate xilungu]. Hina van'wani hi kulile na hidya muhungu na guxi na makhutla futsi hidya, kambe loko hita fika doropeni, a makhutla aha ha dyi, naswona amakona. Loko no heta a malembe yotala nihi laha doropeni ni landza amahanyela ya doropa, nihlamba laha kunga na gezi, ni hi kwaswo swa xilungu, nje hi swakudya swa xilungu, anahari lavi na wuswa, hikusa nitolovela a masa leyi dyiwaka haleno doropeni; a nyama nidya a mabifi niswin'wani swin'wani, loko votsuka vaya veka a nyama ya hloko anaha yidi. Hitchitcha na ma ambalela, a vanhanyana va ambala a mabuluku....a tikereke hoti hlawulela, hambani ni tumbulukile ni hi wa Musawu Suwisa, naswikota akuya hlawula Siyawu Apostolika. Loko, nisukile a kerekeni ya vapswali, ni hambene na ntumbuluko....loko ni fularela a mahanyela lawa mangari kona khali a kaya hi ndlela yo kala yinga twisiseke, nitava ni tsikile ntumbuluko.

(Mundlovo 2001, interview)

**Translation:**

You see, people who are born in the countryside, when they come to the metropolis they are forced by the metropolis to live a metropolitan life. We grew up eating bran with *guxi* (wild okra) and *makhutla* (yellow belly frogs). When we come to the city

we no longer eat frogs, they do not even exist here. If I stay many years in the city, I start living a metropolitan life. I bath where there is light and enjoy a western life style. I eat western food and I no longer want to eat *wuswa* (millet or maize meal) because I am used to macaroni, beef and other good food. If they give me an animal head I do not eat it. We even change our way of dressing, girls put on trousers...we choose whatever church we want. Even if by *ntumbuluko* I am a Presbyterian (Swiss Mission), I can choose to join Zion Apostolic. If I leave the church of my parents I have departed from *ntumbuluko*....If I turn back against the way of life in my family in an incomprehensible way, I have abandoned *ntumbuluko*.

Because of what I heard from Mr. Khosa about *ntumbuluko* in post-Marxist Mozambique, I asked Mr. Mundlovo the following question: 'In the public life of our country what has more influence, the gospel or *ntumbuluko*?' Mundlovo's answer was: '*Makereke manga na influencia hambi manga landziwe....(The churches have influence, even if it is not followed/obeyed)*'. Then Mundlovo asked me to turn the tape off, for he wanted to tell me something confidential. Then, whispering, he told me that even the national anthem was composed by church people or choir (from his church). This story was to back his argument for the church's influence. But I asked if he heard what was once broadcast by Radio Mozambique in the same studio in which we were sitting, talking about a TV station in Niassa Province. The station was set up but could not work. All technological requirements were followed but no images appeared. When all technology failed, they called the local traditional leader to pour libation and the station immediately started to operate and show pictures. When I said, did you hear about that? His answer was:

Niyitwile kambe anyi tivisise ngopfu. Tsena mina ni pswaliwa a Magude<sup>48</sup>, wa tiva a ku a Magude vali Magude nkanyini? - Anitivi tchumu hita Nkanyi, no tiva aku kuna ka Magudu- Loko munhu a ku i wa Magudu, ufanele akuswitiva leswaku iwa Magude nkanyini. Anitive leswaku uvona njani, loko vaku Magudu nkanyine, awu hlamali tchumu kwalaho? - Nahlamala, a nkanyi lowu ixini, wuvula yini ke?- Magudu i tiko a nkanyi i sinye. Kutani, le Magude kuni nkanyi lowu wu hlamuseliwaka swo tala; wu nyikiwa swotala leswi hlayiwaka hi wona a nkanyi lowu. Hikuva hikari wun'wana unga tsuka uya wu tsema hiku ranza ka wena nje, wu pfuka wu file. Kumbe wutsuka, wuku ni lava aku swivona, hakunene le swi vuliwaka swihumelela. Kambe ahileswaku wo loya a kanyi lowuya, kumbe ku a vanhu va Magudu vo loya, tsena swikona swiyelanaka na ntumbuluko swinga ko ka nkanyi lowuya.

(Mundlovo 2001, interview)

<sup>48</sup> There are two variations to the spelling of this town and district. In Tsonga it is spelled "Magudu" but in Portuguese "Magude" here the informant and the interviewer use both spellings.

Translation:

I heard about the TV station story in Niassa, but I know little about it. But I was born in Magude. Do you know that Magude is called Magude *Kanyini*?...If someone says s/he is from Magude, you must know that s/he is from Magude *Kanyini*. I don't know what you see or think if we say Magude *Kanyini*. Aren't you amused or don't you suspect something? Magude is the territory and *kanyini* is a tree. At Magude there is a *kanyini* tree with so many stories; there are many things said about that tree. Because, if one goes to that tree and strikes it for fun, the next day one is dead while sleeping. Or if one does something to test, prove and see whether or not what is said about the tree is true, one dies. But it does not mean that the tree is a sorcerer or bewitches, or that the people of Magude are sorcerers; but there is something of *ntumbuluko* in that *kanyini* tree.

After telling me his story of *kanyini* (marula tree) I asked him to explain what he thought was related to *ntumbuluko* that was killing people. He gave the following answer and story:

Aniswitivi hiku hetelela, kambe va hlaya leswaku, loko uya a Joni, khale kava bava na va ha famba himilenge,...u tsema hika Xikhukhuza a livaleni la swihari, akurhi na laha swinga nabyala ngopfu aku u khomiwa hi swiharhi, kambe, loko uta na unga yi tive [a ndawu ley] uta ndlula, swibiha loko uyi tiva u sima uya...Leswo shivula leswaku mina nitivaka hita nkanyi lowuya, loko nowu ringa a swinge lungi, ninga famba. Kambe loko wuwu yela na unga wutivi, akuna *problem*...nitwa leswaku, a karini wa nyipi, kuve ni musotchua anga wu duwula na a lava aku swivona, kambe a pfuka na a file.

Tivemos um estudo de gênero, não gênero masculino ou feminino, mas gênero que analisa as relações ou relacionamento em casa, no serviço, interpessoal etc. O estudo salienta que na biografia dum indivíduo há desvios no comportamento da vida dum indivíduo (os desvios de alguns acontecimentos. Nesses desvios é para o bem ou para o pior). Aonde há mudança há uma força invisível que desvia; então, penso que também nesta questão do canhueiro de Magude há uma força invisível que deviamos procurar descobrir.

(Mundlovo 2001, interview)

Translation:

I do not know everything about this tree, but it is said that when our fathers used to walk to Johannesburg (South Africa), they used a shortcut through Xikhukhuza, in the plain with many wild animals and beasts. There was a particular place where it was easy for one to be attacked and devoured by beasts. One could pass safely if one used that route without knowing the dangers. Those who knew but were stubborn did not survive. This means that as I know about that *kanyini* tree, if I attempt anything on it, things will go badly for me, I will go (die). But if one approaches the tree unknowingly, there is no problem... I heard that, during the war, there was a soldier who shot the tree with his gun to see what would happen. The morning after the incident he was dead.

We had a study of gender, not masculine and feminine gender, but gender that analyzes social (family), work place, interpersonal, etc. relations or relationships. The study pointed out that in the biography of an individual there are deviations

(these deviations of events are deviations for good or ill) in the behaviour or course of an individual person's life. The study also pointed out that where there is change, there is an invisible power that deviates. I, then, therefore, also think that in the question of the *kanyi* tree of Magude, there is an invisible power which we should try to discover.

To emphasise his point, Mundlovo told a story of the revolutionary combatant who, in typical Marxist fashion, wanted to prove that there was nothing in the tree, thus exposing the superstitions of the people and purge them of childish ignorance and obscurantism under which the religious ideologies and superstitions flourish, as opium of the people. The result was fatal<sup>49</sup>. Then Mundlovo told another story of a course which used astrological cycles<sup>50</sup> of good and bad fortunes in the course of a person's life. The study argued that life has deviations and that those deviations are caused by an invisible power. He concluded by saying that the case of the marula tree of Magude indicates the presence of an invisible power which exists. In his opinion we should try to discover its power.

So far, if we analyse Mundlovo's definition of *ntumbuluko*, we find that he basically understands *ntumbuluko* as the beginning and, profoundly, as the power behind the beginning or that power that causes something to happen. His argument that 'a person is a person because he has beginning' (Mundlovo 2001, interview) is very interesting; it is unfortunate that he expressed it in Portuguese. In some Bantu languages, what he was saying is that *mu-ntu* becomes a *mu-ntu* because s/he has *ntu*. This could sound like Kagame, Mulago and Mujynya's philosophical argument on *ntu* that we will discuss at the beginning of the next chapter.

Based on the *kanyi* tree mystery and story, Mundlovo considers *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power and in his opinion, we must discover this power. Going back to his

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<sup>49</sup> Such fatalities are allegedly related to abuse against the powers of *ntumbuluko*. So called superstitions were common in Mozambique during the Marxist dispensation when the government officials, party militants and soldiers were trying to prove that there were no spiritual powers and God. Maybe such experiences contributed to the total surrender of the government to *ntumbuluko*. Marxism that tried hard and violently to destroy or overthrow *ntumbuluko* crumbled.

<sup>50</sup> Based on the explanation that Mundlovo gave about the study he had, I concluded that even if the study was not presented by astrologers, it used an analytical method which is similar to the astrological cycles (Hiebert, Shaw & Tienou 1999:186).

idea of the beginning, *ntumbuluko* as the beginning is the source of human life and works to ensure its continuity. He also sees *ntumbuluko* as responsible for some unchangeable genetic material that constitutes the uniqueness of an individual. In this point he explains *ntumbuluko* from biological science and the evolutionary theory of the origin of humans. Finally, he sees *ntumbuluko* as a way of life opposed to *xidoropa* (metropolitan life or culture) or *xilungu* (white or Western life or culture). For him, to live *xidoropa* or *xilungu* life is tantamount to abandoning *ntumbuluko*. However, he does not give any warning against the consequences of abandoning *ntumbuluko*, like the warnings given by Ndzukule, which make abandoning *ntumbuluko* a life-and-death matter.

To summarise the academic or modern definition of *ntumbuluko*, we can say that from both informants *ntumbuluko* is described as an invisible power. For Khosa, this power manifests itself and operates through the belief in the ancestors, which is enacted in the annual *mhamba* ceremony. But, for Mundlovo, this invisible power is in nature like that *kanyi* tree in Magude. However, in his story of the deviation of power in a personal human life in the description of how *ntumbuluko* can harm or help in one's personal life (like getting a job and achieving prosperity) Mundlovo agrees with Khosa in attributing to the invisible power of *ntumbuluko* the power of influencing the course of human life and events for good or for ill.

One would expect the modernists to be sceptical of *ntumbuluko* because of scientific influence, but my informants are not sceptical at all. They speak comfortably of the invisible power, the ancestors, the role and relationship of the ancestors. This suggests how strong and successful *ntumbuluko* is in resisting being wiped out by other theoretical constructs of reality.

However, Mundlovo's first choice definition of *ntumbuluko* is that it is the beginning or the power behind the beginning. He used the invisible power concept to comment on my argument against his assumption that the church has much influence in the public life of Mozambique. I am not sure whether Mundlovo gave that story in order to agree with Khosa that *ntumbuluko* dominates the national public life, or whether he wanted to show that *ntumbuluko* is an invisible but real power that cannot be ignored or despised. Or else to show that *ntumbuluko* is dominant because it exercises power

that we have not yet discovered and understood, and therefore there is nothing we can do about it. But his story does not support his argument of the influence of the church in the public life based on the church's artistic contribution in the national anthem. Neither the old or the new national anthems have any Christian words. The old one sung praises to Frelimo (the ruling party) and to the nation, with Marxist philosophy tones. The new one sings praises to the nation, nation building, peace and progress.

After speaking of the national anthem, it is appropriate to follow this with the artist category, in which we analyse songs.

#### **2.4 *Ntumbuluko* – the artist's perceptions**

For this category we speak of perception rather than description, definition and understanding. Technically speaking, they do not engage in philosophical exploration, understanding and explanation of concepts like *ntumbuluko*. Artists perceive poetically, or are poetically inspired, and sing or paint. In the dispersal of ideas, artists are in the second category under the intellectuals (philosophers and religious thinkers) and they serve to disseminate ideas by singing them, acting them out, dancing, drama, painting, TV and movies. So, they perceive artistically and poetically, rather than intellectually. Yet their perspective is very important because they detect nuances of meanings that others might miss.

In this category I will be working with three songs from popular music whose theme is *ntumbuluko*. The three songs were copied from the magnetic tape of Radio Moçambique (the national broadcaster of Mozambique) onto a CD, with the permission of PCA (Presidente do Conselho da Administração, the Portuguese equivalent of 'CEO') of Rádio Moçambique. The artist category is not covered in the form of an interview, but by an analysis of the content of songs with the theme *ntumbuluko*. However, transcriptions of the three songs are quoted in the Appendix of this thesis. They are transcribed in the original language (Tsonga), with parallel translation into English. One song, however, is in a mixture of Portuguese and Tsonga.

#### 2.4.1 The perception of *ntumbuluko* in Movota's song "Tudo P'lo Criador" (Everything by the Creator)

Although Mavota's song has a Portuguese title (as given to me by Rádio Moçambique), it has not used Portuguese at all, being entirely in Tsonga. I transcribed the song as follows:

##### Tsonga (Ronga)

Vonani a ntumbuluko aku xonga ka wone!  
A ntumbuluko ni mutchumo hikwayo;  
Vonani a ntumbuluko aku xonga ka wone!  
A ntumbuluko in mutchumo hikwayo.

Nadzo tilo na misava, tinyanyana tihahaka;  
Hikwaso leswi swi vangiwe hi Xikwembu.  
Swi vangiwe hi Xikwembu,  
Swi vangiwe hi Xikwembu.

Pimisa we makweru, pimisa ha kunene;  
Loko ne wu xaniseka,  
Wuta kuma ku zula.

##### English translation

See how beautiful *ntumbuluko* is!  
*Ntumbuluko* and everything;  
See how beautiful *ntumbuluko* is!  
*Ntumbuluko* and everything.

Heaven and earth, flying birds;  
All these were caused by God  
Were caused (created) by God!  
Were caused by God.

Think brother, yes think carefully,  
When you are suffering;  
You will find peace.

(Mavota, CD)

This song presents and celebrates the beauty of *ntumbuluko* and everything, or the whole of creation. It is not very clear whether *ntumbuluko* here is part of created things or is part of the creating power. But, judging from the Tsonga understanding of *ntumbuluko*, one can see here that *ntumbuluko* is associated with the creation of everything and the concept here is closely related to the creating principle and power or Creator himself. In Tsonga, 'to create' is *ku tumbuluxa* (although the artist uses *ku vanga* [causing to be]) in this song. In Tsonga the creator, or a creator, is *mu tumbuluxi*.

Whichever meaning of *ntumbuluko* the author has in mind, the message is clear, *ntumbuluko* is beautiful. One thing that comes out here very clearly is the fact that the perception of *ntumbuluko* as expressed in this song is completely different from that of the use of *ntumbuluko* in translating Pauline theology of "flesh" in Rom 8:3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13; Eph 2:3 and Gal 5:13, 16 and 19; and 6:8. However, it accords with other Tsonga understanding of *ntumbuluko* as we can see from the above categories

and other categories to follow. But, in each category of my research, the understanding of *ntumbuluko* is diverse. The next song will give us another angle of perception of *ntumbuluko*.

#### 2.4.2 The perception of *ntumbuluko* in “E Natural”, a song by Rosalia Mboa

##### Tsonga/Portuguese

*Goza a vida como ela é...a tua maneira...*

Ni na mahanyela ya mina, na wena una mahanyela ya wena

A ntirho wa swilo loko u swivonela kule sha hlamalisa

*Você não julga* loko unga swi tive, a ntirho wa swilo swa hlamalisa {loko uswi vonela kule}

Unga swi hleki loko swi ngahi ka wena, *é natural* (x6)

*Você não julga a natureza é assim, vai lutando a vida é assim*

I ntumbuluko lowu (x8)

*Toda gente conta naquilo que sabe, a vida é uma luta wa switwa.*

A wunga yi lwi nyipi na wunga hi na matihari

*Não foge, vida é assim, é natural* (x8)

I ntumbuluko lowo (x8)

Mahanyela mahibinza hikwerhu, ko hambana matirhela (*decisão*) ya hina

I ntumbuluko unga ali leswo *intumbuluko*

*Você não foga a natureza, a vida é assim*

*É natural* (x8)

Intumbuluko lowo (x8)

##### English translation

Enjoy life as it is...in your own way...

I have my own way of living, you have also yours;

It is always like that; when one sees things happening

In someone's life from a distance, it is fun.

Don't judge what you don't know,

Things look fun from far.

Don't laugh when things happen to others, it is natural (repeated x6)

Don't run away, nature is like that, go striving, life is like that

This is *ntumbuluko* (x8)

Everyone counts on what they know, life is struggle you know.

You cannot fight a war without weapons;

Don't run away, life is like that;

It is natural (x8)

This is *ntumbuluko* (x8)

Life is heavy to everyone, what differs are our ways of working, or doing things

And making decisions, it's *ntumbuluko*.

Don't reject it, this is *ntumbuluko*.

Don't run away from nature, life is like that,

It is natural (x8)  
This is *ntumbuluko* (x8)

(M'boa, CD)

In this song Rosalia M'boa, a well-known Mozambican singer, answers her critics and justifies the way that she chooses to live her life. All that she does, she says, is according to the natural law of *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* is inescapable and her actions should not be condemned because she is doing what is according to it. Her lifestyle, way of living, what happens to her (normal and natural things), the way she earns her living and how she goes about equipping herself in life are all to do with *ntumbuluko* and she cannot run away from it but must simply accept it and fight her way and survival through the course prescribed for her by *ntumbuluko*.

According to Chitlango and Balcomb:

In this song the word is quite clearly being used to create some ambivalence to the concept of tradition. She concedes that there is a natural order of things but is so bold as to suggest that the lifestyle she has chosen *is* that natural order and she does not need the criticism and judgmentalism of others who think differently. The conservative underpinning of the term is reinterpreted in a way that gives legitimacy to the way that she herself understands what is "natural" in life. She concedes that this might be different to the way that others see it, but she is determined to define for herself what is good for life.

There is, therefore, an incipient rebelliousness here.

(Chitlango & Balcomb 2004:184)

While the first song ignores any negative aspect of *ntumbuluko* and celebrates its beauty, this song uses *ntumbuluko* firstly as natural law, from which, one cannot escape and must follow; and from which one must not try to run away, and secondly as natural order of things and life that pre-determines one's fate in life. The author's life is portrayed to be being lived under that inescapable natural law (no condemnation against her for she is living according to *ntumbuluko*) and that everything she does and whatever happens to her and her lifestyle are all an integral part of her fate and are according to the *ntumbuluko* state of affairs (no criticism is necessary). *Ntumbuluko* is given and taken here, no "buts and ifs."

The next and last song, however, by a young man, uses the word *ntumbuluko* in a quite different way and approaches it in a very complex way and totally differently from the other two songs.

#### 2.4.3 The perception of *ntumbuluko* from “Natureza”, a song by Conjunto Gezi

<i>Tsonga</i>	English translation
Va vansati ni va vanuna x2 A hi dyayeni a moya lowu x2	women and men (x2) Let us kill that spirit (x2)
Hi taku i ntumbuluko Hi taku i ntumbuluko	We will argue, ‘it’s <i>ntumbuluko</i> ’. We will argue, ‘it’s <i>ntumbuluko</i> ’.
A hi dyayeni a ntumbuluko lowu, Kuta sala a ntumbuluko Lowu kulisaka tiko, (25) a lizandzo lisalako	Let us kill that <i>ntumbuluko</i> There will remain <i>ntumbuluko</i> <i>Ntumbuluko</i> that develops the nation (25x) love that remains.
A misaven ku ni lizandzo (x2) A wa nsati a va xavi! I mali muni? A wa nsati a va xavi!	On earth (world) there is love (x2) A woman cannot be purchased! How much is she? You cannot purchase a woman
A wa nsati a va xavi (x4)	A woman cannot be purchased! (x4)

(Conjunto Guezi, CD)

In this song, by a young man, the word *ntumbuluko* is used to denote a tradition or a mindset that needs to be “killed” because it is destructive. The tradition or social practice being referred to here is the one that imposes *lovolo (lobola)* and justifies it as *ntumbuluko*. Once this “*ntumbuluko*” (mindset or social practice) is “killed” there will remain an *ntumbuluko* that is dignifying to women and serves to build the nation. Here *ntumbuluko* needs to be qualified before it is celebrated or one succumbs to it. Clearly, *ntumbuluko* is here associated also with bad and detrimental social norms and practices. It is part of the justification or supporting tools for the ills and evils of society. It is a word or concept used by the powerful to justify oppression of the powerless, and which is used by the rich to the poor, older people to the younger and men to women.

But this song does not only criticize *ntumbuluko* and make it look evil; it makes it clear that the same term can be used for evil and for good. He wants bad *ntumbuluko* killed and good *ntumbuluko* to remain. Here we clearly have a song that associates

*ntumbuluko* with good as well as evil. This calls for better definition of what one means when using the term *ntumbuluko*, in order to decide whether it is good or evil.

To summarise the perception of this category, we can say that *ntumbuluko* is perceived as:

- 1) the creation
- 2) everything (whole of creation or cosmos)
- 3) creative power
- 4) natural order of things
- 5) natural course of life (fate)
- 6) nature
- 7) tradition
- 8) mindset
- 9) social norms and practices
- 10) nation-building good practices and mindset
- 11) attitude and mindset that dignifies women

These perceptions of *ntumbuluko* are close to the dictionary's interpretation of the term *ntumbuluko* (the creation, cosmos, nature, origin and old custom). The themes of the three songs have each taken different meanings of the term *ntumbuluko* from the dictionary. The first has taken the creation meaning, the second the nature (natural) meaning, and the last, although its title is "*Natureza*" (nature), deals with *ntumbuluko* as traditional or social custom. It is precisely *ntumbuluko* as meaning 'old customs' that has an uneasy interaction with both modernity and Christian faith.

At this point it is important to find out what the Christian practitioner's perspective is of *ntumbuluko* and to determine the possible influence of *ntumbuluko* in the Christian life of Mozambique among the Tsongas. To find out about the Christian practitioner's perspective we must now turn to the Christian practitioners' category.

## **2.5 *Ntumbuluko* - the Christian practitioner's perspective**

In this category I have eight informants from three different denominations. Three from *Igreja União Baptista de Moçambique* (IUB), two from the *Igreja Assembleias*

*de Deus de Moçambique* and three from *Igreja Metodista Unida de Moçambique*. From this category we expect to find a Christian definition and approach to *ntumbuluko*. We also attempt to find out whether the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith is considered a problem at all, in Tsonga Christianity. We not only take the complaints of the informants about this relationship, but we also discern the impact of *ntumbuluko* on the informants' thinking and doctrines and on the practices of their churches.

### **2.5.1 Igreja União Baptista de Moçambique**

Two of the three informants were retired from this denomination; they spoke in a personal capacity and not as representatives of their denomination. I highlight the denominational backgrounds of the informants to facilitate the analysis in the context of what each informant of a particular denomination said in relation to what others said.

#### **2.5.1.1 The profile of Rev. Salvador Matsombe and his description of *ntumbuluko***

Rev. Matsombe is 77 years old and was born in Chibuto, Gaza Province. He was also involved in the translation project of the Tsonga Bible (*Mahungu la Manene*). Although he was not one of the recommended persons from the Bible Society in Maputo, his name appears in the list of the Mozambican members of the translation and editorial committee in the archives of the United Bible Society in Cape Town. He was one of those, in Mozambique, who were consulted now and then by the translators and editors of the project.

My first question to Rev. Matsombe was on translation. I reminded him that in Rom 8:6,13 *sarx* in the old Tsonga Bible was translated "*nyama*" (flesh), but that in the *Mahungu la Manene* Tsonga Bible it was translated as *ntumbuluko*. I wanted to know why that change was made, and what kind of discussions they had in order to make that change. He explains:

Hiswona, anitsembi leswaku nita ku hlwelisa aka mhaka leyi. Lexi xinga ve kona ku, hivonile leswaku a nyama hi leswi hi Xiputukezi hinga i *sentido figurado*. A nyama swalava ku fana na loko hi vulavula hi munyama. Swilo leswi swilavaka a

tIhamuselo aka Xikreste. A munyama a hi wusiku. Amunyama wu vula laha a Ivangeli yikalaka yinga se ngena. Loko hiku a munhu loyi a le munyamani, hivula aku ange se amukela a Ivangeli. Kutani a nyama aku vuliwi a nyama leyi [akhomile a nyama ya yena]. A nyama kuvuliwa a swihena leswi nga ve kona ka lixaka lihi na lihi, kumbe a ntumbuluko wa vanhu vahi na vahi. Ali hlovo lihi na lihi lini ntumbuluko wa lona wa munyama. Kutani, a ntumbuluko u lava a livoni, kungahi a dyambu, kambe a livoni leli linga rito la Xikwembu. A rito la Xikwembu li voninga a ka ntumbuluko se a vanhu va suka a ka ntumbuluko va landza a rito. Kambe va n'wani va teka a ku vonakala va ku patsa na ntumbuluko va famba naswo hi wumbirhi la swona. Ninga vula leswaku, a ntumbuluko. A hi wu khongeli, a ntumbuluko wu maha hikwaswo le swo biha. A ntumbuluko wuni nawu wa wona, lowu wu vulaka aku aswokarhi aswi mahise ku karhi. Kunge hilomu sul (dzongeni), wa switiva, loko a mulumuzana a file, asiya a nkosikazi yakwe, ixini xi humelelaka. A mamana luya a feliweke, a fanele aku a sindzisiwa aku a veka a mavoko a ndzaku loko a famba a ndleleni. Loko a tIhangana na munhu, ku laveka a tsama a hansi, i ntumbuluko lowo, i nawu wa ntumbuluko, mu nyama lowu wu kalaka wungarhi na ku vonakala. A ntumbuluko wona hi woxe wu lava a livoni. Lomu ka Yohane hikuma aku, Yesu a tisile a tintswalo na ntiyiso. Swilo swimbirhi. Tintswalo, hikuva swa karata aku susa a vanhu vanga ka ntumbuluko aku vata aka Ivangeli.

(Matsombe 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

...We made our decisions based on the fact that *nyama* (flesh) is what we call 'figured sense' in Portuguese. *Nyama* is like when we speak of 'darkness'. Such terms require explanation or interpretation in Christian use. 'Darkness' is not 'night', but is wherever the gospel has not yet penetrated. If we say this person is in the darkness, we mean that the person hasn't yet received the gospel. In like manner *nyama* (flesh) does not mean this [here he touched his own flesh]. *Nyama* means customs that exist in any human society, or *ntumbuluko* of each and all human people. Any race has its *ntumbuluko* of darkness. Therefore, *ntumbuluko* needs the light, not the sun but the light, which is the word of God. The word of God shines upon/illuminates *ntumbuluko* and then the people move from *ntumbuluko* and follow the word. But some people take the light and mix it up with *ntumbuluko* and go along with them both. I can say that *ntumbuluko* is not religion; *ntumbuluko* does all the evil things. *Ntumbuluko* has its law which regulates how everything must be done. Like here in the south, you know what happens when the *mulumuzana* (male family head) dies, leaving his *nkosikazi* (female family head, lit. female king). The widow is obliged to walk with her arms behind her. If she meets someone along the way, she must sit down; this is *ntumbuluko*, it needs light. In John we read that Jesus brought grace and truth. Two things. Grace, because it is hard to move people who are in *ntumbuluko* to come to the gospel.

In his explanation of the choice of the term *ntumbuluko* rather than *nyama* to translate *sarx*, he then pointed to some *ntumbuluko* laws of widowhood. I asked him to elaborate more on the widowhood laws of *ntumbuluko*. Then he said: 'A widow is required to mourn for the duration given to her by the female elders. During this mourning period she stays inside the house with other ladies who take care of her or rather who torture her'. I asked him to explain why he called the ritual 'torture;' he

started by laughing (probably expressing his dislike of the widowhood ritual) and then explained:

Hahahaaaa...(kuhleka). Hakanyingi, leswi niswitweke na leswi niswi voneke, nivona kuhi ku xanisa. Hikusa, kuhumelela yini xana, a fanele a ku ve mamana loyi, a phindzela a kwelisiwa ehla, aya susa a byanyi leli vali lavaka a xitchungweni, leli anga ta tsama nalona, a etlela ka lona. Niswin'wana kambe swo nonoha va mahaka ka lowa mamana swaku muxanisa. Loko swi hunza leswo, ata tsama a xipimo xa lembe, kumbe mambirhi [se a tekiwa]. Kambe aku tekiwa loko, a a phakiwa laha mutini. Amulumuzana a a vitana a majaha yakwe kumbe a va makwavo va mufi, a ta ku ya: wena muokazana, a nuna a fambile, hivalava a vamakwavo va mufi. Se lo wa mamani a pambula mun'we loyi a mu lavaka ka vona. Loko ku fika a karhi waku tchinga, he! A timhaka tiningi laha ku tchingeni laha. Laha ku tchingeni, loyi a tchingaka, a fanele ku tchinga hiku etlela na mamani loyi. Se vata tchingavo van'wani, kala swi fika ka mulumuzana hi hierarkia la muti loko loyi a tchingaka a phindile lawu mbirhi.

Xin'wani ninga vulaka, hileswi swi mahakaka masiku lawa. Loko munhu a file, a vanhu vaya mahleni hiku landza a munyama. Nivula leswo ha yini, hiku, a ka masiku ndzaku, a kufeni ka va tata va hina a hi swivonanga leswo. Namutlha kuna leswaku loko a mulumuzana a file va mu landza a simitela va ta mu ngenisa a ndwini. Va suka, na byala va fika a sireni va tchela a byala lelo va vulavula leswi vanga ta vulavula swona. Va maha leswo vahi na xinguvuana xo basa, lexi va nga ta nyika a xin'wanana xikokovisa a nguvu liya, van'wani vali karhi va tchela a byala ati kaya. Se kun'wana ikule, ava koti ku famba himilenge. Va lugara a mova, se vaya fika va mahetela hikwaswo, va tchela a byala, se vateka a tchigumana lexiya venge hikona anga kona a mulumuzana kumbe mamana lwiya, va bohelela seno ndzaku ka mova vakokovisa. Hambu a xicravatura, a vanhu a vakokiwa himahatchi. Kambe a ongo la hina ali tirhi. Hi ehleketa leswaku hipfuna ava tatana va hina hikuva boha hikoka himumova!

(Matsombe 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

Hahahaaaa....[laugh]. Most of what I have seen and heard is torture. Do you know what happens? The widow puts her cloth like a baby's diaper and climbs to the top of the house to remove the grass which the rituals' experts need, the *xitchungwa* grass [the grass that covers the spike on top of a typical Tsonga house]. She will sit and sleep on that grass. There are other hard things that they do which are "torture" for the widow. After all rituals she will stay for a year or two. Then she is married to anyone in the family. The father-in-law calls his sons, the brothers of the deceased, and says: 'yes my daughter-in-law, your husband is gone; here are the brothers of the deceased'. The widow then chooses the one she wants for husband. When the time comes for ritual sex of cleansing, or reeds off (*ku tchinga*), yea, there are many things in this process. In the *ku tchinga* process, the one who is going to inherit her, he must do *ku tchinga* by "lying" [sexual intercourse] with this woman. After him, the other brothers will also do *kutchinga* ritual sex according to their family hierarchy. After all the brothers have lain with her, the one inheriting her "lies" with her the second time and after this intercourse, she then has to lie with the *mulumuzana* (father-in-law).

The other thing that I can say is about something new that is happening these days. When someone is dead, people further follow the darkness. Why am I saying that? I am saying that because in the past, in the time of the death of our fathers, we did not see these things. Today there is this practice that when a family head dies, they go to

bring him from the cemetery back into his house<sup>51</sup>. They go to the cemetery with traditional beer and they pour it upon the grave, then speak whatever they want to say. They bring with them a small piece of white cloth, which they give a child to drag, while others pour libation continuously until they reach home<sup>52</sup>. Some burial places are far and they cannot walk on foot. They hire a car [truck] and go to the grave and do everything. They pour libation and take that piece of cloth which they believe has *mulumuzana*, or that lady on it, and tie it at the back of the car and drag it. Even in slavery, people were dragged by horses. But our brain does not reason. We think we are helping our parents by tying and dragging them with cars!

After Rev. Matsombe's explanation of what led him to conclude that the widow caretakers are actually widow-torturers, he gave the full story of the ritual sex and remarriage of the widow, called *ku tchinga ndzaka*. He also included a story of what he said to be a new development, the bringing home of the dead. The story is the continuing effect of *Mutchapi* among the Tsongas. But, before discussing with him about the issue of *Mutchapi*, I wanted to know whether he knew Christians who do what he had just described. His answer was:

Hahaaaa...(kuhleka). Swahumelela ka. Kambe va maha hiku swi fihla, loko hitsamile hisungula a ku switwa aku swi endlekile. Ninga wula a *exemplo*, wu kona a muti wokarhi, ixaka munhu loyi, imakweru loyi a lovileke na santi wakwe, kuyo sala a vana. Se, vaku aku kambiwe ati mhaka, vavulaka a kuya ba tihlolo. A tihlolo tiya ta vula leswaku mahani leswi, mahani leswi. Se hileswo swi mahekaka aka va Kreste lava vaha hanyaka aka ntumbuluko, vakalaka vanga wu tsikangi. Kasi ke lava vanga wu tsika, vo tsundzuka kunene a vafi hi ku byela a matimu a vana va vona na va ntukulu.

Kambe lava vanga munyamani, va ha famba aka tihlolo. Va vutisela. A tatana wakwa a maha hiku heleketiwa akaya. Aku khohlwa hayini ke? A tave maluko. A

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<sup>51</sup> As indicated, this practice of bringing the dead home is a new practice among the Tsongas. Pastor Matsombe and other informants attribute it to the impact of *Mutchapi* upon Tsonga culture after the 1930s. There was no *kupfuka* notion, which is the basic theory behind this practice. But in my opinion, this practice is not just an impact of *mutchapi* upon Tsonga culture, but also a cultural reaction against the Portuguese colonial policy regarding death and burial. According to Khosa, Tsonga people buried their dead in their homes and this strengthened their belief in the continuous presence of their ancestors, which is believed to be of vital importance for the survival and prosperity of the living part of the family. But the Portuguese found this culture of living with graves in the courtyard a repulsive one and they introduced the cemetery and prohibited the burying of the dead in homes. The people felt deprived of the benefits of staying with one's ancestors and were forced to relegate their ancestors to cemeteries [?]. To defeat this system they developed another way of bringing their ancestors home in a way that the Portuguese could not understand, so that the mortal remains could be in the cemetery to please the Portuguese colonists, but the ancestor was brought home to fulfil one's *ntumbuluko* duty. This way, the Portuguese could do nothing, for the return was spiritual.

<sup>52</sup> The procession of bringing the ancestor home, as described by the informant, is similar to the *Akuapem Odwira – Adaebutuw* Festival in Akropong, Ghana as described by Nana Addo Birikorang, the Apesemakahene, and witnessed by the author.

Matsalwa mavula leswaku a munhu loko a timeka, a Xikwembu xi teka a moya wayena. Xiteka a munhu, hina hisala hiya lahla a tsumbu, kambe a munhu angahari kona. Se himani loyi vayaka vaya teka esireni?

(Matsombe 2001, interview)

**Translation:**

Hahaaaaa...[laugh]. Of course. But they hide when they do it, but later on we hear that they did it. I can give an example of a certain family, a relative of mine. In fact it is my brother and his wife who died and are survived by their children. They said to each other: 'let us consult diviners to hear about family matters'. The bones-casting told them to do this and that. That is what is happening among the Christians who live in *ntumbuluko*, who haven't left *ntumbuluko*. But those who have abandoned *ntumbuluko*, they remember the dead by telling their stories to their children and grandchildren. But those who are in the darkness, they go to divination. They consult by divination and his father needs to be brought home. Why does he not know his own home? Is he insane? The Scriptures says that when a person departs, God takes his spirit. God takes the *person* and we bury the *corpse*, the person is no more! Then, who are they going to bring home from the grave?

After he told me this I asked him "What shall we do?" He said: ... "Do not be hasty. Teach the people. When you come back and you are given a branch (parish)..., do not go only to serve Holy Communion, learn about issues of that area and go to them with teaching that will help them":

Se uva komba, ahi sukeni laha, laha ku bihile laha hi mhaka leyi na leyi na leyi, ahi teni laha. Hi leswi mufaneleke ku maha swona. Loko uku, *isto não da, não pode ser assim, deixa isto...* aswinga ta famba. Ngopfungopfu, mufanele aku sungula hi va rangeli. Haka nyingi, la va hluphaka ahi vanhu lava va xitsungu, i varangeli. Hikuva loko loyi a rangelaka na a randza leswi aswi randzaka, ata koka a vanhu aka swona. Kulaveka a ti hloko, u sungula hitona. Varangeli [va kereke], varangeli va mitlawa uva dyondzisa, u yengisa a macomentário ya vona aka hikwaswo leswi va dyondzaka.

(Matsombe 2001, interview)

**Translation:**

Then show them, let us move from here, there is an error or evil here because of this and that, let us come here. This is what you must do. If you just say "This can't be so, this doesn't work, stop it, don't do it"...that won't help. You must primarily start by teaching the leaders. Most of the time, those who cause trouble are not the ordinary believers, they are the leaders. Because, if one who leads the church and there is something he likes, he will drag the people behind him to that thing. You must start with the heads. You must teach church leaders and leaders of groups [youth, women, men], listening to their comments.

Talking on the role of the missionaries in this teaching, he said that there are two different categories of missionaries, the "yesterday" and the "today" missionary. The "yesterday" missionaries were agents for transferring people from *ntumbuluko* to the

grace of Jesus Christ. "Today" missionaries do not learn the culture of the people. Their teaching is general biblical studies without saying anything specific about the customs of the our country, the customs of the Lomwe people, the customs of the Tsongas, the customs of the Chopis, the customs of Vatswas and those of other people groups that are in our church.

Then I asked Rev. Matsombe whether research which would then produce a guideline for the church in gospel and culture issues could help or not. He answered and gave other supportive comments and stories as follows:

Yinga pfuna swinene ngopfu [aphindile kotala]. Lexo xinga pfuna hikuva xita ngena awutomini la ntumbuluko wa lixaka lelo. Vata switwa aku hakunene [itiyiso] hikuva wena utave utamelile a Bibeke na xiheno lexiya uxi tamelile amavokweni. Uku hina ha switwa leswaku hitsamisile leswi na leswi na leswi, kambe leswi swinga tisiwa hi Yesu, aku vonakala, na tintswalo na ntiyiso hi leswi, na leswi na leswi. Se hi va komba leswaku hi fanele a ku ta laha atintswalweni, hi va komba leswaku loko hinga se fika laha ahi se fika atintswalweni ta Yesu.

Ninga swiseketela, loko wena hakunene u swi randza leswi swaku hlota ati mhaka leti tinga pfunaka, naswikota akuku seketela hiku teka andoda kumbe mandoda ya lomu, Xai-Xai na ka Vilankulu hita tsama hixuxa. Hikuva swikona leswi xanisaka a bandla swamukhuva, akaman'wani masiku hiku vulavula ka hina a pulpito vakalaka vanga switwi. Loko hi endla hiku tsama a hansi, swinga apswa swinene. Hinga endli hiku va khahla hiku tsikani leswiya. Van'wana avaswitive lomu swin'wana swinga tumbuluka kona, voswilandza nje. Kasi ke loko vongo kuma ku pfuniwa hi ndlela leyo a swi ta pfuna swinene. Mhamba-tikona ati kereke leti mahaka amikhongelo wo phahla a vafi. Van'wana a vazalwani va hina vava kona vava kombela aku katekisiwa hi va tata wa vona la va feke. Loko a hi kota leswaku a bandla li tiya, aswitave swisasekile ngopfu. Amasiku ndzaku ahiri ni makuruso ya hikwavo vatiri. Ahiva dyondzisa atimhaka leti, niswin'wana leswa mukhuva aswingena aka *programa* lelo. Kambe a *programa* ali fambanga, kambe lisasekile swinene.

(Matsombe 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

It can help very much [he repeated this many times, which is a Tsonga emphatic mechanism]. It can help very much because it will penetrate the life [heart] of *ntumbuluko* of that people. They will surely understand that truly it is truth because on the one hand you will have the Bible and on the other hand their customs. In addressing (evangelising, teaching) them [and using the research findings] you will say: 'We know that we are like this and that. However, Jesus is this and that (light, grace and truth). Then we show them that we must come to the grace, showing them that before we come to this point we haven't arrived yet at the grace of Jesus.

I can support such research. If you truly like investigating issues that can help, I can support you by gathering the elders as informants from Xai-Xai and Vilankulo and we can discuss together. There are some issues that are troubling the church; there are some stranger practices/incidents [in our denomination]. We cannot properly address these issues from the pulpit. If we can sit down, this could be better. We

must not push them, saying abandon this or that. Some of them do not know the origin of some of the practices; they just follow them. Therefore, if they could be helped this way, it could be very helpful.

There are churches that offer prayers of libation to the dead called *ku phahla*. Some of our church members go to these churches and ask to be blessed by their deceased fathers. If we could be able to help the denomination to be firm, that could be very good. In the past we had seminars for all leaders and church officers, we used to teach them about these issues and other issues were also included in that programme. That programme did not last, but is a very good programme.

Summarizing what Rev. Matsombe said, we can say that he associates *ntumbuluko* with:

- 1) cultural customs of a people
- 2) darkness or *ntumbuluko* of darkness and
- 3) traditional or customary laws.

This darkness needs the light, and this light is the word of God. He emphasizes light, grace and truth in his perception of the gospel in relation to *ntumbuluko*. Talking about the laws of *ntumbuluko*, Rev. Matsombe tells a story of a widowhood ritual that can rightly be called family or ritual rape. It was this story that pushed me to ask whether such *ntumbuluko* practices are done by Christians.

He started by laughing, and then told a story of his own extended family. Then he indicated that there are serious problems concerning *ntumbuluko* and the Christian faith in the Baptist denomination. He calls these problems *mukhuva* (strange practices), he points out the following as the aggravating factors:

- 1) the vestiges of *Mutchapi*
- 2) the existence of churches that conduct ancestor-veneration prayers and use magic to kill the victims of their clients
- 3) the influence of *Mutchapi* with its problems, like spirit attacks and demands for slave girls
- 4) the economic hardships, which create a desire for prosperity and
- 5) the cultural revolution in post-Marxist Mozambique.

These factors force many people to seek *ntumbuluko* solutions, thus being attracted to divination and cultic church services. They go looking for help for their *Mutchapi* related problems as well as seeking the blessings of their father (ancestors).

From what Rev. Matsombe says, one can see there is tension on the ground. The fact that he is saying that, if we could help the denomination to be firm or strong that would be good, suggests that the denomination is not firm or strong. The present interaction between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith is problematic, so much so that there had been open conflicts ending with:

- 1) the expulsion of some pastors
- 2) the exodus of a good number of believers and local churches, and finally
- 3) with the termination or expulsion of the missionaries in the denomination in the year 2000 and 2001.

Maybe the call for further research and a programme for training the church leadership in the interaction between the gospel and culture is an idea worthy of effort. But the research that is necessary to deal with the issues is not simple, it must cover:

- 1) *ntumbuluko* laws and practices
- 2) *Mutchapi* phenomena and its related problems, and
- 3) the emerging “cultic” churches.

This kind of research does not deal only with facts, but with spirits which the informant called *swinyamukwaxani* and *muhliwa* (these spirits are related to *Mutchapi*).

But first we must listen to what other informants had to say on the issue of *ntumbuluko* and the Christian faith.

#### **2.5.1.2 The profile of Rev. Rafael Mangwele and his description of *ntumbuluko***

Rev. Mangwele is a retired senior pastor. He is 92 years old, and was born in Munyazilo and lives in Matimbine, Chidengele, Gaza Province.

Rev. Mangwele is not a Tsonga, he is a Muchopi, although the Chopi origin is Karanga/Shona. Since their immigration into the Tsonga area in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century they have assimilated much of the Tsonga *ntumbuluko*. Langa (1992) in his *Guestões Cristãs à Religião Tradicional Africana: Moçambique*, studies the Chopi and the Shangaan. His first part is entitled “A Religião Tradicional Africana no

*Contexto Changan-Chope (African Traditional Religion in the Shangaan-Chopi Context)."*

I am including Rev. Mangwele in the IUB for historical reasons. When I interviewed him he had already left the IUB and joined the Baptist Convention. The conflict I made reference to involved, among others, his son-in-law (a pastor) and his son (a lawyer) on one side, and the old church leadership on the other side. His son-in-law was expelled from the church and he joined the Baptist Convention in Maputo. His son, the lawyer and his daughter, among others, followed their brother-in-law.

His answer to my question about *ntumbuluko* was: '*Kunene mina ni tiva leswaku ntumbuluko inawu. [Ntumbuluko] ku tlhanganisa ka hikwayo munawu yi taka hi ka lava va nga hi beleka (Yes, what I know is that ntumbuluko is the law. It is the summary of all laws that come from those who gave birth to us)'. When I asked him whether he remembered some of those ntumbuluko laws he said: 'Ina yikona. Hiku, loko u fika lom u tikweni wu hanya, u fanele ku maha leswi va ku gwelako. Lava vanga hi beleka va hi byelile leswaku munga tsuki mu maha leswi himu byelaka a ku mu nga mahi. Swa yila (Yes there are. If one arrives in a country and settles one must do whatever one is told to do. Those who bore us told us never to do what they told us not to do. Swa yila (is taboo).'*

One of the interesting things in his answer is the idea of coming and settling in a land or country and having to do whatever one is required to. I am not sure what he meant with coming to settle in a land. Could this indicate that the historic immigration of the Karanga/Shona who became the Vachopi is still in the memory and consciousness of the contemporary Chopis? His statement suggests the inescapable domination of territorial or communal *ntumbuluko* laws over everyone living in a given territory or community, including Christians like Mangwele himself. When I asked him to give me specific *ntumbuluko* taboos that he remembered and could explain, he said:

*Hi tsundzuka[a ku tsundzuka can mean to remember or to observe. I used it to mean to remember, but my interviewee meant to observe or respect] swi nyingi, hikuva a mhaka leyi ya ku xi tchava a xilo yi nkulu. I nawu wu nkulu lowo wa ku tchava a tchumu. Ku na ku tchava a bava wa wena na ku tchava a tchilo, va ku byela va ku, u nga tlangi hi xona xilo lexo xi ta ku dyaya. Loko u teka nsati, va ku layela va ku u nga mahi a swa ku kani, xi yila xo karhi, u nga mahi; u nga kuma ti mhangu (AC-*

mu nga ni hlevela – RM- hahaha!!! A hi ku hleva ku vula ntiyiso]. A wa nsati a ni tsamela ga kwe, se loko gi fikile, a wu swi koti a ku etlela naye.

(Mangwele 2001, interview)

**Translation:**

We remember<sup>53</sup> many things because, one must take it seriously when warned to fear something. It is a high law, the law of fearing something. There is fear for one's father ('fear' here is the deepest or ritual respect) and fear of something, when one is told not to joke with or have fun with that thing, for it will kill you. If one gets married, one is counselled and told what one must not do, something which is a certain taboo; one must not do, it will lead one to trouble (I asked if he could confidentially tell me what he meant). Hahahaaa....[laugh]. It is not secret, it is telling the truth. A woman has her manners/nature, when her nature comes [menstrual period], you cannot sleep with her.

Based on his expressed view about female cycles, I told him of other churches which have a doctrine prohibiting women in their periods to partake of the Holy Communion. Then I asked if such prohibition existed in our denomination or not. He answered:

Hi swona na ha ha kula hina, a swi hi kona. Loko a hi masikwini a a yila [a wa nsati], a a nga gi xilalelo. Hambi swi nga hi leswo, loko wu vulavula hi ku ti tsona, ku ti tsongahata, na ku kombisa a ku a meza lowu hi yako ka wona wu nkulu, wena Mfundisi a wu nga yi a ndlini ya nsati wa wena. A bandla a hi nga li byeli a ku mu nga yeni a ti ndlini ta n'wina, a vo swi tiva vona [*so obvious that no teaching is needed*], na wena u yaka u ya khoma a meza lowuya.

(Mangwele 2001, interview)

**Translation:**

Yes, when we were growing the church had this prohibition. A woman having her period was impure. She did not partake of the Holy Communion. Besides that, if one speaks of depriving oneself (fasting), humbling oneself, and demonstrating that the table that we are going to is high (holy), the pastor did not go into his wife's house [bedroom, meaning sexual abstinence]. We did not tell the congregation not to go into their houses, but they knew that they shouldn't, and this was the general rule for whoever would touch that table.

After his explanation of the female impurity and Holy Communion restrictions, I changed the subject to the issues of different deaths, burials and funerals. Concerning the burial of a person with tuberculosis, Rev. Mangwele explained: 'For a person who

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<sup>53</sup> In Tsonga *kutsundzuka* can mean to remember or to observe. I used the term to mean remembering, but my informant understood and answered it in the sense of the "observance" of a ritual.

has died of tuberculosis they use *murhi* (medicine). Those who touch the corpse are given this *murhi*. They get mud and grass from the lagoon. Then they put the medicine, mud and the grass in the grave and lay the corpse over these elements'. According to the informant, if this is not done the family of the deceased will continually be struck by tuberculosis while the entire community will see no rain, for the land is polluted. He then said that Christians who do not know the truth in their hearts do these things and that they even announce that the deceased is suffering cold, let us bring him/her home. They slaughter chickens and go to the grave to pour libation saying: 'Let us go home', thinking he will be a protection for them against the invisible powers. He then made the following comment:

A mhaka leyi ya ntumbuluko ya karata. Loko hiya ku lahlani-va hi kombela a ku hi khongela; se hi khongelela a ndawu na va tirhi a ku va tirha kwatsi. Kambe hi ndzaku, la vo lava a ntumbuluko va teka kumbe swi faki va khumuzela se a swi hangalasa a phahla a ku: 'N'wina va ka mani, na n'wina va ka mani, "a khuza va ka vona," amukelani a munhu wa n'wina loyi hi la ku mu veka laha.' Se ni ku tsee!, se la va nga khongela va tirhile yini ke loko va hi va ka mani na va ka mani va faneleke ku rangela a ntirho lowuya?!

Lava va hanyaka ka ntumbuluko na va hi Makriste nizwa guwa. Loko munhu a vabya, va ta landzelela a mavabyi se u twa a ku a ka khombo legiya, a va swi mahangi kwatsi. A va ha hlanganangi kwatsi va hangalasa khombo [ritual sex]-se a tekile a tchilo xa mufi a ngenisa a ndlini ya kwe, se a ngeneliwa hi khombo, a ta fa. Wa yi vona mhaka!

**SWILERISO-** Loko hi ku hlawula, wena, ku la ku ti hlawula, u suka a ka mahanyelo ya ntumbuluko. A hi ku kwalaho hi nga ku hlawula kona, u tsama kwalaho, u landza ntumbuluko. A Ivangeli leyo yi nga ta famba, hikuva, a tiko la ku vona, li hlamala; liku, kasi leswi a ngo khoma seno a khoma seno! A ni tsembi leswaku wena u nga hundzula a vanhu va tiya a Ivangelini loko wena u nga ti hlawulangi ku sungula.

(Mangwele 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

This issue of *ntumbuluko* is a difficult one. When we go to burials, they ask us to pray. We pray for the burial site and for those who will dig the grave that everything should go smoothly. But those who want *ntumbuluko* to prevail, they take maize and spread it then and pour libation or say a *ntumbuluko* prayer: 'You, the paternal family and the maternal family, "praising his clan," receive your person that we are bringing here'. Then I wonder what the Christian prayer was for, if the ancestors of the two clans are the ones to lead the work?! Those who live in *ntumbuluko*, being Christian, there is a lot of problems. If someone is ill, they will investigate the illness [through divination]. Then one is told that the recent burial or funeral was not properly done. They did not meet and scatter the misfortune, then the one who is ill took something belonging to the deceased and introduced it inside his house, thus bringing the misfortune to himself. He will surely die. Do you see this problem?!

As an advice, if one is set apart by the church, s/he must set apart her/himself, transferring oneself from *ntumbuluko*. Do not stay in the same place we found you, following *ntumbuluko*. That sort of gospel will not advance, because the people see you and are disillusioned that you touch here and there. I am not sure if such a person can convert people to become firm in the gospel without first setting oneself apart.

I wanted the informant to explain what he meant by 'touching here and there'. The answer was: '*Ku patsela. Ku patsa ntu na ivangeli* (It is mixing. It is mixing *ntumbuluko* and the gospel)'. Then I asked him whether mixing *ntumbuluko* and the gospel was an issue at all in the church, to which he answered:

Xi tave xi karato lexo a kerekeni ke?-xi karato, xa ni xanisa; ni sungula ku twa a ku ni tirile mahala. A vanhu va hina a va yingisangi, vaha landzelela leswiya. A le ivangelini, kambe a vanhu va mu tiva. Se a vanhu va ta tsikisa ku yini loko u ku a hi tsikeni leswi, kambe wena u swi maha. U ta mu hundzulisa ku yini, na yena uta maha hikuva a vona wena. Va n'wani va li a ninga tsiki ntumbuluko wa hina-swa ni xanisa. A vana va swi tiva leswaku bava a a tirha a Ivangeli, kambe a a maha leswi.

(Mangwele 2001, interview)

Translation:

It is an issue, it is a serious one which pains me. I start having a feeling that I laboured for nothing. Our people did not listen, they are following those things. They are in the gospel, but the people know his life. How can other people abandon things if the leader is doing them? They will also do the same. Some people even say: 'I cannot abandon our *ntumbuluko*'. This pains me...

Rev. Mangwele views *ntumbuluko* as the law or the summary of all laws. He recommends the respect and observation of these laws, especially those related to women's impurity (menstrual period) and the laws of the land. His language on the laws of the land is that of someone whose clan or family has no ritual connections or ownership of the land. When it comes to the point of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, he becomes very personal.

When speaking about funeral rites, he sees them as annulling the importance of the Christian faith. However, he says one cannot force people to believe; therefore he has never confronted such practices. He does not also become involved at the family level when the funeral rituals end disastrously. Without being specific, Rev. Mangwele makes a general accusation that Christians mix the gospel with *ntumbuluko*.

It is on this point that he becomes more personal, saying he feels that he has worked for nothing and that this mixing causes him pain. Here, his complaints about the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel are similar to the complaints made by Rev. Matsombe. Although they do not go into specific detail, they reveal that there is a serious gospel and culture relationship problem in the Baptist denomination. Rev. Mangwale calls for the church leadership to set itself apart for the ministry as a solution to this relational problem.

If this is what the two clergy say, what does the next informant, a lay person, have to say?

### **2.5.1.3 The profile of Mr. Filimone Josayi Chitlango and his comments on *ntumbuluko* and the gospel relationship**

Filimone Chitlango passed away due to pneumonia in December 2001 at the age of 40. Filimone was born in Chilotani, along the Save River and he had been attending the IUB church since his youth. He had no formal education, but could read and write in Tsonga, since he attended the local vernacular literacy classes. He had two wives at home, with six children, and a third wife in South Africa, with two children. Thus he is survived by eight children and three wives. In South Africa he was known as Paulos Mahlangu. In my interview record he identified himself as a lay preacher in the IUB.

Filimone did not understand the process of an interview. He just started talking as in preaching, without answering my questions. Because of this, I will not use much of his information, except some interesting remarks and statements he made here and there.

He said that people living along the Save River are born and grow up knowing that what keeps them alive are their gods, and that they cannot have rain or good hunting without the favour of these gods, and so they offer them sacrifices. These practices started from time immemorial to our great grandfathers, grandfathers, and to our fathers and our generation. These practices cause backsliding or double-tongue (talk)

among Christians. They cause one to have two kings; people are unable to serve demons only or God only. 'We cause the two to fight over us' (Chitlango F 2001, interview).

For this problem, Filimone blamed the fact that our church ordains people who are not trained for pastoral ministry or, if they are, they do not teach, but just give laws. He argued that some people mix *ntumbuluko* with the gospel because of ignorance, and that if they could be tough with those who have experienced the power of God, change could happen. However, he recommended that such teaching must continue for as long as one to two years for each person, if the people who live in *ntumbuluko* are to be transferred to the power of God, and to be transformed.

He then gave a wonderful testimony of how he himself came to know of the power of God and how he trusted God and that he was eager to teach others. He said he had renounced and destroyed his amulets and artifacts and that no one could bewitch him. But, three months later, he got pneumonia and concluded that he was bewitched and that he knew who had done it to him and that that person was a relative of his. He visited various diviners in Johannesburg and prepared to go home to be treated by the most powerful diviners of the village. The day he got his visa he became very ill, and died the next day. After his burial his wife presented to me a lot of muti bottles and charms that he had used. Now I also hear he had an altar for sacrifices, back home.

This is a classical example of the contrast between what many Tsonga Christians say and preach and the way they live their lives. Nevertheless, the issues he raised are of critical importance for the IUB church. The issue of the contrast between the deep cultural background and the lack of theological training among the ministers is a problem. Ministers who can effectively teach and transfer people from the powers operative in *ntumbuluko* to the power of the gospel, are those who are trained to deal with the spiritual realm. He indicated the major problem to be the spirits in various manifestations. The issue comes back to the invisible power, as suggested by Khosa and Mundlovo. It is an issue of powers, or spiritual powers.

To sum up the findings from interviewing the three informants from IUB, we can say that, regardless of some differences in perception and definition of *ntumbuluko*, all do

reveal in varying degrees that *ntumbuluko* is a serious challenge to the Christian faith. For instance, Rev. Matsombe indicated that the impacts of *Muchapi*, and that of the new religious movements within the Christian religion, are contributing factors in the rapidly deteriorating Christian life and practices in the IUB. All three were not happy about the kind of interaction between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, as reflected in the IUB today. They wanted research to be done and a guide to be produced which would be used in teaching how to solve the problem. Moreover, they felt that the church needs spiritually transformed leaders in this process. They also indicated that such teaching would require time. It is not a sermon or lecture kind of teaching. It is a sitting down together, which might take a period of one or two years.

Now, the question we can ask is whether the problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel is limited only to IUB? The answer comes out of our interaction with the next two groups of informants, from the United Methodist Church and the Assemblies of God.

### **2.5.2 Igreja Metodista Unida em Mocambique**

My research in the Methodist church was through the church authority at the Provincial level. However, the views expressed in the interviews may not reflect the official position of the church on the matter. I went to Cambine, Inhambane and approached Rev. Nhatsave, the Provincial Superintendent and explained my research. He then called a district superintendent, Rev. Maswangane, to help him identify good informers within the Methodist denomination. They identified two women and two men. Among the men one was a lay person and the other a pastor. The two women were both pastors' wives, one now a widow. The pastor's wife declined the interview, saying that she grew up in a Christian home and did not know anything about *ntumbuluko*. So I only interviewed the other woman, reducing the informers to three. In the interview with the layman I was accompanied by two pastors from the centre in Cambine, including Rev. Maswanganhe, the district superintendent, who is also a lecturer in the denomination's seminary.

Cambine is an old mission station started in the 1800s by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. When the mission could not continue its work it handed over the centre to the Methodist mission. Cambine was the first Protestant

mission in Mozambique. It was a complex comprising a primary boarding school, Bible school, clinic, chapel, craft centre and a number of missionary and local ministers' residences. The primary school is now a matric boarding school, the Bible school is at the college level and the craft centre has developed into a training centre in carpentry. Cambine has produced very many important people in both the church and in government. This was the reason why I selected this place for its historical importance in Tsonga Protestant Christianity. What do people from this historic place have to say about *ntumbuluko*?

#### **2.5.2.1 The profiles of Mr. Amisson Jane Dule and Rev. Jeremias Penicela Nhanombe and their definition and description of *ntumbuluko***

While I was interviewing Mr. Dule, Rev. Nhanombe decided to take part so that I did not have to set another interview with him. So, whenever he felt he needed to add to or clarify something that the other informant said, he spoke and made his contribution. The transcription presents the information from both informants, indicating the code for each before his words. Although Rev. Maswanganhe was present during the interview, he did not say anything.

I did not know Mr. Dule and the other Methodist informants before the interview and I know little about their background. Mr. Dule is 67 years old and was born and lives in Mucambe-Feha, a very remote area of Murrombene between Massinga and Funhalouro districts. It is a Vatswa area and all of my informants from the Methodist Church are Vatswa. Cambine itself is a Vatswa area but close to Tongas of Murrombene town.

Mr. Dule was identified as the most trustworthy elder of the church who, in the opinion of the two superintendents, could give the most valuable information on *ntumbuluko*. He did not hold an ordained position and his occupation was subsistence farming. However he commanded respect from the clergy, including his superintendent and Rev. Nhanombe, who is 10 years older than him.

Rev. Nhanombe is 77 years old, and was born in Pacule, Murrombene, Inhambane. At the time of the interview (2001) he was working and living in the Cambine centre, but expected to be transferred anytime in the year 2002. He is a professional agriculturist, probably at the certificate level.

When I asked Dule what the term *ntumbuluko* meant his answer was:

A ntumbuluko, a ntiyiso kahle nita ringeta aku vula leswi: Ntumbuluko I ku vangywa ka vanhu. Loko va vangwe a vanhu na wu tomi laku sangula ka munhu.... Wu tomi laku sangula laha misaveni li vitaniwaka ntumbuluko.

(Dule 2001, interview)

Translation:

*Ntumbuluko*; I can truthfully say that: *ntumbuluko* is the creation of humans. When humans were created and the life of the human in the beginnings [that is *ntumbuluko*].... The way of life on earth in the beginning is called *ntumbuluko*'.

In a further comment he said:

A ku sunguleni a vanhu a ka hanyela gabye, ku ni leswi vanga nyikwe aku swi hlayisa....lomu ka tiko legi ga xi hangula (ku vumaleka a tiva na mucongo, a ku na tchumu), kutani ke, lomu va tirisile a mi ntamu yo tsama va hleketa. Se va maha a ngoma ya hombe ya 2m. Yive na xikhumba seno ni seno. Yive yi akeliwa yindlu – va veka xiphande laha na laha, vayi veka laha.

A ngoma leyi a va yi phahla leswaku yi ta kota a ku va byela a swilo, kumbe mababyi, kumbe ku a ti vula ti tana; xi ta vula. Loko ku fika a karhi wa ku a vula yina, a xitrumeto lexiya xita dzinza ku kwa xi biwa hi munhu. Xi wa fana na ku dzinza ka tilo. A nga kona a to kala anga xitwi, lomu ka ma 4 horas xi ta dzinza.

Loko xi dzinza vata swi tiva leswaku a vula yi la kuna. Vata vuka ni mixo va amba mahungu va ku a gi tcheni, vaku mu vukile njani, vaku hi vukile, kani lezi (xiwa vitanwa aku Mapude) – vaku Mapude a dzinzile a mangala a ku a vula yi tave kona. Se va ta famba va swiyelela a mun'wereti na ti mhakwa leti vanga nkela lomu ka swimuwo; a nsiku legi yi ta na a yinge tsandzi.

Swi fambile swi famba vaku va lahlile a ntumbuluko. Kuni mukarhi a xitrumeto lexi va xi totaku mafura na tsumani. Xi wa hlayiswa ku fana na loko wena munhu u tola mafura. Kambe hi ku famba ka swi khati, a xaha tirhi.

(Dule 2001, interview)

Translation:

In the beginning, there were certain things that humans were given or assigned to keep or observe.... In this dry land (where there is no lake, lagoon or flowing rivers), they used their reasoning powers. They made a huge drum, [about] two metres tall with drum skin on both ends. They built a house for the drum in which the drum was suspended on a pole supported by two forked uprights.

They offered sacrifices to this drum so that the drum could inform or communicate to them information about things to come, like diseases or rainfall. When the rainy season came, that instrument would thunder as if someone was playing the drum. Its sound was like that of heavenly thunder. Everyone could hear it (literally "there was no one who could not hear it"). It thundered at around 4 a.m. When it thundered they knew that it was about to rain. In the morning they would greet each other and say 'Mapude'<sup>54</sup> (the name of the drum) thundered giving notice that there will be rain.' Then, they would go and clean their tree-wells and tree-holes they made in *ximuwu* trees, and that day it would definitely rain.

Sometimes they would say that *ntumbuluko* had been broken. These were times when they had to anoint the instrument with oil and ochre. The *Mapude* drum was treated and taken care of like a person. But in the course of time, it lost its power and did not work anymore.

I asked Dule how the people knew which message *Mapude* was communicating when it thundered. He explained that the *Mapude* drum thundered in different ways. If it thundered to announce rain or misfortune or diseases, the sound was different. Going further, he explained, he said:

Loko hi hundza ka xitrumento lexi, lomu va tirisile a zinyanyani. Na nyamutlha ha ha xi tsemba a xi nyanyani xa matchowani. Loko xiku, tchowe, tchowe [tcha-tcha-tcha...] – ha zi tiva aku a vula yi tana. Zilo lezi zinga hi lomu zinga mahilwe hi ntumbuluko, abi hina hi nga swi maha. Naswona ku na xinyanyani xi singitaku, i nhura [or ndura]. Loko yi ba, lavo kota a manganakana kumbe hosi, ku tave na ku fa. Se, a madoda ya tiko, a ma hlangana ma lava ku tiva leswaku ikhombo muni gi lavako ku humelela. Se va hlahluva tihlolo. Se va tiva aku ixini xi onhekileke – loko swihi swaku swa koteka aku va swi pfala hi ku phahla, va ta phahla [*prediction and control of reality*]. Loko ku kumeka leswaku a swi nga ta koteka hambu va phahla, a khombo gi ta tsama gihi kona, avo rindzela.

(Dule 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

Besides this instrument (*Mapude* drum), in this area birds were also used. Even today we still trust the *matchowani* (rain announcer) bird. If it chirps "tchowe, tchowe, tcha-tcha-tcha-tcha...", we know it is going to rain. These are the *ntumbuluko* things that used to be in this land, we did not invent them, and they come from *ntumbuluko*. There is also a bird that announces misfortune, which is called *nhura/ndura*. If it chirps, personalities like royal officials or the king himself will suffer death. Once that bird is heard chirping, the counsellor or elders of the territory will meet and try to find out what is going to happen. They go to bones-casting divination. Through divination they knew what has gone wrong. If they can avert

<sup>54</sup> *Mapude* is the name of that mysterious drum. I have no idea of the origin or meaning of the term. 'Drum' in all of the three Tsonga languages and other Bantu languages like Zulu, is "ngoma", which shows no etymological relationship whatsoever with *Mapude*. However, the term "ngoma" is closely related to spirits. So, in Tsonga there is *Xingomanatanda* and in Zulu *Sangoma*. These terms indicate those who play drums to call spirits to possess them. The *Mutchapi* movement prophesized about the mysterious drum, that at its sound witches would be exposed. *Mapude* can be compared to the Ghanaian talking drum tradition, but *Mapude* is still different because it is not played by humans, it is a self-operated talking drum, while the Ghanaian talking drums are played by humans and they do not foretell events.

the coming disaster through a sacrifice, they will offer a sacrifice. If divination tells them that even if they offer a sacrifice, they won't be able to avert the tragedy, they get prepared for it to happen.

After the above story of birds announcing death, the attempt to stop death from taking place, and the acceptance and preparation for the imminent death, I asked Dule to explain what was done if someone died. He explained that if an adult or the head of a family dies, they make a hole in the back of the house and remove his body. This is done so that his body disappears and does not leave a vacuum at the spiritual realm of the home, thus opening up the home for more deaths one after another. After removing the body through the back of the house, and arriving in the family graveyard, they stop and take all the grain produced by the family. The eldest of the family who offers sacrifices on behalf of the family spreads the grain on the graveyard entrance and addresses the family ancestors saying: 'We are coming home, welcome us so that we have no trouble and everything goes smoothly' and they spread some more grain. When they reach the precise place where they will make the grave, the elder will once again spread grain and say: 'Yea, here is the place we accompanied him/her to, we will leave him/her here'. Then he takes a hoe and marks the size of the grave. After digging deep they make a compartment [like in Jewish and Islamic graves] and they will lay the corpse in that compartment, a man will lie on his right side and a woman on her left side.

Relating to death, I asked what was done in the case of miscarriage and the death of a person suffering from tuberculosis. Dule explained that they take a pot and go to the miscarriage or abortion spot and place all the remains and blood in the pot. They then go to a place to bury them. They do not make a grave, but just cover the foetus with the pot and make a hole on the top of the pot. He then said that if they do not make the hole, that baby or miscarried pregnancy is the last, the mother will become barren. Relating to the funeral of tuberculosis sufferers, Dule said that the relative will bury him/her outside the family grave, or they will make a grave where the family deposits ashes as they do with an albino. Rev. Nhanombe, the other informant, added that a tuberculosis corpse is also taken out by the back of the house, wrapped in grass. S/he is not handled. They tie the corpse with a rope and drag it out, and then the corpse can be handled outside the house. The grass and the rope will be put into the grave saying: 'misfortune, we expel you, do not enter our home again'. He commented that

if this is not done, more people in that family will have the disease and die. When I asked whether there were Christians in the Methodist church who do such rituals, Dule indicated that for the grain offering in the grave, some do, others do not, but for the tuberculosis rituals the majority do and they do have a protective medicine given by a diviner that the family invite afterwards.

Then I asked about what is done when a girl reaches puberty. Dule's explanation included the giving of *ntumbuluko* laws, shaving her hair and anointing her with ochre, and a party. Rev. Nhanombe added that this is an important occasion for Africans. Not only the girl who has reached her puberty, but also all the girls of the area come and make a circle and pound an empty pounding canon, producing the sound "gwa, gwa, gwa" and dancing to announce to the young men that there is a mature girl in that family just waiting for interested and suitable young men. He repeated the point that this day was a day for giving the girl laws and that her counsellor (*sungukati*) measured and gave her the days that her period must last. She was told that she would be impure for the duration of her period and that, in such a state she must separate herself from her husband and stop cooking for anyone except herself. So, I asked Rev. Nhanombe what the Methodist Church's position was on women during their menstrual period. He said:

Hi nayo wa xilalelo xa Hosi, até nyamutlha a Makreste lawa manga wuva ma ambala a Xikreste, ka layeliwa lezaku, a wa nsati loko a la ku ya ka xilalelo anga feli ku ve loyi a vonaka masiku – anga faneli ku sukela a ndlini a hlangene na nuna wa yena – a viki la xilalelo li kwitsimile ka wa nuna kumbe wa nsati, a va tsineli a xi lalelweni na va karhi va hisa, na nyamutlha va layeliwa lezo – zinga etcheka aku va n'wani va honisa, kambe a nayu wa kereke ya hina u vula lezo.

(Nhanombe 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

According to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, to this day, mature Christians put on Christlikeness (sic). It is taught that a woman going to partake of the Supper, must not be in her period; she must not come from her house where she met her husband [sexual intercourse]; the Holy Communion week is a holy week for men and women, they must not approach the Table while hot [ritual heat after sexual intercourse]. Even today this is what Christians are taught. It is possible that some do disregard it, but this is what the law (doctrine) of our church says.

I am not sure whether this is the official Methodist position or not, but this is what one of their pastors said. When I asked about the problem of *ku pfuka* and the *Mutchapi*

influence, Dule confirmed that *kupfuka* is a new phenomenon and that it is associated with *Mutchapi*. In Mucambi-Feha it started to become a serious issue in about 1956. They also indicated the issue of slave girls called *Nyakwave*. These girls are wives to spirits, they never marry and may never have sex, or else the man will die. Most of the time they stay inside their house.

Finally I asked my informants what had the most influence in the life of their believers: was it the gospel or *ntumbuluko*? Rev. Nhanombe said that one of the problems was that now people from different places and cultures are mixed, including the pastoral personnel. He added that now, if someone dies, there is *missa* (mass), which is *mhamba* in *ntumbuluko* (sacrifice to the ancestors). Goats are slaughtered and our believers are bathed with goat's blood, saying they are killing death in the family. Now, there is three month *missa*, six month *missa*, one year *missa* but this is *mhamba*. The medium comes and works on Friday night and we pastors go on Saturday morning. 'This is half Africanism, half Christianity' he said. Then I asked Rev. Nhanombe why that happens, and he said:

A mhaka hi leyi yaku a Makreste ya nyamutilha ma tchava a ku vula a xi onho. A ntumbuluko ixi onho. Byela munhu xionho. Kunge hi leswi, ni Mfundisi, ku laveka a ku vala uku, Mfundisi wa hoxa hi lexi na lexi, haku nyimisa a kuve Mfundisi. Kambe sweswi va tchava ku byela munho xi onho.

(Nhanombe 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

The problem is that today's Christians are afraid to point out sin. *Ntumbuluko* is sin. Point out the sin in someone. Like myself as a pastor, you must be courageous to say, pastor, you are doing wrong in this and that; we suspend you as pastor. But now they are afraid to point out sin in someone's life.

He went on to say that people living in sin go on working, preaching, their problems are overlooked and there is no discipline. He also pointed out that there are other contributing factors causing *ntumbuluko* to have more influence among the Methodist Christians. He indicated that the church had long lost its tradition of classes from which people learned the fundamentals of the Christian faith, which included issues concerning *ntumbuluko* and the Christian faith. The other contributing factor he indicated was that there are Christians that act as diviners and mediums in spirit communication. They slaughter goats and operate magic in the name of Christ. If an

evangelist is disciplined in the church, the next day he will visit you with his clerical collar showing and make an unspoken statement: 'you considered me a sinner, look now; I am a minister like yourself'. 'Because of that our churches are reluctant to discipline their members and clergy, for fear of losing them'. Within the church, Nhanombe indicated that there is more civilization than conversion. 'People come to show their status and talents, with very nice clean clothes; but very dirty hearts'. Dule added that 'another issue that contributed to *ntumbuluko* being more influential was the general ignorance about the power of God in relation to life issues, and the lack of experience of God's power in life' (Dule & Nhanombe 2001, interview).

Looking at Dule's account, we find that *ntumbuluko* is the creation or beginning of human life and existence. The kind of life in the beginning is what must be called *ntumbuluko*. Although he started by saying that *Mapude* was the product of reasoning, after talking about the two communicating birds, he concluded by saying that those things were of *ntumbuluko* and not anyone's creation. In the same way as other informants, Dule and Nhanombe did associate *ntumbuluko* with various ritual laws like those of funerals, puberty etc. However, they did not define *ntumbuluko* as the law like others did. Like Matsombe, they dissociated *ntumbuluko* from the *kupfuka* notion and phenomenon, attributing it to *Muchapi* and not to Tsonga *ntumbuluko*.

Nhanombe said nothing when I asked about *ntumbuluko*. But when I asked about the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and Christianity in the Methodist denomination his answer to this question was a definition of *ntumbuluko*. '*Ntumbuluko* is sin', he said. With this definition he came close to Matsombe's definition of *ntumbuluko* as darkness and as something which does everything evil. Once again, we find that the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and Christianity is a serious issue in the Methodist denomination. From these two informants we can see that the issue is complex. At the end of the interview the doctrine of Holy Communion expressed elsewhere was used by Dule to criticise the Methodist ordination of women. On our way back from Mucambe-Feha to Cambine Rev. Nhanombe, and Rev. Maswanganhe the area superintendent, told me not to take Dule's criticism seriously, for it was a layman's ignorant comment.

### 2.5.2.2 The profile of Mrs. Nel Sinai Massango and her definition and description of *ntumbuluko*

Mrs. Massango was born in Homoine and is now resident in Cambine. She is 82 years old. In 1941 she enrolled at the United Methodist Mission Hospital Nursing Training School at Chicuque, which is now a Rural Hospital, whilst the nurse's training school is still functional. She graduated as a nurse in 1943. She is the wife of the late Rev. Mukhambi, a very well-known senior Methodist pastor and a long-serving President of the Christian Council of Mozambique. Mrs. Massango has served for many years as President and Monitor of the Women's Society of the United Methodist denomination in Mozambique at national level. Her late husband, Rev. Mukhambi, worked closely with Rev. Matsombe and during the natural calamities of the 1980s they travelled together to the US, on behalf of the Protestant churches of Mozambique, to explain the war situation and to ask for emergency assistance.

According to Mrs. [?] Massango:

A ntumbuluko ixilu xi kombisaka a wu munhu la hina laha misaveni kota swi vangwa. Loko Nungungulu a hi mahile, ku sukela ka Adamu a vekile a swilo swa ntumbuluko a ka Adamu na Eva kala ku fika ka hina. A ntumbuluko ku ve na wu tomi ga ma tsamela ya tiko laha misaveni.

(Massango 2001, interview)

Translation:

*Ntumbuluko* is something that symbolizes and demonstrates our humanness on earth, as created beings. When God made us from Adam, he established or put up things or principles of *ntumbuluko* to Adam and Eve all the way through to us. *Ntumbuluko* is to have life in harmony with the cosmos or nature on earth or in the world.

Massango defined *ntumbuluko* as:

- 1) the demonstration or mark of our humanness as created beings
- 2) the [divine] principle and
- 3) the cosmic harmony.

Unlike any other informants of this category, she stated categorically that *ntumbuluko* comes from God and was first given to Adam and Eve when God created them and

that it was handed down from Adam to the Tsongas. Judging from her age, she must have known Bishop Scobel, who studied at Cambine, went abroad for theological training, translated the Bible to Xitswa and who wrote a Vatswa genealogy up to Adam.

When I asked about the interaction between Christian faith and *ntumbuluko*, she told me two stories. One of her nieces, a daughter of her younger sister, had been murdered because she had spirits. The other story had happened two weeks prior to our interview. Another niece of hers was brutally murdered. Her niece's brother died. The sons of the deceased came and accused their aunt of having killed their father magically and murdered her. These incidents took place in her family and in her church. She concluded these stories by telling her own story of her long illness, which had ended just a month before the interview. She said that Christian leaders or pastors from her church came and insisted that she was bewitched and that she should allow them to find a medium to cure her. She said that they told her that she must help God and that prayer is secondary, the first thing is *ntumbuluko*. She concluded the story by lamenting that once one was an old woman, when the neighbour's children have fever, they suspect you of bewitching their children. She also indicated that the practice of giving girls as payment, the *nyakwave* spirit wives girls, is still alive, although people try to civilize it.

Giving a general critique of the kind of Christianity that she sees today in her church, she had this to say:

Hi leswaku a masiku lawa, a ku kholwa ka hina ka behuka – a hilaha hasi, a hi le hehla, hi le ndengelengeni hotche makholwa. Va tsongwani nguvo va ngenaka ku kholweni va tiya. Ha vumela a ku hi makholwa; a hi Makriste, ho va makholwa. Loyi a nga Mukriste a nga tsekatekisiwi hi tchumu. Makunu, hina hi rangelaka, ka xin'wani xi khati hi ni nandzu. Hikuva a hi yi hi moya lowuya wa ku kholwa ka khale. Ha kiyelwa hi ku kholwa. Loko munhu a kiyelwa hi ku kholwa ka matirela ya wu Kriste, a nga wu kumi tamu wo hundzulusa vanhu va vuya a swi neneneni. A va rangeli va byela vanhu a ku 'hambi vafundisi va patsela.

(Massango 2001, interview)

Translation:

These days, our faith is light, we are not down, we are not up, we are "in-between" kind of Christians. There are very few who enter into faith and become firm. I think we are religious and yet not Christians. A Christian is not tossed/shaken by anything.

We leaders are guilty of this. We do not lead with faith like in the old days. We lack faith. If anyone lacks faith in the Christian ministry s/he is powerless and cannot convert people. Our leaders tell our people: 'Never mind, even the pastors do mix faith and tradition'. Our message in the congregation is empty, it does not cause conversion. Our deeds, of us the leaders, do not manifest or express Christian faith.

(Massango 2001, interview)

Once again, we find the same kind of outcry that was expressed by the other Methodists. If one listens carefully to the kind of remarks that are made, one could conclude that the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith is a very serious problem, not only among ordinary Christians, but even amongst the clergy of the Methodist church. Massango clearly puts blame on the leadership and she has concrete examples of those who approached her when she was ill. Nhamombe also indicated that there are pastors and evangelists living in sin, whilst the church does nothing about it. This is the same kind of situation that ended up with Mangwele leaving the IUB denomination, when the issue involved his own daughter and he had to confront the leadership. Matsombe has also indicated that the problem is in the leaders, that they drag people along with them, and he called for teaching which targets the leaders first. Even Filimone and Dule made a criticism against the leadership as a reason for the poor interaction and/or relationship between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith.

As regards the possible solution to the problem of relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, so far we have two informants who have made some suggestions. Nhamombe noted the fact that the Methodist church has let the "class" tradition fall apart and that it needs to be revived as a discipleship strategy. He also recommended, at the academic level, that research be done and that the findings be published in Portuguese, Tsonga and English so that our people can see this situation and start working hard to change it. He said that we are being deluded by large numbers of people or a "people's movement" in our churches, whilst the low conversion and commitment levels are alarming. 'The boat is sinking, it is not moving' he said. This is similar to what Matsombe said. He indicated that there were seminars that the denomination used to run in former times, and that one needed to research and develop a guide on *ntumbuluko* versus the gospel issues which could be used for discipleship and leadership training, reviving this tradition. But this is a process that Filimone calculated would require at least one to two years to achieve.

We still have two other informants, from a different Christian tradition, whose contribution we need to hear.

### **2.5.3 Igreja Assembleias de Deus de Moçambique**

My two informants from the Assemblies of God are, more than others, to be taken in their personal capacities. They are not only not speaking on behalf of their denomination, but even what they say may not reflect a general situation in their denomination. They are both lay leaders and for many years they were individual believers without a local Assemblies of God church in their village. One such church has started up in the last five years, but it is still very fragile, being under local, semi-literate leadership. The two informants are migrant workers in South Africa and live in squatter camps. So they are not in the main stream life of their denomination. But they are very important because they demonstrate the kind of Christian, representing the majority of male Christians among the rural Tsongas, who also represent the remains of the historical beginning of the Protestant Christianity in Mozambique<sup>55</sup>.

#### **2.5.3.1 The profile of Mr. Solomoni Chitlango and his definition and description of *ntumbuluko***

Mr. Chitlango, also known as Makasela, is 59 years old. He was born and still lives at Malindile on the Save River. He, as are all the Chitlangos, is a royal. He is a deacon in his church; he has one wife at home and another in South Africa. He has no formal education, but can read and write in Tsonga.

Solomoni Chitlango gave the most comprehensible definition of *ntumbuluko*, which includes everything. For the duration of the interview he explained each aspect of *ntumbuluko* and ended each explanation with the statement, "this is *ntumbuluko*". He also explained why each ritual is done. We do not have space for all his

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<sup>55</sup> According to Khosa (2001, interview), the Protestant gospel did not come to Mozambique with the missionaries. It came with our people who worked in the South African mines. Then, they called in missionaries to teach and baptize. Only the Catholic church, which is still full of Whites to this day, came with the white missionaries.

definitions/descriptions and explanations. However, we will have extensive quotations in the beginning to highlight how he defined *ntumbuluko*, and then we will summarize the rest, quoting only parts with important definitions.

My question was so simple, “what is *ntumbuluko*”? His answer was:

Ya, se, nita vulisa leswi, niku a ntumbuluko iswilo swa le kaya ka hina a makwatini [*geographic definition*]. A ku fana na muti loko u yakwa. Avaku, a muti awu fanelangi ku yakiwa na unga rangeliwangi hi mulumuzana na nkosikazi – i ntumbuluko lowo.

A xa wumbiri avaku laha kaya a ku faneli leswaku loko n’wana a pswaliwa anga tiviwi. Avaku swa yila. Loko amuti wu sunguliwa na unga rangeliwangi avaku swa yila. Aku yila hikwihi? Avaku swi nyika ku khohlola aka bava na ka mamani. Loko kota a munhu ata endla swa masangu laha kaya aka wena kuve awu rangelangi muti, uma kumile.

Khale ka matiko, a tikweni la hina nitiva aku loko karhi wa tipfula wu fikile ta ku byala, ava hlangana vaya a phangweni, aka swikwembu swa va kokwani lava vanga fa khale (vona hi vona swikwembu swa kona) – vaya vaya phahla. Se vaku, ati mbewu a ti byaliwe. Loko vabyalile, avaku, aswi fanele aku un’wani ni un’wani loyi anga kona lomu tikweni a sungula kudya a timbewu leto (loko ti upfa) na anga yangi tiya phahliwa. Avaku swa yila aku ga vanga phahlangi. Avaku ku ta ta ti fenhe, tinyanyani kumbe tindlopfu ti ta ga mavele ti heta. Se, loko va la ku lumela timbewu, mun’wani ni mun’wani ata khaya xikhevana, xi riwana, hambu loko a phahlile a mutini wakwe a ka ntumbuluko wakwe, ata yisa a timbewu aku tiya phahliwa aka ntumbuluko wa tiko. Se, ava teka timbewu leti vaya phangweni se a hosi yi ya phahla ya tiko lego, se yiku: ‘fambani mu ya ga a timbewu ta n’wina. ‘Se loko vaya a karini waku hula, va peta a byala la ntumbuluko. loko li upfili mun’wani ni mun’wani a teka a mbita vaya hlangana aka ndawu leyi ya munhu loyi anga fa khale anga yena xikwembu xa kona. Se vaya fika va phahla se vaku; mun’wani ni mun’wani a nga ha endla leswi aswi lavaku; kumbe wa peta byala, kumbe a na swikwembu swakwe, se hi endlile swa ntumbuluko.

Ina ka, aka swilo hikwaswo leswi swi vitaniwaka swaku i ntumbuluko aswiza swi endlwa hi mhaka muni? A vaku, loko swinga maheke leswo swa yila; kufana na leswi ninga vula aku a muti na n’wana swa bohiwa.

(Chitlango S 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

Yes, I will say that *ntumbuluko* is things of home in the village. Like when one builds a home. They say that a home must not be built without the *mulumuzana* (male family head) and *nkosikazi* (female family head) knowing the new home<sup>56</sup> first. This is *ntumbuluko*.

They also said that if a child is born in a family and is not known, *swa yila* [is a taboo]. A long time ago, when the rainy sowing season came, they gathered and went to *tipangweni*, to their gods, which are their forefathers, and they sacrificed and

<sup>56</sup> According to S. Chitlango, if they failed to do so, the family heads would contract tuberculosis. Once anyone comes from outside (visitors or daughters with their husbands) and has sex before the ritual, the two family heads or the children will contract tuberculosis.

prayed to them. Afterwards, they went back and sowed. After that, they were told not to eat anything from their agricultural produce before taking their first fruits to the *tipangu* to be prayed for. They said it is taboo to eat before praying for the crops. Monkeys, birds and elephants would come and destroy all the crops. When they want to "bite the season" (eating the season's produce for the first time), they will take all the crops they have, even if they have prayed for their crops according to their family *ntumbuluko*, they have to follow the national *ntumbuluko* of praying for all the crops. They will go to the *pangweni* and the king will offer a sacrifice and say to the people: 'Go and enjoy your seeds (crops or produce)'. After the harvest, they make millet drink and they will go back again to their *lipangu* and present their harvest and the king says: 'From now henceforth, each may do as he pleases with his harvest, whether you make millet drink, or you have your gods, do as you please, we have now done what is of *ntumbuluko*'.

Now, then, all I have explained and whatever is said to be of *ntumbuluko*, why were these things done? They said that if those things were not done, something will happen as in the case of a new home and a newborn baby.

S. Chitlango made a clear connection between the concept and its various administrations in life. I asked him to explain each of the rituals he alluded to above, namely the tying, knowing or leading the home and knowing the child. He started with the home, saying:

Ina ka loko vaku a muti wa tiviwa ava vula leswaku, loko ku sungula vaya fika lahaya va tsema hlapfu vaku hi laha mitini laha. Se ayaka a heta, se aya teka nkosikazai yakwe, hambu ova na mune kumbe tlhanu wa vava nsati; a taya teka a nkosikazi yakwe leyi anga sungula a teka (a nsati wa xiteko) – loko va fika laha kaya la na vahi va mbiri, na kubi hava mun'wani. Se va teka a sangu vali andlala, loko vali andlalile, ku na mati lawa va ngata na wona, se va endla ti mhaka ta vona ta masangu, se va teka a mati lawa va hlambisana. Se va teka a mati lawa vaya laha sangweni [*entrada*] laha ku ngenaka vanhu, se va tchela a mati lawa aka magodi vanga cela...se va ngenisa tinhi va siyetela. Se va famba vaya fika laha phakati ka muti va hlamba a mati lawaya (ave se maha tchumu leswo) se va n'watsekela. Se va ya a ndlini vaya fika vaku hi hina venyi va muti; hi lava mun'wani ni mun'wani loyi a taku laha a kuma leswaku hina hi hina venyi va muti lowu.

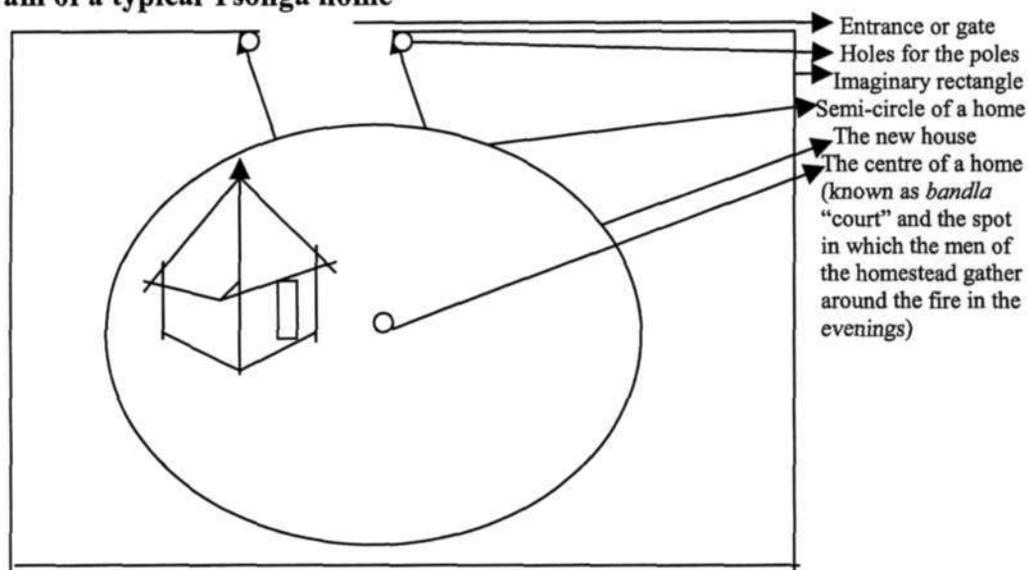
(Chitlango S 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

Yes, if they say that a home/household is known they mean that when they chose a place to build a new home they first cut a branch and say "here is home." After finishing building the house(s), the head of the family will bring his first wife (*nkosikazi*). Even if he has four or five wives, it is the *nkosikazi* (wife of marriage) that he will bring for the ritual. When the two of them arrive in the new home at night, they will unfold their mat and have intercourse and they will wash each other with water they brought for the purpose after the intercourse. They take the water to the gateway where they have already dug two holes and brought two poles to erect at the entrance. They will pour the water and plant the poles. Then they go to the centre of the home and sprinkle the water to all four winds and then they go inside the house and say: 'We are the owners of this home, we want anyone who comes here to find that we are the owners of this home'....

There is a problem of order in the explanation. They bring the two poles with them and then dig the holes before entering the home. Then they enter the home and have intercourse inside the house. The whole ritual, from beginning to end, is done naked, and it takes the whole night to complete the outside and the inside intercourse. I have illustrated this scenario by means of a diagram of a home with gateway holes, the home centre and the house.

**Diagram of a typical Tsonga home**



**Figure 1.**

After the home-knowing ritual he explained many other rituals, like knowing and tying the child, tying oneself, puberty, *xirotha* (wedding ritual) and how the life of the husband stays in the *xirotha* pot. He warned about the proper handling of the pot, giving an example of how his aunt killed her husband by using this pot to serve millet drink to the family's grandchildren. The man who died was called Xibamani, a young brother of the supreme king Mabungele of the Chitlango kingdom. After that story he also warned of the deadly effect of women during their period. They must be separated from their husbands during their periods and not touch anything belonging to their husbands. He then gave a list of food *ntumbuluko* laws. To support his arguments for *ntumbuluko*, in each of the applications of it to life activities or life events, he said:

A ntumbuluko awu tirela yini? Awu tirela aku seva [to save] awu tomi la hina aku hi hanya kwatsi, hi kuma masiku ya ku leha. A ntumbuluko avaku, ahi pfumeleliwe aku, hahari va tsongo, hi etlela na vava nsati va hombe – a swi yila.

(Chitlango S 2001, interview)

Translation:

What was *ntumbuluko* for? It was for saving our life, thus allowing us long living. In *ntumbuluko* we were not allowed to sleep around with old women. It is a taboo.

S. Chitlango presented *ntumbuluko* here as having the function of saving and preserving life to ensure long living. It is also a moral guardian, although he did not indicate what *ntumbuluko* says about sleeping around with girls of one's own age. Further, he said: 'These days that *ntumbuluko* is finished (sic) [no longer practised], our life is not the same as yesterday (sic) [it used to be]. Because all the things our fathers told us were intended to save our lives' (Chitlango S 2001, interview). He then gave further descriptions of *ntumbuluko* as follows:

Ntumbuluko – hikwaswo leswi venge i ntumbuluko a wuhi ntumbuluko wa ku hanya. Leswaku wutomi la hina li hanya liya phambeni – hambi loko lifo lihikona. Sweswi, loko hinga ha hanyi, hiku hi lahlile a ntumbuluko wa hina lowu hinga hanya hi wona. Hina vaka Xitlangu a hinga ringani a ku dla a humba, hiku ixibongo [totem] xa hina, loko hidya hita hela matino. A tolo na vaha swi tirisaka, loko vadya hlahphi va file (a te akuhi na totem ya Xiyuda na ya Xigriki).

(Chitlango S 2001, interview)

Translation:

*Ntumbuluko* – everything called *ntumbuluko* was *ntumbuluko* of life – so that our life was prolonged, even though there is death. The reason why we no longer live long is because we have lost our *ntumbuluko* by which we lived. We the Chitlangos should not eat a snail, because it is our surname. If we eat it we lose all our teeth. Yesterday [previously] when this was respected it happened to those who disobeyed. As the N'umayos are still using it, if one eats fish, one dies. There were also things that the Jews should not eat or do, as well as the Greeks.

After saying this he also said: 'Keeping/observing *ntumbuluko* and *tipangu* gave us life'. He started to name various *tipangu* he knew and how they were attended to and concluded:

Mavona, hikwaswo leswi aswi nga ha endleki – ati pfula a tinga hani – kambe sweswi vangaku pfluxani a tipangu, a pfula yina, kuzile ku tala a ndambi.

Ntumbuluko a wuhi wa ku nyika wu tomi laku hanya. A wu nyika ku hanya ka munhu na ku hanya ka tiko.

A ntumbuluko a wu edlela aku hina vanhu hi kuma wu tomi loko hi mahile swa ntumbuluko. A ntumbuluko a hi muhlayisi wa wu tomi la hina kasi ku hi ta hanya hi ku lanza a ntumbuluko. akuhi na ntumbuluko wa lixaka na lixaka, muti na muti, kambe lowu wa hombe hi lowu wa tiko hi kwalo.

(Chitlango S 2001, interview)

Translation:

You see, now none of these things were happening<sup>57</sup>. Rain stopped raining, but now that (there was no rain, but when) they said: 'Resume *tipangu*', it started to rain, until there was flooding. *Ntumbuluko* was for giving life and for good living. It gave life to the individuals and to the nation.

*Ntumbuluko* made it possible for us humans to gain life as we did things of *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* was our life care-taker and we lived by following *ntumbuluko*. There was clan *ntumbuluko*<sup>58</sup>, family *ntumbuluko*, but the greatest one was the national or territorial *ntumbuluko*.

From these two quotes it is clear that *ntumbuluko* is life for S. Chitlango. It is *ntumbuluko* that ensures long living. He criticised the Communist policy of the Frelimo government before 1990. He said that when they stopped *tipangu*, which is *ntumbuluko*, rain also stopped. When they asked and urged people to rebuild and clean up their *tipangu* and resume the sacrifices, the rain started to fall again until it reached a climax in the 2000 floods. When he said that, his fellow Assemblies of God man confronted him. It would be interesting to hear what he says of the drought in the year (2002). S. Chitlango was very strong and confident about *ntumbuluko*. There was no other informant in this category who said categorically that *ntumbuluko* is life and that if one follows *ntumbuluko* one inherits life. This brings him closer to Ndzukule, who belongs to the traditionalist segment in our research categories. Arguing for *ntumbuluko* and his ground as a Christian he said that *ntumbuluko* is good also, and that he was born and brought up in *ntumbuluko* and then left it to go into the gospel. Even now he is in *ntumbuluko* while in the gospel. He said there are some aspects of *ntumbuluko* that even the Bible likes and supports. He had no problem

<sup>57</sup> This is a criticism of Frelimo in the mid 1970s and 1980s. They banned all religious ritual in the country and the shrines were abandoned. He says that is why there was no rain in the 1980s. Now the government has changed its policy, drafting a new constitution in 1990. They have revived these old practices through statements and *Ministerio de Cultura e Juventude*. Chissano attributes the rains to the same source: the rain shrines in the country that are now attended to and wheredue sacrifices are given.

<sup>58</sup> *Ntumbuluko* has four levels. (1) Personal *ntumbuluko*, (2) Family *ntumbuluko*, (3) Clan and Tribal *ntumbuluko* and (4) Community or Territorial or Societal *ntu*. Number 4 is the supreme *ntumbuluko*.

with those who mix *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith. He seemed more concerned about those who abandon *ntumbuluko* for whatever reason. He accused *xilungu* (western culture or modernity) and the government Marxist policy for causing people to abandon *ntumbuluko*. Although he did not make an accusation against Christianity, his argument on his stand in *ntumbuluko* and in the Christian faith is a form of criticism. But his friend frequently challenged him.

#### 2.4.3.2 The profile of Mr. Daniel Machava and his perception of *ntumbuluko*

Mr. Machava is also a deacon in the Assemblies of God. He was born in Mabungele and is now living in Malindile. He is 45 years old and is a migrant worker in South Africa, near Johannesburg.

Machava, as indicated above, was present when I was interviewing S. Chitlango. He did not agree with Chitlango's approach to *ntumbuluko*. When I interviewed him he said he had no other things to say about *ntumbuluko*, but he wanted to respond to Chitlango's statements about *ntumbuluko*. According to Machava:

A ntumbuluko awu pfuna a vanhu va khale. Kambe ni lava aku vulavula hi ntumbuluko aku ule hehla kumbe ule hasi ka Ivangeli ke? A khale aka hina a ku ngahi na Ivangeli, ...kala onge hi ma 1950s [yingenile hi ma 1940s] hikona yinga ngena a Ivangeli. Kambe hambis leswo, a hinga se tiva leswaku yi tthamusela yini. A vanhu va tile vahi ka ntumbuluko, kambe sweswi hi humesiwa a ku hive ka Kreste. Sweswi loko ku fiwa va vitana Makreste...[culture change process?].

(Machava 2001, interview)

#### Translation:

*Ntumbuluko* helped the ancient people. I want to say whether *ntumbuluko* is above or under the gospel. In the old days there was no Christian faith in our land... until about the 1950s or the 1940s], when the gospel came. However, we did not know yet what its meaning was. People were in *ntumbuluko*, but now we are being transferred to Christ. Now, if someone dies, they call Christians...

Machava started with a statement which put *ntumbuluko*'s relevance in the past, in contrast to his colleague who put its relevance in the present. He argued that *ntumbuluko* was good until the gospel came. He also admitted that, in the initial phase, people did not understand the gospel and *ntumbuluko* was still dominant among the believers. He then came to his "now" statement. In this "now" people are called to a total transference from *ntumbuluko* to Christ, and he indicated that those

funeral rituals of *ntumbuluko* mentioned by Chitlango are irrelevant, because even non-Christians call in the church if there is death “now”.

What Machava was saying here about the funerals is a story I know very well. It was also used by Filimoni to testify about the influence of the gospel over *ntumbuluko*. The church that is called to conduct funerals in the area is the local IUB church, whose leader since 1945, with 57 years of leadership, has been my father. However, when my brother, Patson Chitlango, was at home and attended the funeral of a deacon of that church, our father allowed *ntumbuluko* burial and funeral rites to be performed. If that could be done for the deacon of our church, what about those who are not even Christians, or those who are even diviners? This may not suggest an influence of the gospel, but a synthesis of *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith. After his first statements Machava added:

Sweswi, a *ntumbuluko* hinga ka wona i *ntumbuluko* wa Krete. Kambe ma hundzuka ya kona ma hi tikelaka....va n'wani aku hundzuka ka kona swi tlhela swi fana na wo *ntumbuluko* lowu wa khale. A *ntumbuluko* wu fumile va kokwani hi swi yila. Hina hi fanele ku hanya ka Kriste-kambe ufanele ku hlonipha kasi unga ti dyayi. Uhlonipha aku kufiwe laha mutini wa wena, u swi tiva leswaku ufanele aku u hanyisa kuyini leswaku a masiku ya hina matala-kambe, hi lava ku swi tiva leswaku a *ntumbuluko* lo wa khale na *ntumbuluko* lo wa Xikwembu hi wihi unga na matimba, unga ehla ka wu n'wani ke?

(Machava 2001, interview)

Translation:

Now, the *ntumbuluko* that we are in is *ntumbuluko* of Christ. However, conversion is hard for us... The conversion of some is similar to old *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* governed our grandparents by taboos and laws. We must live in Christ, but one must respect so as not to kill oneself. One must respect when there is death in one's home, one must know how to live and behave in order to live a long life. But we want to know, between the old *ntumbuluko* and the *ntumbuluko* of God, which one has more power and is superior to the other?

Machava quoted a story of a rain-making failure and divine intervention in their prayer for rain at Chidoco during the agricultural season of 1996/97. He told the story of how *ntumbuluko* failed to bring rain, but prayer succeeded and he used the story to respond to the *tipangu* claims of his colleague S. Chitlango. He said that, in that incident, even the elders of the land complained that the church was plotting in that way to end *ntumbuluko*. His conclusion and answer to his question was:

A ntumbuluko wa Kriste wule hehla. Swi lava aku hita ngena ka wona, hi wu tirisa tani hi lowu hinga wu tirisa khale.

(Machava 2001, interview)

Translation:

*Ntumbuluko* of Christ is above. We must enter into it, and use it in the same manner we used the other *ntumbuluko* before the gospel. (This is important since the other interviewee attributed the good rainfall of the last few years, including the flooding of 2000, as the result of the reconstruction of places of worship or shrines in the area - that was the same statement Chissano was reported to have made).

Machava is in sharp disagreement with his colleague. He, like other informants of this category, acknowledges the fact that there are some problems of conversion and of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. Maybe the classic example of such a tension was his disagreement with S. Chitlango, which led him to interrupt Chitlango at times and to confront him.

Machava argued that *ntumbuluko* was important and good in the past, but now we must embrace the gospel and use its power in the same way that we used *ntumbuluko*. From his experience of rain in Chidoco, he was confident that the gospel is superior to *ntumbuluko* and that its power is much more efficient and would produce better results than *ntumbuluko* could, if used.

To summarize the definitions, perceptions and descriptions of *ntumbuluko* given by this category, the Christian practitioners, we can say that *ntumbuluko* was defined as:

- 1) darkness
- 2) customs
- 3) the law
- 4) beginning
- 5) principle
- 6) cosmic harmony
- 7) life
- 8) life giver
- 9) life care taker and
- 10) sin, etc.

All except one informant had a negative view of *ntumbuluko*. However, all of them adhere to some aspects of *ntumbuluko*. Matsombe used *ntumbuluko* as moral

sanction. Mangwele, Nhanombe, Dule and S. Chitlango all adhered to the *ntumbuluko* menstrual impurity law in the family and in the Church. Machava indicated the sex ban after death of a member of a family as an indispensable aspect of *ntumbuluko*, while Massango argued that what is of *ntumbuluko* must not be overlooked. One of the things of *ntumbuluko* that must not be overlooked is the prohibition of extra-marital sex by a woman when anyone is ill in the family (the husband or the children) and the need for a peaceful acceptance or tolerance of wives towards the unfaithfulness of husbands, and their duty to cover up their husbands' infidelity so that they are not exposed (and disciplined in the church?).

All the informants, except S. Chitlango, indicated the existence of a problem between *ntumbuluko* and Christianity. None of them were happy with the kind of relationship they saw in their churches or denominations. They all wished for a different form of relationship with *ntumbuluko* in the church. Between the lines, one can read an atmosphere of tension and conflict over the issue in the churches researched. They want a solution and some have even made proposals. The issue points to the leadership. Some even accused the leaders of lacking conversion, lacking faith and failing to set themselves apart. Others said that the leaders drag the people into doing wrong. So, after developing a guide on *ntumbuluko* and Christianity, part of the solution is teaching. This needs to be directed primarily at the leaders, for they are seen to be the major problem, as well as often being without training.

Next we have the Bible translators' category. It is another category of Christians, but is separate because of being a technical group of Christians that is intimately involved with the concept under discussion in their translation work.

## **2.6 *Ntumbuluko* – the Bible translators' perspective**

This category comprises two different kinds of informants. The first kind of informant in this category is people involved in translation work under the Bible Society of Mozambique. The second kind of informant is people who directly or indirectly contributed to the revision of the Tsonga Bible *Mahungu la Manene* (1954-1972) published in 1989. Most of these informants (who contributed to the revision) were identified and recommended for this research by the *Secretário Executivo*

(Executive Secretary) of the *Sociedade Bíblica Unida de Moçambique* (United Bible Society of Mozambique) at that organization's headquarters in Maputo. As argued above, this category is separated from other Christians on account of being a technical and expert group on the translation of the Bible, thus intimately involved with the discussion of *ntumbuluko*.

For this category I will not use the term "description", but "understanding" of *ntumbuluko*. Being an expert and technical category, I preferred to have their understanding of *ntumbuluko* rather than their description of it. The question was what they understood by the word *ntumbuluko* when they used it to translate various concepts in the Bible. In other words, they were not to just describe it, but to explain the reason why they used the word they way they did.

#### **2.6.1 The profile of Rev. Mavulule and Priest Nhagumbe and their understanding of *ntumbuluko***

The two translators will be presented together because the interview was a group interview in which both participated. The use of information from each will follow the same style as in the case of Dule and Nhanombe, above.

Rev. Victor Zefanias Mavulule was born in 1952, graduated from the United Seminary of Ricatla in 1984, and is an ordained minister of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. He is a Bible translator in the *Txitxopi*<sup>59</sup> language. Since 2001 he has been a full-time translator and coordinates United Bible Society team of translators in *Txitxopi*. His field is the New Testament and Greek.

Pe. Jose Chamice Nhagumbe was born in 1954, and is a 1978 graduate of Makere University, Kenya. He was ordained as an Anglican Priest in 1979 and has been a lecturer at the Anglican Theological Seminary since 1979. His field is Greek and he

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<sup>59</sup> Due to misspelling by the Portuguese, *Txitxopi*, the language of Vaxopi, is known in the Mozambican literature as *Chope* or *Chopi*, and the people as Chopes (see Feliciano 1998:37,90,469 following Junod). But in Christian literature, especially the Bible, the misspelling is corrected as above. But, in the 1999 *Txitxopi* New Testament one still notes the Portuguese distortion. The publisher had to call it *Txopi* to produce equivalence to *Chope*, rather than spelling the word in its original form.

has been a translator in the *Txitxopi* language since 1980. Both translators (Mavulule and Nhagumbe) pastor local churches or parishes.

When Pe. Nhagumbe was asked to explain why the new Tsonga bible version (Mahungu la Manene) has a more prominent use of the word *ntumbuluko* than the others, and why *Txitxopi* and *Gitonga* also use *ntumbuluko*, which seems to be a Tsonga concept, he, as translator, said that they had a problem. The language they use is a learned language, from school or church, which does not give one the freedom to express one's thoughts. 'We try hard to find ways to express our thoughts in our own languages. And it is Jesus himself who puts us into this problem by becoming human, taking on our nature and communicating with us' (Nhagumbe 2003, interview). 'We used *ntumbuluko* [as nature] to demonstrate that it is in human nature that Jesus wants to communicate' (Nhagumbe 2003, interview). Here, Nhagumbe indicates that *ntumbuluko* was used in order to replace abstract words with clear and expressive ones.

According to Mavulule, when we speak of *ntumbuluko* / *ntumbunuko*<sup>60</sup>: 'it means nature and is related to the originality of things...in my understanding, when one speaks of *ntumbuluko* is indicating or pointing to what gave origin to everything that exists' (Mavulule 2003, interview). He concluded by saying that all the different ways of writing the word *ntumbuluko* in all the three Tsonga languages, and in *Txitxopi* and in *Gitonga*, are in reference to one and the same concept, which has to do with existence or pre-existence:

Things came to exist because there was pre-existence, which gave existence to all things. Everything came from nature, they are born and made by that naturality. Then this and that appear, but owing their origin to a beginning, naturality or nature, which we call *ntumbuluko*.

(Mavulule 2003, interview)

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<sup>60</sup> There is variation in the spelling of the word. In *Txitxopi* it is spelled *ntumbunuko* and *ntumbunuko*. In *Gitonga* is *tumbuluko*.

When asked to comment on various and opposing uses of the word in the Bible (Jn 1:3; Rm 1:26-27; 8:6,13; 1 Co 11:14 and Hb 1:3), Mavulule says:

There is ambiguity in the above verses. In a positive sense *ntumbuluko*, is about existence; it promotes life and health, and guarantees the acceptable in everything when observed. But when *ntumbuluko* is not observed, it will punish the disobedient. One will be under punishment [non-natural punishment] for not having observed a certain *ntumbuluko* code. Here, *ntumbuluko* produces or originates a negative situation, which is contrary to the acceptable originality that brought things to existence. There is contradiction here. *Ntumbuluko* is a double-edged sword, one is positive, to save, and the other is negative, to punish those who disobey *ntumbuluko*. But at the same time there is *ntumbuluko* i.e. the following of which is a contradiction to Christian faith. This way, we find that the positive side of *ntumbuluko* is in contraction with the will of God. This way, we do not benefit or enjoy the privilege of the positive side that *ntumbuluko* offers. When we feel we are losing something, we start following even the negative side of *ntumbuluko* and we reap punishment, curse and death.

(Mavulule 2003, interview)

The two translators criticized what they called external influences in translation, which are very visible in Tsonga (Shangaan). The Txitxopi language exists only in Mozambique and, because of that, the Mozambican people themselves are translating the Bible to Txitxopi. But the translation of the Bible into Tsonga was done 90% in South Africa, according to the Executive Secretary of the United Bible Society of Mozambique. This fact is blamed for the occurrence of non-Tsonga expressions in the *Mahungu la Manene* text. The two translators say that in Mozambique the new Tsonga version has lost its acceptance in relation to the old version. It is no longer selling as does the old version. The two translators make an appeal saying: 'while serving as translators, theologians and pastors to the people, let us keep in mind the need to find adequate ways of essentially and accessibly transmitting the word of God in the language of the people' (Mavulule 2003, interview).

The next two informants are not professional interpreters working in the Bible Society, but are the "masters" who trained Mavulule in theology and biblical languages (as well as many others now working in the Bible Society, including its Executive Secretary).

### 2.6.2 The profile of Rev. Simao Chamango and his understanding of *ntumbuluko*

Rev. Chamango was born in 1935 at Manhica, Maputo and is a Ronga/Shangaan. He has a doctorate *honoris causa* from Canada. From the 1970s to the 1990s he worked as the Rector of the United Seminary of Ricatla. After retiring from the seminary he became the Synod President for the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique. He has now also retired from the church, but is still lecturing in dogmatics, exegesis and systematic theology, and has also published some chapters in books. He participated in the revision of Tsonga Bible (Mahungu la Manene) in the last two years of that project.

According to Rev. Chamango, the Greek word *sarx* has several meanings, including “nature,” “flesh” and “human nature.” It is this variation that allowed the use of the word *ntumbuluko* in translating the word *sarx*. He argues that the use of “*nyama*” (flesh) to translate *sarx*, as in previous translations, imposed a huge problem of understanding for the Tsonga people. This problem was one of the reasons why translators changed from “*nyama*” to *ntumbuluko*. However, for Chamango, the problem was not totally solved. The question is how people understand the word itself; ‘It is not easy to find an exact meaning and a common understanding’ (Chamango 2003, interview). He points out that: ‘the difficulty that translation faces here is the absence of a word that is more comprehensible. Either we use one, “*nyama*”, or the other, “*ntumbuluko*”, but we still need to give an explanation to understand the word *ntumbuluko* (Chamango 2003, interview).

Any alternative to “*nyama*” (flesh) needs explanation. The use *ntumbuluko* in Romans 8 requires explanation in both the old and new version. *Ntumbuluko*, according to Chamango, appears very negative but, in reality: ‘*ntumbuluko* may not necessarily be negative; it may have a positive meaning; and therefore we need explanation (Chamango 2003, interview). So, for Chamango, *ntumbuluko* is also abstract and complex, it is not an easy solution. Nonetheless, he agrees that it is a better option than “*nyama*.”

Because of such difficulties in translation, Chamango argues for a close working relationship between translators and theologians. Translation needs a constant update, exchanging archaic words with current ones, such as the case of “*nyama*” to “*ntumbuluko*.” With such close relationship between theology and translation, the translators will better handle difficult terms and concepts in keeping up to date with contemporary theological contributions (Chamango 2003, interview).

Chamango proposes a close relationship between translation (translators) and theology (theologians) ‘the translators must know what other theologians say’ (Chamango 2003, interview). The translators need to be in constant contact with theological development, through studies, debates and publications. To use Bediako’s language, one might say that he is saying “theology is the shaper of translation” while “translation is the shaper of theology.” It is theology that dictates the choice of words and terms in the process of translation. But, once the process is completed, the translated text shapes the theology.

Much could be said about this relationship between theology and translation, but we need to give space to the last informant of this category.

### **2.6.3 The profile of Rev. Jonas Ngomane and his understanding of *ntumbuluko***

His full name is Jonas Rusen Ngomane. Jonas was born in 1947 in the town of Chibuto (Gaza, Province). He has been a Presbyterian minister since 1976. He worked for four years in Sofala Province, five years at Chicumbana and two years in Manhica (Gaza and Maputo provinces). He also served for three years as denominational youth pastor. Rev. Jonas Ngomane has been the Rector of the United Seminary of Ricatla since 1997.

Ngomane started by asserting the contribution of his school towards the translation enterprise, saying:

Speaking of translations we, here at Ricatla, continue to insist on the study of Greek and Hebrew. Our seminary never vacillates on that. All other existing seminaries in Mozambique

do very little on Greek and Hebrew. If they do, it is for cosmetic reasons. We believe that the mastery of languages is pivotal to the continuation of translations. As you know, in Mozambique there are many languages, there are about 16 languages<sup>61</sup> or more.

(Ngomane 2003, interview)

Ngomane then came to the topic under discussion with the following historical information:

Coming back to your problem of the translation of *Mahungu la Manene*, in 1973 here at Ricatla there was a conference in the last years of the translation of *Mahungu la Manene* while I was a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student. It is here at Ricatla that personalities such as D C Marivate<sup>62</sup> and others from South Africa came to try to consolidate the language of *Mahungu la Manene* Bible with Mozambicans. Unfortunately, many Mozambicans did not master Greek and Hebrew and could not argue out the external influences to the language. Let me not also forget the involvement of Bishop Mandlate of the Catholic Church in this translation endeavour.

(Ngomane 2003, interview)

After indicating that Mozambican participation was minimal, due to the lack of training, he points out that:

[T]he person who was in the forefront of the translation, especially for the New Testament, was Rev. Theo R Schneider<sup>63</sup> from Switzerland and a lady. Both were regarded as Tsonga specialists in South Africa, but were missionaries. Under these circumstances, if you found the word *ntumbuluko*, others might find other discrepancies in the text. This is disturbing.

(Ngomane 2003, interview)

As one can notice, Ngomane felt as if I was pointing out discrepancies in the text of *Mahungu la Manene*. Indirectly, he attributes the problem to the fact that two

<sup>61</sup> The issue of languages in Mozambique is quite complex. Johnstone's *Operation World* is an illustration of that. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition (1986) reprinted in 1987 indicates that there are 23 languages in Mozambique (Johnstone 1986:306). The 5<sup>th</sup> edition (1993) indicates that there are 244 languages in Mozambique (although this could be a typographical error for "24") (Johnstone 1993:395). And the 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2001) also called "the 21<sup>st</sup> century edition" says there are 39 languages in Mozambique (Johnstone, Mandryk & Johnstone 2001:458). How many languages are there in Mozambique? 23? 244 / 24? 39? Or what? Maybe the best answer is "many languages."

<sup>62</sup> Marivate was a stylist of the translation project.

<sup>63</sup> Schneider is also mentioned in two documents from the Bible Society in South Africa from its Cape Town office. The first document is "Bible Translation into Tsonga: the people and their language" (1979). This document names Schneider, born in 1925, who was invited by the Bible Society of South Africa 'to become the project co-ordinator for a dynamic Tsonga Bible Translation' (Reyneke 1979:2) with Rev. D C Marivate and Mr. T L Selapyane forming the editorial committee. But the other document "God's word speaks in today's Tsonga" published by *The Sower* (a Bible Society of South Africa publication in Cape Town) names Schneider last in a list of the final editorial committee. The list is in the following order: Rev. S D Maluleke, Mr. MJ Makuvele, Dr. D C Marivate, Mrs. AK Manyike and Dr. T R Schneider. They were assisted by Prof. MC Dippenaar, Rev. E F C Mashava, Prof. C B N Inkondo and Mr. F M Rikhotso (BSSA 1989:3).

missionaries (non-Tsonga natives) were given the guiding role in the translation because they were considered Tsonga specialists in South Africa. Later in the interview Ngomane is also critical of the dominating role of South Africa in the translation process. But after the above remarks, he gives his understanding of *ntumbuluko*.

According to Ngomane:

*Ntumbuluko* in Tsonga means many things. *Ntumbuluko* also means things or phenomena that one cannot interpret, and with the word *ntumbuluko* one explains that which one cannot explain. For that reason one cannot use the term *ntumbuluko* to replace flesh in rendering [*sarx*] in the New Testament. Flesh [*sarx*] means carnality. Carnality and *ntumbuluko* do not appear to be conceptually related. This is a problem of our translations. I can give an example of the Ronga New Testament and the influences of non-Rongas in the text. I can even say that the problems in Tsonga (Shangaan) translation are fewer compared to problems in the Ronga translation.

(Ngomane 2003, interview)

Ngomane gives an interesting interpretation of *ntumbuluko* here. He understands *ntumbuluko* as an interpretative and explanative tool. He indicates that one uses *ntumbuluko* as an explanation and interpretation of that which one cannot otherwise explain or interpret. We can clearly see *ntumbuluko* here as a Tsonga heuristic device used for the understanding, interpretation and explanation of reality. However, Ngomane turned his focus to the problems of translation. For instance, he highlighted that in Ronga, if one goes to a Ronga-speaking church and compares the hymnbook, the New Testament and the old version of the Ronga Bible, one does not have to be a specialist to note that there is problem (Ngomane 2003, interview).

He pinpoints the problem as the external influences our languages suffer. He gives the example of Tsonga (Shangaan) that 'is suffering external influence of South Africa, the North of Transvaal, the place of translation of Tsonga in South Africa, precisely in the town of Valdezia and not Gazankulu. This place is close to the Venda and its Tsonga is mixed with Venda. Many words in our Tsonga Bible are Venda-influenced because Tsonga of Valdezia is mixed and/or adulterated with Venda' (Ngomane 2003, interview). But in the end, Ngomane acknowledged that, in many ways, the new translation (*Mahungu la Manene*) is far better than the old version. But

he admitted to not being well-informed about the Bible Society's point of view in Maputo. He manifested a desire to be involved with the Bible Society and to have training in translation so that he could be involved in translation after retirement.

Contrary to Ngomane, Mavulule and Nhagumbe were quite happy with the use of the word *ntumbuluko* in the Bible, and they use it in other languages that are not of Tsonga language family. But they are also critical of the influence of South African Tsonga in the *Mahungu la Manene* version. The Executive Secretary also indicated that the work of translation was done 90% in South Africa and that the Tsonga we have in the South African translation is not quite the pure Tsonga. They blame this factor for the decline of *Mahungu la Manene*'s acceptance in Mozambique. Because of my interest in the explanation and interpretation of the function of *ntumbuluko*, as Ngomane understands it, I brought him back to the question of his understanding of *ntumbuluko*.

I asked him to explain or give an example of how *ntumbuluko* is a theoretical tool to explain what one cannot explain. His answer was:

For instance, in ethical issues (corrective) if one questions the ethos or basis of it, the answer will be: "*i ntumbuluko wa hina*" (this is our *ntumbuluko*) – you can't do that – it is an ethical problem. When they say *i ntumbuluko wa hina* (is our *ntumbuluko*), that must not be broken, if you break it, you are threatening the centre of gravity of life.

(Ngomane 2003, interview)

He goes on to say that there is *ntumbuluko* of everything. 'When they say "*ntumbuluko wa hina va Tsonga*"' (Ngomane 2003, interview) they include in it *lobolo*. If one refuses to pay *lobolo* (although it is a new institution) they will accuse the person of breaking *ntumbuluko* and the woman for whose marriage no *lobolo* was paid will not feel comfortable and proud of her marriage. Finally, he warns that *ntumbuluko* may lead one to fanatic behaviour. 'The defence of *ntumbuluko* can lead one to be fanatic and die. There are people that commit suicide and die to defend *ntumbuluko*' (Ngomane 2003, interview). After giving this warning, he also indicated

that there are many types or levels of *ntumbuluko*. He says that the term *ntumbuluko wa hina* can refer to the tribe or extended family for there is: '(1) *ntumbuluko* of the tribe, (2) *ntumbuluko* of a zone (limited geographical area) and (3) *ntumbuluko* of a region' (Ngomane 2003, interview).

The last question was concerned with the participation, or otherwise, of Mozambicans in the choice of the term *ntumbuluko* to replace the term "nyama," he indicated that there was a certain discussion and contribution of Mozambicans in general, because the South Africans were conscious that Tsonga is in Mozambique and therefore they sought Mozambican participation. However, he lamented the lack of capacity among Mozambicans to take a lead in the project. According to Ngomane, everything was done under the 'hegemony of South Africa... for them even now when they come here, they think there is no knowledge here. They think that knowing cannot be acquired in Portuguese (*munhu anga tiva hi Xiphutukezi?* [Can anyone know in Portuguese?]). Do you see that? But now with your presence in South Africa, they are starting to have a bit of respect for Mozambique' (Ngomane 2003, interview).

This is an interesting interview. Ngomane uses this interview to address unsolved problems in his life story. The translation of the Tsonga Bible is the domain of the Presbyterian Swiss mission with its headquarters at Lausanne. Ngomane's Presbyterian Church is the work of that mission. After the interview, Ngomane expressed shock at the way the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique is being marginalized by the sister church in South Africa. He indicated that it was looked down upon and despised by his fellow Tsonga theologians in South Africa. One needs also to remember that the same mission (Swiss Mission) invested in South Africa, producing competent translators in Tsonga, but chose not to do so in Mozambique, and then discriminated against them for not having capacity when they were never given the opportunity to develop.

To summarise the understanding of *ntumbuluko* among the Bible translators in Mozambique, we can say that *ntumbuluko* is:

- 1) nature or naturalness
- 2) humanity or human nature
- 3) origin of things

- 4) what gives origin to everything that exists
- 5) existence or pre-existence
- 6) originator
- 7) beginning
- 8) double-edged sword (saving and punishing power)
- 9) explanation and interpretation of reality
- 10) ethos or ethical foundation
- 11) centre of gravity of life
- 12) cultural and social custom and
- 13) life- and health-promoting.

Mavulule argues that everything is born or made out of nature, and that whatever exists owes its origin to a beginning which he calls *ntumbuluko*. As we can see, this category of informant is very positive towards the concept. When confronted with the very negative use of the term in the Bible, they feel ambiguous. Chamango highlights the fact that *ntumbuluko* is not always negative; it is a more neutral term. Mozambican translators do not easily accept the negative use of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible. One can easily notice that they do not use terms like “sinful nature,” “immorality” and other negative terms that are related to the meaning of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible.

Chitlango and Balcomb (2004:183) argue that:

Attempts to use the term in translating Pauline theology of the “flesh” into Tsonga seem to heavily bias the meaning of the term towards a negative connotation. This is unfortunate, because the term is probably far more neutral, or at least open to both positive and negative meanings, in its Tsonga use than its use here implies... This erroneous translation reinforces the suspicion that Bible translation by missionaries, for example from the English into the vernacular, has in the past distorted original meanings with a view to demonizing indigenous religion and culture.

(Chitlango & Balcomb 2004:183)

This argument or comment on the use of the term *ntumbuluko* in Pauline theology is of significant importance. The pioneer missionary among the Tsonga was Henri A Junod. He studied Tsonga language and culture and wrote many books about the

Tsonga people, and all other missionaries came to know the Tsongas through his writings. To speak of his writings and the conception of Tsongas he disseminated we need to examine his intellectual upbringing.

Junod was directly influenced by Frazer in his study of the Tsongas people. The question is, who was Frazer? Sir James G. Frazer was the father of anthropology and his first work was published in 1890. This work was then expanded into 12 volumes and published in 1911-1915. He also published *The Golden Bough* in 1922. All of this was based not on research but on traveller's tales and accounts of explorers and missionaries (Mandelbeaum 1989:22). This is how anthropology started, without research! Now, when Junod prepared his study he described his data collection technique as: 'taking as a guide the set of questions prepared by Prof. J. Frazer for people collecting ethnographical material and giving special attention to the question of taboo' (Junod 1912:6). This study was done on the basis of the evolutionistic cultural human development theory. In his study, Junod described the Tsongas as "completely savage" and "heathen." According to Mandelbeaum, 'Junod describes iron tools and metal currency of copper and gold that Ba-Thonga produced asserting that they must have been taught the skills and techniques by other peoples' (Mandelbeaum 1989:24). He asked a question to which he provides the convenient answer saying: 'Did they [Tsongas] rise by their own intellectual strength to the "Bronze Age", like the inhabitants of our Swiss lacustrine villages? This idea cannot be entertained for an instant!' (Junod 1903:118). For Junod, Portuguese explorers, Arabs and Phoenicians from the earlier periods had taught them the techniques of exploiting ore to produce tools (Mandelbeaum 1989:24). In 1919 Junod said that: 'Ba-Thonga are in a very primitive development stage of civilization' (Junod 1914:96). He also said: 'Although most stories of the Ba-Thonga show clear distinction of good and evil, the African is comparable to an infant and recognizes the white man as his superior' (Junod 1914:100).

Junod is quoted in the Bible Society's "Bible Translation into Tsonga" as a source of information for the section "The People and their Language" (Reyneke 1979:2). Needless to say, the Swiss missionaries and Tsonga Bible translators were influenced by Junod in relation to Tsonga people. He portrayed Tsonga people as "primitives," "heathens," "infants" and "inferiors" in relation to Western people.

However, he needs to be given credit. Although he was influenced by the thinking of his time, he was very optimistic about the “primitive natives” and was very sympathetic to the Tsonga. He became a sort of an advocate, trying to justify his savage and primitive friends to the civilised ones promising them that they also will come of age as they receive the scientific knowledge:

For instance look how seriously the savage keep their taboo!.. This taboo – as we will see – is inspired by strange, unscientific physiological ideas regarding defilement and contagion which will disappear when scientific knowledge has spread amongst them.

(Junod 1912:9)

According to Mandelbeaum (1989) Junod later corrected his misconception about the Tsonga people as he came to know them more and more. His later publications were less demeaning to the Tsonga than the initial ones. However, the Methodist missionaries in Mozambique were already influenced by his early writings although he himself had changed his views.

We can now sum up the views on the importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga consciousness. *Ntumbuluko* is viewed as:

- 1) life itself (it is the source of life and is the life-giver, ensuring longevity of the faithful)
- 2) a guide<sup>64</sup>
- 3) provider
- 4) moral guardian
- 5) the normative and supreme law
- 6) the health-protector and health care-taker
- 7) land-fertilizer and
- 8) solution to life's problems and puzzles.

Ignoring, overlooking or abandoning *ntumbuluko* causes social and ecological chaos and disaster, resulting in a lack of rain, droughts, unstable family life, and diseases and plagues causing premature death, and so forth.

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<sup>64</sup> *Ntumbuluko* provides what Andrew Walls (1989:9) and Howell (1997:240ff) call the “key to conduct”.

## 2.7 Analytical summary of the informants' definitions, views and descriptions of *ntumbuluko*

In this section I wish to summarise the use of *ntumbuluko* by the various informants.

The traditionalist informants defined *ntumbuluko* as:

- 1) pot
- 2) foundation
- 3) corner stone
- 4) the law etc.

The important aspect of *ntumbuluko* within this category is ritual *ntumbuluko* in life cycle, life events and life activities. In life cycle there is *ntumbuluko* for:

- 1) pregnancy
- 2) child birth (*ku amukela n'wana, ku tchula n'wana, ku tluta n'wana* [child reception, child naming, child sailing]) rituals
- 3) knowing the child sex ritual
- 4) puberty rituals
- 5) law giving rituals (*mbutsa*)
- 6) marriage rituals (*xirotha*)

There are also *ntumbuluko* laws related to death and funerals of various orders including the widowhood rituals. Agriculture and pregnancy laws also form an important part of agricultural *ntumbuluko*. There is also *ntumbuluko* that serves to prevent and treat diseases.

The academic category defined *ntumbuluko* as:

- 1) invisible power
- 2) the beginning or
- 3) the power behind the beginning which causes the beginning.

This category described *ntumbuluko* as both a helpful and a harmful power, and that this power manifests itself through the ancestors. If one forgets the ancestors, *ntumbuluko* becomes harmful, but if one remembers them through *mhamba*, *ntumbuluko* becomes helpful because the ancestors will ensure one's protection and prosperity, even dealing with unemployment problems. This category also presented

*ntumbuluko* as a cultural identity of the Tsongas (the way of doing things, dressing, eating etc.) and also *ntumbuluko* was described as an individual or family genetic characteristic. Mundlovo used the term "invisible power" to define *ntumbuluko* when answering a question on the influence of *ntumbuluko* in the public life of Mozambique. He told the story of the *kanyi* tree in Magude and concluded that there was an invisible power that needed to be discovered.

It is important to note that it is on this point of power that *ntumbuluko* survives and dominates. Khosa identified this invisible power with the ancestors, or at least that it manifests itself through them. This indicates that the invisible power called *ntumbuluko* may be independent of the ancestors, only manifesting itself through the ancestors. For Mundlovo the invisible power or *ntumbuluko* manifested in his hometown, not through the ancestors, but through a tree, a *kanyi* tree. Could it be that the names of the ancestors are just being used to give an identity to *ntumbuluko* invisible power(s) without their knowledge and participation, as in the case of the *kanyi* tree of Magude? In any event, the issue of invisible power as the definition of *ntumbuluko* is very important for this study. It is for this reason that the government policy on *ntumbuluko*, which initially identified it with superstition and a backward mentality, failed because their method of combating it did not deal with the invisible power(s). They hoped to wipe out *ntumbuluko* through education as indicated in the Independence declaration:

The schools must be fronts in our vigorous and conscious battle against illiteracy, ignorance and obscurantism. They must be centres for wiping the colonial-capitalist mentality and the negative aspects of the traditional mentality: superstition, individualism, selfishness, elitism and ambition must be fought in them. There should be no place in them for social, racial or sexual discrimination. Above all, the masses must have both access to and power in the schools, universities and culture.

We are engaged in a Revolution whose advance depends on the creation of the new man, with a new mentality.

(Henriksen 1978:260)

Needless to say, the government failed in its intellectual and scientific Marxist socialist battle against *ntumbuluko*. The soldier who tampered with *ntumbuluko* by

shooting the *kanyi* tree died. Now the same government is the preacher of *ntumbuluko*. It is on this issue of power that academics, and even Christians, fall prey to *ntumbuluko*.

The artists perceived perceive *ntumbuluko* as:

- 1) the creation
- 2) everything (whole of creation and cosmos)
- 3) creating power
- 4) natural order of things
- 5) natural course of life
- 6) tradition
- 7) mindset
- 8) nature
- 9) social norms and practices
- 10) nation-building good practices and mindset
- 11) attitude and mindset that dignifies women

These perceptions are similar to the dictionary definition of *ntumbuluko*. Each of the three songs gives different sets of meaning to *ntumbuluko*. This, again, indicates how complex and ambiguous *ntumbuluko* can be; in each category there are different ways of perceiving, interpreting and using of the same word. To conclude let us say that *ntumbuluko* is perceived as:

- 1) beautiful
- 2) life pre-determiner and
- 3) custom which can be either good or bad.

We must, now, consider the third group's answer to the question of *ntumbuluko*. The Christian practitioners defined *ntumbuluko* as:

- 1) darkness
- 2) sin
- 3) customs
- 4) culture
- 5) the law
- 6) creation

- 7) origin
- 8) life in the beginning
- 9) human guidance in the beginning
- 10) the beginning
- 11) the mark of humanity as creation or creatures
- 12) the cosmic harmony
- 13) life-giver
- 14) life care-taker
- 15) life cycle rituals
- 16) life events and
- 17) life activity rituals, etc.

*Ntumbuluko* was described as something that does all the evil things, with immoral and satanic inspired laws and rituals. These rituals are increasing as the aftermath of *Mutchapi* and the impact of cultic churches that are growing among the Tsongas. However, others described *ntumbuluko* as good and as life. Most of the informants of this category chose some rituals, especially those in which the most feared destructive effect of the invisible power of *ntumbuluko* is averted, and recommended them to preserve life. Some of these rituals are the *ntumbuluko* menstrual laws and the sex ban after death and before ritual sex called *ku hlamba tindzaka*.

Maybe it is important to note the importance of some of the issues the academics and the Christian practitioners point out in their account of *ntumbuluko*. For instance, *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power that we must discover is an important issue that needs attention from Christian theologians and missiologists if Christian faith is to have a future among the Tsongas. In the processes of researching *ntumbuluko* one needs to take into account:

- 1) the invisible power(s) that are operative therein
- 2) the impact of *Mutchapi*
- 3) the impact of the cultic churches among the Tsonga people
- 4) the impact of the *Mutchapi* notion of *kupfuka* (resurrection) and
- 5) slavery or the spirit's wives girls practice among the Tsonga people.

These issues can only be addressed with and by the “Invisible Power” of God. The spiritual oppression of taking girls as *tihloko* or *vanyakwave* (slave girls as wives of spirits) is one of the most brutally destructive effects of *ntumbuluko* and *Mutchapi* among the Tsonga, which causes an outcry. In Ndau there is a song which goes:

Nguruve, nguruve, nguruve; (one person)	Spirits!, spirits!, spirits!;
He, nguruve; (all the others) (x2)	Oh!, spirits!;
A ndi zi koni ku bara mwana ndi pe nguruve(one)	I can't bear a child to give spirits.
He, nguruve. (all the others)	Oh!, spirits.

This is a people's outcry that we do well to listen to. Most girls grow up in fear of being given away as slaves by their families. This practice is now more intense than ever. People feel helpless because it is an issue of the invisible power of *ntumbuluko* against which they have no response.

There are many questions that informants ask which we will only list but not attempt to answer here, since we are still concerned with description. Some of the questions are as follows:

- (1) what interaction should take place between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith?
- (2) if *ntumbuluko* is defined as life-giver, life-protector, life care-taker, and as life itself; where does such a powerful concept put the gospel?
- (3) can these two powerful concepts or invisible powers (*ntumbuluko* as an invisible power and the gospel as the power of God) peacefully share a place in the depths of the consciousness of a Tsonga Christian?
- (4) if *ntumbuluko* is life-giver, life-protector and life care-taker, while Christ has the same attributes, who is doing what?

Each of these questions can be a research question on its own; therefore, we will not try to answer them separately but within the context of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel relational questions. These questions come down to the question of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, which must be directed to the Christian practitioner's category. The academic category was more concerned with the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and society. When asked about the church, they indicated there were some problems, but they did not show much interest. One of the informants in the academic category complained about the dominance of *ntumbuluko*

in the public life of Mozambican society. The other simply answered by saying there is an invisible power there to explain the reason for *ntumbuluko* domination of public life in the country.

But turning to the eight Christian practitioners, with the exception of one the category was unhappy about *ntumbuluko* and the Christian faith as practiced by many Christians. *Ntumbuluko* is seen as being dominant in this interaction and the gospel as being subservient. Although our informants were from only three denominations, most of them were senior pastors who had been working in their denominations and interacting with the leaders of other Protestant denominations for many years. Because of the extensive knowledge of the informants, and the fact that all denominations recruit their converts from the same Tsonga stock, we can conclude that the relational problems indicated by all the informants are a generalized problem of Tsonga Christianity in Mozambique. The present interaction between *Ntumbuluko* and the gospel is unacceptable, according to the informants, as it undermines Christian faith. They recommend that:

- 1) research be done
- 2) discipleship be revised and reinforced or reintroduced
- 3) church leaders' training, with the aid of the research findings, be introduced as a way of changing the present relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel.

Finally we must sum up the Bible translators' perceptions and definitions. According to the Bible translators *ntumbuluko* is:

- 1) nature or naturalness
- 2) humanity or human nature
- 3) origin of things
- 4) the originator of everything that exists
- 5) pre-existence
- 6) the originator of things
- 7) the beginning
- 8) double-edged sword
- 9) explanation and interpretation of reality
- 10) ethos or ethical basis

- 11) centre of gravity of life
- 12) cultural and social custom and
- 13) life-and health-promoting power.

Most of these definitions are a repetition of what other categories have also said, but there are nuances of meanings that only come in this category. Numbers eight to eleven are a unique perception of *ntumbuluko* from this category. *Ntumbuluko* as “explanation” and “interpretation” of reality (Ngomane 2003, interview) comes closer to Horton’s (1993) theory (explanation, interpretation and control of reality) that we use to interpret *ntumbuluko* in chapter three. Together with the interpretation of *ntumbuluko* as ethos or ethical foundation and centre of gravity of Tsonga life, explains why *ntumbuluko* is pivotal in everything in Tsonga life. Any disregard of *ntumbuluko* is an aberration against ethical fabric and a serious affront to the centre of gravity of life. This suggests that whenever the gospel is understood to instigate such an attitude towards *ntumbuluko*, it is seriously countered.

This findings of the fieldwork proves my assumptions and makes the research question (i.e. what should the interaction between *ntumbuluko* and the Christian faith be?) an appropriate and timely missiological and theological issue. However, before dealing with the research question we have some steps to take. We need to find out how deep *ntumbuluko* has permeated Tsonga consciousness, and to assess the impact of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga apprehension of the Christian faith. After that, we will try to understand or interpret the definitions of *ntumbuluko*, using multidisciplinary approaches. After that, we will review the debate on the gospel and culture, and finally will attempt to suggest an answer to the research question.

## **2.8 The importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga consciousness**

The importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga consciousness varies from one segment of Tsonga society to another. For instance, the approach of the academics to *ntumbuluko* was simple and emphasized more the question of identity in modern Tsonga society. But, in the traditionalists’ view, *ntumbuluko* is a matter of life and death; it is of capital importance, it is life. Among the Christians we find some differences and, to a degree, some contradictions. One group agreed with Tsonga

tradition and saw the value and importance of *ntumbuluko* as a matter of life and death. But others were contradictory. They started with a very negative view of *ntumbuluko*, but then began making statements or making reference to *ntumbuluko* to sanction their moral authority in one instance or another. One example was one informant who was more negative about *ntumbuluko* than the other Christians I met, but who, after the interview, contradicted himself and criticized the way in which wives of young pastors dress, regarding this as immoral and a violation of *ntumbuluko*. So the standard of morals that he was talking about was that of *ntumbuluko*.

### **2.8.1 The importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in the traditionalists' consciousness**

In the words of Ndzukule: '*Ntumbuluko* is the greatest thing amongst all other things on earth for humans; for everyone, for all human beings' (2001). He said that in 1957 he could have impregnated three girls if it were not for *ntumbuluko* that held him back from doing that. He saw *ntumbuluko* as *mu thangala wa wu tomi* (life fortress or face) and as life-giving.

In the traditional consciousness, *ntumbuluko* is of supreme importance. It is only obedience to *ntumbuluko* that guarantees life, prosperity and fertility for the individual, family, clan and for the whole community. Thus, there is personal *ntumbuluko*, family *ntumbuluko*, clan *ntumbuluko* and community *ntumbuluko*. As we can see, the informant gave *ntumbuluko* value as a moral guardian. He stated categorically that the person and the clan that do not obey *ntumbuluko* are condemned to disappear or become extinct. He used the story of my great grandfather Xipalo, the conqueror and founder of our traditional nation saying: 'There is *ntumbuluko* of Xipalo that he lived by and ensured that his lineage may not be worn out or be torn apart and disappear' (2001).

### 2.8.2 The importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in the academics' consciousness

'Our *ntumbuluko* is for putting things right, not for spoiling things or doing wrong' (Khosa 2001). If one follows *tatana* Khosa closely, it becomes clear that his view emphasized *mhamba* or *missa* (a memorial ceremony for the ancestors). He called it "*xifihlutu*" ("breakfast"). This *xifihlutu* is offered annually so that the deceased can see that the living still remember them. Here we can say that *mhamba* is the important ceremony that comes first to mind when Khosa thinks of *ntumbuluko* and it is this that may validate *ntumbuluko* in his view.

On the other hand, Mundlovo (2001) put value on the cultural identity function of *ntumbuluko*. To him, *ntumbuluko* is opposed to *xidoropa* (metropolitan life) or to *xilungu* (white or western form of life). So, we can sum up by saying that the importance of *ntumbuluko* to these two academics resides in the fact that it provides a link between the dead and the living through *mhamba* and gives a cultural identity to the Tsonga people.

### 2.8.3 The importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in the artists' consciousness

The three songs give three different artistic assessments of *ntumbuluko*. The first celebrates the beauty of *ntumbuluko* 'see how beautiful *ntumbuluko* is!' (Mavota 2001, CD). In the second song *ntumbuluko* is the natural order of things which is just to be followed 'Don't reject it, this is *ntumbuluko*' (M'boa 2001, CD). While it is being portrayed as an inescapable, pre-determining force in one's life, the last song classifies *ntumbuluko* into two categories, accepting one and calling for Tsonga society to kill the other.

Again, a very complex picture emerges in this group. *Ntumbuluko* is celebrated as beautiful and good, in as much as it is a conceptualization of the creating and sustaining power (God) which created everything beautifully and sustains everything in proper order. But while it is seen as pre-determining force for individual lives, denying one the freedom to determine one's own fate, it is seen as natural law which is inescapable. One has to accept and live with it, without judging others. But the last song views *ntumbuluko* as custom and presents quite a critical examination of it. In

that process the song identifies *ntumbuluko* as a negative custom and calls for its annihilation. When this *ntumbuluko* is killed there will remain only positive and constructive *ntumbuluko*. This view gives one the responsibility for discerning *ntumbuluko* and changes it by killing the bad one and promoting the good one.

It is interesting to note the above differences in the perception of *ntumbuluko*. The following section has a similar situation, where members of the same category have different and sometimes contradictory views. This will be mainly what we see in the Christian practitioner's category.

#### **2.8.4 The importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in the Christian practitioners' consciousness**

Among the Christian practitioners there were two major approaches. Some people started their interview by being very negative about *ntumbuluko* but, during the interview, became positive about or even defenders of *ntumbuluko* in the same way as the traditionalists were. Some started positive, but then turned negative towards *ntumbuluko*. Yet others manifested a certain degree of contradiction, ambiguity and confusion.

Solomon Chitlango (2001) started by asking and answering his own question: 'what is the function of *ntumbuluko*? It was for saving and protecting our lives, ensuring our well being and long living'. He believes that what his parents told him or his generation was for his generation's protection and he lamented that *ntumbuluko* is now gone and that all the norms are broken. As a result of that there is no more good health and longevity. 'All things called or said to be *ntumbuluko* were *ntumbuluko* of life. These things were there in order that our life goes on – although death was there' (Chitlango S 2001, interview). He added that *ntumbuluko* gave life to individuals and to the land or country including the people, the land and nature. He argued that when the government of Mozambique stopped<sup>65</sup> *tipangu*<sup>66</sup> there was no rain and that, when *tipangu* returned, rain started to fall until there was flooding in the year 2000<sup>67</sup>. But S.

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<sup>65</sup> What S. Chitlango is talking about here is what I described in chapter one, pages 35 to 36 of this thesis.

Chitlango was challenged about this by his fellow Assemblies of God deacon, who had a story of *tipangu* having failed to bring rain, whereas prayer and fasting by the Christians caused rain and good harvest at Xidoko in 1996/97. Even after that challenge, he went on to say:

*Ntumbuluko* made it possible for people to find life after doing things according to *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* was the keeper or care-taker of our lives and we lived by following *ntumbuluko*. There was *ntumbuluko* of each family or household and each clan; but the most important was *ntumbuluko* of the whole country [community].

(Chitlango S 2001)

According to S. Chitlango there are also animals of the gods. If, in the Makasela forest<sup>68</sup>, anyone goes and extracts palm wine without following *ntumbuluko*, then elephants of the gods will come and destroy all the palm trees from which they are extracting the wine. These animals of the gods include monkeys, baboons, snakes, lions and others.

Machava (2001), the one who challenged S. Chitlango on *tipangu* and the rain-making issue, was one of those who had a critical approach to *ntumbuluko*. His

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<sup>66</sup> *Tipangu* is plural of *Lipangu*. It is a place of public religious activity in Tsonga culture. It existed in each community where there was a king or chief. It was that place where sacrifices and prayers, libations, presentation of seed, first fruits gifts and harvest presentation were done for the community.

<sup>67</sup> A few years after independence in 1975, the country faced the most severe natural calamities. There were several successive droughts, resulting in severe and prolonged famine for more than a decade, and this intensified in the 1980s. As if natural calamities with many plagues (one of my cousins lost six children in two days) were not enough, civil war gripped the country brutally. For all these, the people blamed the government's assault on *ntumbuluko*. Interestingly enough, even Christians said that. As a part of the preparation for peace talks, the government changed the Constitution in 1990 and abandoned Marxism, giving freedom of religion. With this change the government restored traditional leadership and, through its Ministry of Culture, urged them to restore *tipangu* and to offer sacrifices and prayers for their community and the nation for rain, productivity and prosperity. Nowadays, project inauguration ceremonies are combined with libation and it is common to see the President pouring a libation in a community. Mediums and diviners are working under a government umbrella in the *Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais de Moçambique* (AMETRAMO) now represented in all communities. *Tipangu* and diviners are now sponsored and protected by the government. This move was followed with good rain from 1992 to 2001. The climax of that was the 2000 floods. The people feel vindicated about what they were saying about the causes of the droughts of the 1980s. The President is reported to have said that it rained in 2000 because people to go to their *tipangu* and offered libations and sacrifices for rain making, called *ku phahla pfula*. However this year, 2002, there is another severe drought in Mozambique in the whole of the Tsonga area, and it will be interesting to hear what their understanding and interpretation of it will be!

<sup>68</sup> Makasela is the name of gods that Solomon was given and it stands as his surname. There is forest where Makasela lived and when he died and became god, he became god of that forest. Henceforth Makasela forest. The Makasela forest is a territory but, in other places, Makasela is my informant.

argument was that *ntumbuluko* had helped people in the past, before the arrival of the gospel. When the gospel arrived, people were taken out of *ntumbuluko* to be in Christ. He then validated his argument by saying that now, when there is a death, Christians are called to attend and conduct funerals without having to observe *ntumbuluko* rites:

Now the *ntumbuluko* that we are in is "*ntumbuluko* of Christ"...*Ntumbuluko* governed our grandparents with laws (*swiyila*); we must live in Christ. However, one must respect [*ntumbuluko*] so that one may not kill oneself. Respect death [follow the sex ban and cleansing ritual sex] in your home. You must know how you must live [behave] so that our days [life] may be long. Nevertheless, we must know between old *ntumbuluko* and the *ntumbuluko* of God which one has more power and is above the other.

(Machava 2001, interview)

After this Machava started to tell his story of a power encounter in Xidoko between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel over rain-making in 1996/97. That year it did not rain and the sowing season passed. Kings and chiefs argued that it was because of the lack of rain-making rituals. They were given all that they needed to offer sacrifices and they *did* offer them, but no rain fell. The community saw a disaster looming. Through divination, "rain-stoppers" were identified and were beaten up, and some rain-makers were also beaten up. But even this failed to release or make rain, so it did not rain. In this disparate and nasty situation the church intervened.

An Ethiopian AIC church leader stopped the beating of people and promised to pray for rain. He mobilized the local churches to join in this movement. Local authorities stopped arresting and beating people, and also the traditional authority was stopped from performing rain-making rituals. The churches fasted and came together to pray. The above-mentioned leader wore trousers, shirt, jacket and tie all made of sacking. He preached, and it started to rain while he was preaching. It rained heavily and continued to rain throughout the season and there was a very good harvest, to the point that the traditional leaders were concerned that *ntumbuluko* and their spiritual power and authority would be undermined, and they asked if the church was trying to abolish *ntumbuluko*.

### 2.8.5 The importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible translators' consciousness.

For Mavulule, *ntumbuluko* is the natural or the original state of things. It is the pre-existence which makes it possible for anything to exist. It is the beginning of everything that exists. He admits, however, that *ntumbuluko* originate both positive and negative responses in life. But his negative here is in relation to misfortunes, instigated by *ntumbuluko*, which befall those disobeying *ntumbuluko*. This is why he warns that the positive side of *ntumbuluko*, i.e. the obedience of it, is sometimes in contradiction to Christian faith. He feels that Christians stop obeying *ntumbuluko*, but when they suffer the consequences of doing so, they start following everything in *ntumbuluko* and reap punishment, curse and death from God. In his understanding, Christians are trapped between *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith. On the other hand, Nhagumbe sees *ntumbuluko* as an expression of the essence of nature. If one associates this nature with human nature, its use in the Bible is more a seal of humanity or human nature. He accords it importance since Jesus has taken on that nature by becoming human, and that its use in the Bible indicates that it is in that human nature that Jesus wants to communicate.

Chamango discussed the use of *ntumbuluko* to translate the Pauline theology of the "flesh", arguing that *ntumbuluko* may not necessarily have a negative meaning and that its negative use needs an explanation. Finally, Ngomane understands *ntumbuluko* as the Tsonga ethos or ethical basis (corrective ethics) on which all matters and disputes are settled. *Ntumbuluko* is the centre of gravity of Tsonga life. We can sum up by saying that, in this category, *ntumbuluko* is the natural order of things; the basis of being (originator of all things); the essence of human nature which Jesus shares; Tsonga ethos; and the centre of gravity of Tsonga life and existence. Translators agree that it is ambiguous and therefore difficult to interpret, although it is now commonly used in the Bible in Tsonga languages such as Txitxopi and Gitonga. This accounts for some differences among Christians in the way *ntumbuluko* is understood and approached.

### 2.8.6 Some differences in the Christian practitioners' approach to *ntumbuluko*

It is interesting to analyse S. Chitlango and Machava, because they have many things in common. They are both from the same traditional area, both are in the same Assembly of God church and both are deacons in that church. For S. Chitlango *ntumbuluko* was life; its abolition or abandonment was suicide and its restoration by the government was a kind of resurrection to life. But, for Machava, *ntumbuluko* was good and helpful only as long as the gospel had not yet arrived. The coming of the gospel superseded *ntumbuluko* and replaced it. People must now be in Christ, in whom there is "divine *Ntumbuluko*". For him, *ntumbuluko*'s importance and value dwell in the past. His rain-making story was told to prove that the power of the gospel is above that of *ntumbuluko* and that whatever *ntumbuluko* achieved could be better achieved through the power of the gospel. Unfortunately, however, in his understanding that power was limited only to rain-making; when it comes to death and sexuality, he went back to *ntumbuluko* as the life-saving and long life provider, which was the same view that S. Chitlango S was expressing when he challenged him, and which was the traditional view, as expressed by Ndzukule, on the value and importance of *ntumbuluko* in human life as viewed by the Tsongas.

Rev. Matsombe, head of the Union Baptist (IUB)<sup>69</sup> denomination from 1974 to 1995, considered *ntumbuluko* to be darkness. For him, to follow *ntumbuluko* was to follow "darkness". For him, widowhood rites are *ku xanisa*<sup>70</sup> (torturing the widow). For him the *ku vuyisa mufi*, or the practice and ritual of bringing the dead home is a new but senseless practice. When his grandfather and father died there was no such practice; it

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<sup>69</sup> IUB stands for *Igreja União Baptista de Mocambique*. It is the single biggest Protestant denomination in Mozambique and is the biggest Baptist denomination in Southern Africa (Johnstone 1993:395).

<sup>70</sup> When I asked him to explain why he considers the widowhood rituals as torture, he told me that in his area, Chibuto, when they return from the burial the widow is forced to climb the roof of her house and to remove the central grass, called *xitchungwa*, in which she must sleep for the duration of *xikuma*. For him, the woman is heart-broken and weak, and so to make her climb is brutal. Furthermore, when the *ku tchinga ndzaka* ritual is performed, all the male members of the family have sex with the widow in one night, one after the other. To him this is disgusting, torturing and unacceptable.

is a *Mutchapi*-related practice. The gospel is the light that must shine in the darkness of *ntumbuluko*, because Jesus Christ brought grace, light and truth. Therefore, the Christian agent must remove or transfer people from *ntumbuluko* to the gospel (Matsombe 2001).

After the interview, and his attack on and view of *ntumbuluko* as darkness, we started to have a normal conversation and then he launched an attack against us young pastors for allowing our wives to wear short skirts, short dresses and/or long but revealing dresses saying:

You make us see the upper legs and underwear of your wives – *swa yila leswo hi ntumbuluko* (this is against, or is not permissible according to, the laws of *ntumbuluko*). Only the husband can see those parts of the woman (wife)'

(Matsombe 2001, conversation)

We can see here a kind of contradiction. In the official interview he was so negative about *ntumbuluko*, to the point of saying that *ntumbuluko* does all the evil things and that *ntumbuluko* itself needs the light of the gospel. But, in his moral critique, he used *ntumbuluko* to sanction the moral basis and authority for his criticism. We can see that he gave *ntumbuluko* the function of establishing normative and moral standards. Maybe, when he said that *ntumbuluko* itself needed the light of the gospel, he was reflecting what K. Bediako (1999:12) called the conversion and redemption of cultures.

Another example of a negative Christian practitioner's view, which also makes such exceptions in a somehow contradictory fashion, is that of Rev. Mangwele. He would like to see Christians not mixing the gospel with *ntumbuluko*. He asks a question:

If one is in the gospel, but people know him/her that is mixing, how will they abandon *ntumbuluko*? How can one have power to preach the gospel if there is mixing? You cannot have power to convert anyone, and God cannot hear your prayers, if you are mixing. I am starting to feel that I laboured for nothing; they are mixing *ntumbuluko* with the gospel.

(Mangwele 2001, interview)

However, he also contradicted himself by warning emphatically that, if one is married, one must fear *ntumbuluko*, especially when one's wife is in her period,

otherwise one will kill oneself. He also said that, if one lives in a certain land, one must follow the *ntumbuluko* laws and norms of that land. This is the same viewpoint as that of Ndzukule, one of my traditionalist informants, who gave an example by saying the *ntumbuluko* laws of "Chitlangoland," must be respected and obeyed by all who live in it, and never be dismissed as merely Chitlango or Xilotani laws, but regarded as territorial or national religious and civic laws. Mangwele made those warnings so as to protect men from the deadly effect of women's impurity and to keep the cosmic and ecological equilibrium of the land and to enjoy rain, fertility and productivity of the land, which are withheld if people start *ku xakela tiko* (abusing or polluting the land). My question is: could it be that those whom he accuses of mixing *ntumbuluko* with the gospel are also trying to do what he outlined here? It would be interesting to know what kind of judgement and differentiation he is making in saying that there are those who are mixing, while he wants everybody to observe the *ntumbuluko* laws of the land as well as those of purity and impurity which govern sexuality. This demonstrates profound ambiguity about the issue from a Christian perspective.

If we compare Mangwele with Machava, we begin to see a perception that God has no interest in sexuality. The power of the gospel does not penetrate sexuality, or is not powerful enough to have an effect on and to dominate the *ntumbuluko* on sexuality and fertility. So, under the dominion of *ntumbuluko*, sexuality becomes an area of life unclaimed for Christ. This is, again, the effect of the negative view on sex and sexuality. God is too holy, and sex too dirty, for the Tsongas. So God cannot be interested in or be brought into sexuality because it is sin, and one cannot involve God in sin. So, sexuality is another world which is disgusting and hated by God, a world without God, a world into which God cannot even look because it reminds him of "The Fall"<sup>71</sup>. In this way sexuality becomes an open ground for other powers to inhabit and control. That is why *ntumbuluko* is the sole director and custodian of sexuality in Tsonga culture.

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<sup>71</sup> In the Tsonga popular understanding of sin, the fall of Adam and Eve was an act of adultery between a wife and husband. God did not design humans to have sex, he would have provided a way of multiplying the humanity without sexual intercourse, but Adam and Eve broke the divine plan and that is why there is *xirotha* to try cleaning and minimizing the evil dirty nature of marriage, especially sexual intercourse (Ndzukule 2001).

Dule (2001), one of the Methodist informants, associated the importance and value of *ntumbuluko* with what was happening in his area in relation to the *Mapude* cult discussed earlier. *Mapude* gave information which provided the necessary guidance and warning to permit the survival of the Mukambi-Feha people in a harsh and hostile environment. He said that, although there were many things that Christians had abandoned, there were certain things that they continued to do, giving the example of the ritual after the death of a person with tuberculosis. He indicated that in his area and his church in such a situation, after the church ceremony the family call a medium to prepare a protective medicine for them in a snail shell, into which all will spit. The medium or diviner will then take the shell away, hoping that the misfortune is in this way taken away from the family.

But, when I asked Dule to advise us young ministers, he started by saying:

Today I was solving a problem of my daughter-in-law, who is a widow. I could not find a solution. When my son died, I wanted to find out what her condition would be, but the boys [his younger sons] stopped me saying: "she is our wife, it is not up to you to know that". However, today there is noise; she is bringing men to sleep with her at home and when we were trying to solve the problem, she told me: "I cannot stay three years without finding a man [meaning having sex]". The boys are furious and saying to her: "you are bringing men here?!" And she says, "I cannot stay three years without having a man". But, in the old days, people stayed that long because we gave them laws [laws of *ntumbuluko*].

(Dule 2001, interview)

Here Dule is speaking of the widowhood rituals and ritual sex and remarriage, which took place between six months and two years after the death of a husband. Here *ntumbuluko*, or laws, functioned as the normative, moral guardian and the widow's restorer to normal life and sexuality after the death of her spouse. His young son did not know that and did not allow their father to guide them. In this story he is showing that:

- 1) young people marginalize old people
- 2) there are certain life events in which *ntumbuluko* is the only way to find guidance, and that the old people are the custodians of that way
- 3) without the old people young people cannot handle some life issues.

This serves as a warning for young ministers not to marginalize the old people because they will get nowhere if they act like his children did.

The other person to speak her view about the importance of *ntumbuluko* was Mrs. Massango. She was very negative about *ntumbuluko* and very critical of those believers who mix Christian faith with *ntumbuluko*. She gave the example of her illness and of how many people from her church, including leaders, came to her and persuaded her to seek help from mediums for her healing. These people believed that she was bewitched and that her neighbours had put magic rice and meat in her throat because they were jealous, because her children always sent her rice and meat. She refused to go to the medium, diviners or spiritists and prayed until her children came to take her to Maputo and to send her to hospital, where eventually she was made well.

But, when it comes to sexual morality, she said:

If a mother [wife] goes playing [adultery] with men, she brings poison at home. Her children and her husband will be sick. If a child is sick one must not play [have sex]. Although we lighten things, what is of *ntumbuluko* is of *ntumbuluko*. Christianity is there, but there are other things that work and are compatible or walk together or along with the law within Christian faith. The law [*ntumbuluko*] is what makes families strong or stable. If a mother despises [*ntumbuluko*] she spoils the family life... If a man plays [adultery] too much, she must not over-rebuke him or rebuke him too much... She must leave him alone, he will learn his lesson by himself. When he returns [many Tsonga men leave their wives at home and live with adulterous women] she must only say: 'I told you!' she must not expel him from the home. If she expels him it is *mhangu* (disaster or curse) for herself.

(Massango 2001, interview)

She went on to say that a wife must rebuke her unfaithful husband only gently and that she must never be jealous and hateful to her husband, because wives have or uphold their husband's lives in their hands. Therefore, she must avoid being "light" (losing dignity) and she must tie up or control her heart or emotions and hide the *wufendze*<sup>72</sup> of the father (husband) of the house. She concluded by saying that even if the husband forgets his wife and does not give her money or beats her frequently, she must be patient. She must not scatter the family in her anger. She must be considerate and uphold her husband's life.

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<sup>72</sup> *Wufendze* is a term used to indicate a mess. If someone does not clean his home, does not put things in order, or cooks in unclean pots etc., that is called *wufendze*. It means "mess" or a state of uncleanness and dirt. Here it is used to mean moral mess and uncleanness or moral dirt, which adultery is.

She views the sex ban, when a child is sick, as a part of *ntumbuluko* which must not be devalued and forsaken, but fully observed by Christians. She believes that *ntumbuluko* strengthens families, especially in their approach to unfaithfulness. The wife's unfaithfulness is poisonous, bringing sickness on the children and the husband. It is very bad! But the unfaithfulness of the husband must not be rebuked, he must be left alone; he can only be gently rebuked if it is too much. The wife must hide it, not be jealous, and must love the husband without any hatred. She must take all the beatings and abandonment; just wait for him to learn a lesson and then come back home and then say "Honey, I told you!!!...".

This suggests that *ntumbuluko* distorts morality and suppresses women, suggesting also that it is an idea that favours men rather than women. It is important to note the use of the term "playing" to replace the other terms that are used for extra-marital sex. The term becomes a psychological preparation for acceptance of the behaviour. It is also interesting that such a form of suppression of women was being enforced by someone who worked as the national president for the women's society of her denomination for many years, teaching other women and solving family matters, especially those related to unfaithfulness. We will come back to this when we discuss the influence of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga apprehension of the Christian faith, but for now it will be enough to say that the importance of *ntumbuluko*, to Mrs. Massango, lies in its providing health care and protection, moral control (for women) and family stability.

## **2.9 Discerning the influence of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga apprehension of Christian faith**

The use of the term *ntumbuluko wa Krete* and *ntumbuluko wa Xikwembu* (*ntumbuluko* of Christ and *ntumbuluko* of God) by Machava (2001) is one of the examples of the influence of the concept *ntumbuluko* on the Tsonga apprehension of Christian faith. In general, this is the noble and positive influence which becomes a way of appropriating faith into one's culture. However, when we look at certain aspects of life like sexuality, immorality; purity; impurity and holiness, as we will do, one finds some disturbing negative influences of *ntumbuluko* in the people's apprehension of Christian faith, ethics, concept of sin, holiness etc.

### 2.9.1 The influence of *ntumbuluko* upon Tsonga Christian understanding of sexual immorality

Two of my informants (S. Chitlango 2001 and Ndzukule 2001) used the term *ku hlakana* (to play) in reference to marital sex. But Massango (2001) used it in reference to extra-marital sex. In the Bible extra-marital sex is called adultery, in the Bible and in Tsonga it is called *ku oswa* or *ku bhaya* (illicit or sinful sex). The deliberate avoidance of the biblical terms for adultery (*ku oswa/ku bhaya*) and the use of euphemistic language instead have the powerful psychological effect of minimizing the moral gravity of the act and making it appear something normal<sup>73</sup>. That effect can clearly be seen in the family sexual conduct code that Mrs. Massango prescribes in the interview.

Massango (2001) says that if a woman has extra-marital sex, she brings poison home and that that poison will cause her husband and children to become sick. However, if it is the man “playing”, his wife must not rebuke him. If he is “playing” too much, she must rebuke him only gently and let him learn his lesson. She must hide his moral filth and mess (2001). This gives the impression that extra-marital sex is only bad when it is a woman who is involved in it and that adultery is sin only when committed by women. Therefore, the duty of a woman is to abstain from or avoid extra-marital sex. The virtue of a woman is also judged by her ability to accept her husband’s going out and enjoying extra-marital sex, while she does all she can to cover up or hide this and to protect her husband. In other words, the husband commits adultery whilst his wife must become his bodyguard and advocate; if she fails to do this and instead becomes angry the whole society, including pastors, bishops and their churches, will reject her. This is the typical teaching given to girls before, during and after *mbutsa*. That is what girls are told by *mapswatsi* carrying a jar on the head and wearing beads called *xikhulu* representing these laws in the Tsonga *mbutsa* ceremony. These teachings and views on sexual immorality are

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<sup>73</sup> Most Tsongas use the term *ntumbuluko* to justify their sexual immorality. They just say “this is *ntumbuluko*”. One person, who refused to be interviewed, argued that the Chikava clan in my tribe uses the term *ntumbuluko* in a bad or evil manner. They use it as a cover-up to or justification for sexual promiscuity.

enforced with the virginity test, before *xirotha*, which is meant only for women, never for men. Men are never checked and called to account for their sexual conduct, at least not by their fiancées, brides or spouses.

I regard this is a distortion of the biblical teaching on sexual morality. It waters down the fact that *any* extra-marital sex, whether by a man or a woman is a sin before God and a total betrayal of the conjugal relationship and trust, with serious spiritual, emotional and social consequences. The responsibility given to the women of hiding and protecting the husband is the most emotionally and psychologically crushing torture. She cannot go for pastoral counselling to express her feelings and to find help because she must hide what the husband is doing and fight fiercely those who try to expose him. If she goes to seek pastoral counselling she will have to explain her problems and in so doing will be breaking the rules and will be accused of having "reported" her husband.

Women are required to keep secret that which is killing them. What a sin and what a torture! If we could reverse that requirement onto Tsonga men, we would see suicide after suicide and murder after murder. Men kill their wives and rivals over just the rumor of an affair. Besides depriving the woman of help, this tradition deprives the male sinner of the liberating and healing power and effect of the confession of sin.

As a result, one finds women resorting to extra-marital sex as a form of revenge, or because their husbands have long neglected their sexual needs, catering instead for those of the other women. Although men hide their sexual sin from the sight of humans, and their wives are forced by *ntumbuluko*, and *ntumbuluko*-influenced Christian teaching, to support and cover that behaviour, sooner or later, the very immoral sin they hide ruins and destroys their emotional, spiritual and social life. But Mrs. Massango said that this is part of *ntumbuluko* which must not be reduced or devalued because, in her opinion, it accords with Christian faith and teaching and serves to strengthen families and family life.

## **2.9.2 *Ntumbuluko* in the perception of impurity, holiness and sanctity**

Rev. Mangwele, a senior retired minister of IUB says:

If a woman is in her days [menstruation] she is impure; she can not eat Supper [Holy Communion]. Besides that, if one speaks of fasting; humbling oneself; and of showing that the table we are approaching is big, the pastor did not go into his wife's house [sex abstinence]. We did not tell the congregation not to go to their houses, but, they knew that was the condition to partake the Communion.

(Mangwele 2001, interview)

From this we see that sexual intercourse even within the boundaries of marriage and/or menstruation, causes impurity which prevents one from partaking of communion. One must not partake of the Holy Communion when one is menstruating or if one has had sex within the communion week. One should abstain from sex so as to be pure during that week; women should pray against their impurity (period) that week in order to qualify to the Lord's Supper. Another minister, from the United Methodist Church says:

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper until today, [and] those Christians that are mature put on Christ-likeness, teaches that if a woman is going to the Supper she must not be one who sees days [menstruation]. She must not be coming out from the house in which she met her husband [a term for sexual intercourse]. The Supper week is holy for men and women. They cannot approach the Supper if they are hot [sex makes one ritually hot]. Even today, this is what they are taught. It is possible that some people are stubborn, but that is what the doctrine of our church says.

(Nhanombe 2001, interview).

Once again, we find that menstruation causes impurity and that women in such impurity have no access to the Table of the Lord. Such a condition, and having sex with one's spouse during the week prior to Holy Communion, cuts one off from the communion of believers or saints, with their Lord. Such people must be excluded in order to maintain the purity and holiness of the ritual. To be holy and sanctified one must abstain from sex. So, menstruation and sexual intercourse are an iniquity that God shuns. If a couple has sex God covers his face and runs away. If a woman is in her period God runs away from her. So, while God runs away from her, she is not permitted to approach God.

Using the above doctrine, Dule, a lay person in the same denomination as Nhanombe, criticized the increasing number of women in pastoral ministry in his denomination saying:

The yesterday and today's church are no longer the same. I see many female pastors; they will now invade men... If one follows our laws of *ntumbuluko* and the Holy Scriptures, I do not believe that a woman is allowed to climb to the pulpit if she is running [menstruation]. I do not know if this is right, but I believe it is not right from both our culture and from the Jewish culture in the Bible. A woman must not climb to the pulpit while she is running. She must not meet with other people, she is impure. But today a woman is pastor, a woman is superintendent and she is to serve the Supper, but she is running. My head is starting to burn. What we devalue is what takes our power away!

(Dule 2001, interview).

His criticism was not accepted by the two Methodist ministers that were there, including the one who said that it was their doctrine that women must not come to the Lord's Table during their periods. When we were on the way back, the two ministers said the following regarding Dule's remarks: 'Dule's remarks are of a lay person, and must not be taken seriously' (Nhanombe and Maswanganhe 2001, conversation).

But, in my opinion, Dule was asking a critical question about the Holy Communion doctrine of his denomination. He was merely highlighting the position in which that doctrine puts women, regardless of their obvious ordination and acceptance within the ministry. Surely, there is a contradiction here. The other thing that Dule did, by drawing from *ntumbuluko* the authority to make his critique, is to indicate that his denomination's doctrine of the Holy Communion is derived from and based on *ntumbuluko*.

This doctrine has some implications. It creates gender superiority and blood inferiority. Men become impure only through contact with women. They remain pure as long as they abstain from sexual contact with women. On the other hand menstruating women, whether they have sexual contact or not, cannot be pure. Once every month they become impure. They have an inherent "perpetual pollution"<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> This was an expression used by Dr. Philomena Mwaura in her lectures on new religious movements in Africa. She lectured in the first semester of 2000 for the MTh in the African Christianity Programme in the University of Natal. With "perpetual pollution" she described the general bias on women in African cultures which as also reflected in the religious movements of both Christian and traditional or Islamic origin.

This ruling makes men the pure sex and women the impure, and thus inferior, sex. With this attitude, discrimination against and dehumanization of women is inevitable. So, one cannot blame Dule for what he said about female ministers, but one must blame the doctrine that reinforces *ntumbuluko* and keeps people in bondage, rather than liberating them. The church ordains women so as to follow the modern trend, but it has not done its job on the ground by changing conditions and structures that have been in place from time immemorial and which were instrumental in the marginalisation of women. And the result is that they are ordained, but, for Dule, they are still impure, and thus sometimes he will reject their Holy Communion and not listen their sermons. This is just a small example of what sometimes happens within denominations in Mozambique. Maybe people like Dule end up starting their own "pure" churches, where women are kept in their "rightful" place.

What do I mean then by "blood inferiority"? The impurity of women in their periods, after delivery and after sex within the bonds of marriage, suggests some viewpoints. It suggests that sex is bad, sinful and evil in any condition. This is the view in which sex is called *khombo* (misfortune) in Tsonga. The fact that God gave Adam a wife, that the Bible urges us to "marry and not burn with desires" (1 Co 7:9) and that the church encourages us to marry shows that sexual "sin" is allowable, no matter with whom one may have sex, for it is sin anywhere, but an allowable sin. It is *ntumbuluko* (a human duty) and it is Adam who started it. One is not accountable for it. On the other hand, the fact that the blood of menstruation is so powerful as to break the seal of purification that Jesus made through his own blood, making the woman impure, raises the question as to whether our purification was complete or whether the blood of Jesus was *inferior* and could not deal with Tsonga impurity. If Jesus' purification cannot stand above menstrual impurity, and if Jesus refuses access to his Table because of our impurity, his blood cannot purify and he fears for his own contamination. So, we must find someone else to provide purification for us and to come back to his Table clean.

## 2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I sought to answer questions about what *ntumbuluko* is. I used primary sources from the fieldwork to answer the questions. In order to find a broad definition and description of *ntumbuluko*, the research targeted three categories or segments of the Tsonga society. My other task in this chapter was to find out the nature of *ntumbuluko* and its relationship to the gospel, in the experience of the informants.

I found that almost all the informants of the Christian practitioners category were unhappy with the existing relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. They all had stories to prove that there is a problem in the way *ntumbuluko* relates to the gospel in Christian denominations and in society. In view of these complaints, I sought to assess the influence of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga consciousness as well as in the process of Tsonga people apprehending the Christian faith itself. Our assessment reveals that the issue is complex, since those informants who complained about how others relate *ntumbuluko* to Christian faith, themselves had some *ntumbuluko* rituals and laws that they favoured and which could lead them to be disapproved of by others. Even some of the doctrinal formulations and ethos are more related to *ntumbuluko* than to the Christian faith, although they find resonances in the OT and Judaism.

However authentic our definitions and descriptions of *ntumbuluko*, we need to unpack the concept for the wider audience, by applying multidisciplinary approaches to interpret *ntumbuluko*. Only after such interpretation, giving us different angles or avenues to interpret and understand the concept, can we theologically and missiologically engage the concept *ntumbuluko*.

In the next chapter we shall start with the process of the interpretation of the concept of *ntumbuluko*. That chapter is the first of Part Three, which is interpretative. The next chapter will be based mainly on social science interpretative tools, while the following chapter will be based on theological and biblical interpretative tools for the interpretation and understanding of *ntumbuluko*.

**PART THREE:****INTERPRETATION**

Cultures pattern perceptions of reality into conceptualizations of what reality can or should be, what is to be regarded as actual, probable, possible, and impossible. These conceptualizations form what is termed the "worldview" of the culture. The worldview is the central systematization of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their value system. The worldview lies at the very heart of culture, touching, interacting with and strongly influencing every other aspect of the culture.

(Kraft 1979:53)

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3 ANALYSING *NTUMBULUKO* FROM DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIVE APPROACHES

#### 3.1 Introduction

It is not the task of this research to preoccupy itself with the etymology of the word *ntumbuluko*. Nevertheless, it is important to indicate first the variation in spelling, second, the use of the prefix *ntu* in other concepts in Sub-Saharan Africa, and among those languages generically called Bantu languages and to look at a fascinating study of its use by one of the most renowned of African philosophers, Alexis Kagame, from Rwanda. Only after that will we use other approaches for interpreting *ntumbuluko*.

*Ntu* is a very important prefix in history (migration of Bantu people), in theology and ethics (*Ubuntu*), in philosophy (Bantu philosophy) and elsewhere.

The word *ntumbuluko* has some variations in spelling. Some Tsonga dictionaries in Mozambique, such as the *Dicionário Changana-Português* and the Ronga New Testament use *ntumbuluku* while the *Tsonga-English Dictionary*, the Xitshwa Bible and New Testament; the Ronga Bible and the Tsonga Bilbes (including *Bibele Mahungu la Manene*) use *ntumbuluko*. Txitxopi has two variations, spelling it *ntumbuluko* in some verses and *mtumbuluko* in others. Gitonga breaks the prefix *ntu* and spells it *tumbunuko*, replacing “l” with “n.” So Gitonga omits “n” at the beginning of the word and substitutes “l” with “n” before the suffix “ko.” These variations pose no problem. In Tsonga an “o” at the end of a word is pronounced like “u”, so it makes no difference if one ends with “o” or with “u”. “N” before “l” (*nt*) is silently used to produce a heavy sound, but its absence does not imply conceptual or grammatical change. In daily speaking, people pronounce it either way. The substitution of “l” with “n” in Gitonga does change the sound and pronunciation of the word. This way of using the word, although not written, is also common among the Vaxopi and some Tsongas. In Txitxopi I have not yet understood the conceptual reason why some verses use *mtumbuluko* while others use *ntumbuluko*. But all these are variations of one and the same concept word and the variations do not affect its

conceptual makeup. For this study we have adopted the spelling *ntumbuluko*, unless otherwise indicated. Where some other spelling is used it is in reference or relation to a particular source using that spelling.

*Ntumbuluko* comprises three separate parts: *ntu*, or *tu*, or *mtu* (prefix) + *mbulu* or *mbunu* (radical or root) + *ko/u* (suffix). *Ntu* appears as a suffix in words and concepts like *xintu*, *intu*, *muntu*, *vantu*, *buntu*, *bantu*, *ubuntu*. As for the radical or root, I am not sure of its use, although in Xitshwa, one of the Tsonga languages, *mbulu* is the supernatural power from diviners that enables one to act supernaturally. If one is said to have *mbulu wa nyama* (magic power for hunting) one can call animals to come to oneself<sup>75</sup>. The suffix “*ko/u*” indicates the class of the word. *Ntumbuluko/u* is an abstract substantive or noun. *Tu* without “n” is the verbal form of the word *ntumbuluko* which is more related to the verb “to create,” “creation” and “creator.” *Ku tumbuluka* is the verb “to begin” or “to originate”; *ku tumbuluxa* is the verb “to create”, “to cause something to begin”, “to be the force or master-mind behind the beginning or origin of something”; *tumbuluxa* is the imperative of *ku tumbuluxa*. *Ku tumbulukixiwa* is “to be created, made or formed”; *mutumbuluxi* is “the creator”, whereas other forms include *tumbulukile*, *tumbulukisa* and *tumbulukisiwa*, etc.

### 3.2 Ontological and philosophical interpretative approach to the study of *ntumbuluko*

In our attempt to translate the concept *ntumbuluko*, I shall survey the ontological study of *ntu* by Kagame (1956). *Ntu* was introduced into ontological philosophical studies of “being” by Tempels (1945) in his *Bantu Philosophy*, which was followed by many works including Kagame’s (1956) *La Philosophie Bantu-Rwandaise de l’Etre*. In 1976 Kagame published another work, *La Philosophie Bantu Comparée*, covering all 24 Bantu countries in West, Central, East and Southern Africa. According to Mudimbe (1985:187) both works rely heavily on linguistic analyses of Bantu languages because, for Kagame:

<sup>75</sup> My grandfather on my mother’s side had an *mbulu wa nyama* in the form of a bow. If he took that bow and went hunting he simply found a place and stood still. All animals were allegedly attracted to him, including lions and snakes. They came near to him and stopped, until he chose those he wanted to kill and shot them (Hlungwani 1995, counselling).

[T]o speak of Bantu philosophy implies, above all, a consideration of two conditions for its possibility: the linguistic coherence of Bantu languages which uniformly presents class structures and the commodity of a philosophical method inherited from the West (Kagame, 1971:591). Tempels, according to Kagame, initiated the availability of the method and that is his merit. His Bantu Philosophy should be revised because Tempels was not a scholar: he did not pay attention to Bantu languages and moreover, his synthesis, strictly based on his experience within the Luba-Shaba community, does not offer a comprehensive understanding of Bantu cultures.

(Mudimbe 1985:187)

It is with this assumption that Kagame, and thereafter Mulago (1965:152-53), Mujynya (1972:13-14), as well as Jahn (1961:100), emphasized that all the ten classes or categories of *ntu* in Kinyarwanda can be reduced to four basic concepts (Mudimbe 1985:188-89). The four basic categories are: (1) *MU-ntu* = being of intelligence (Aristotelian notion of substance; (2) *KI-ntu* = being without intelligence or thing; (3) *HA-ntu* with variant *PA-*, *VA-* and *GO-* expressing time and place and; (4) *KU-ntu* related to modification of the being (Mudimbe 1985:189). Summarizing Kagame and Mulago, Mudimbe (1985:189) says that all the four categories come from the root *NTU*, which refers to being and also to force. *Ntu* is a form of universal sign of similitude; its presence in beings brings them to life and attests to both their individual value and to the measure of their integration in the dialectic of vital energy.

Mujynya (1972) is quoted in Mudimbe (1985) summarizing his understanding of *ntu* by saying that:

(1) all elements of the universe, that is each created *ntu*, is a force and an active force; (2) everything being force, each *ntu* is thus always part of a multitude of other forces and all of them influence each other; (3) every *ntu* can always, under the influence of other *ntu*, increase or decrease in its being; (4) because each created being can weaken inferior beings or can be weakened by superior beings, each *ntu* is always and simultaneously an active and fragile force.

(Mudimbe 1985:190)

To conclude this study of *ntu* I quote Mudimbe saying: '*Ntu* is the fundamental and referential basic being-force which dynamically manifests itself in all existing beings, differentiating them but also linking them in an ontological hierarchy' (Mudimbe 1985:189). Then the question to ask is: does *ntu* of *ntumbuluko* carry all these? Unlike other Bantu languages, Tsonga does not use *ntu* in reference to human beings.

Tsonga and Shona use *munhu* and *vanhu* where other Bantu languages use *buntu/muntu/intu* and *bantu/vantu/antu*. However, the idea of “being”, “force”, “creation”, “origin”, “human essence” and “beginning” that are basic to *ntumbuluko* are also discussed in varying degrees in the Kinyarwandan *ntu* of the above scholars. In fact, Parratt (1995:28-40) identifies Mulago and Kagame as contributors for an African theological method with their study of *ntu* (Parratt 1995:32) following Tempels’ study. But this study is conceptual rather than linguistic, so, we must go back to the conceptual exploration.

Tempels’ work itself (*Bantu Philosophy*) does not separate *ntu* and study the concept of *ntu* philosophically. His work is more concerned with the concept of ‘vital force’ (Tempels 1959:44) and ‘philosophy of forces’ (Tempels 1959:74) in Bantu cultures. With this concept Tempels analyses the “*muntu*” concept of being in various human situations. Discussing Bantu metaphysics or ‘philosophy of forces’ (1959:74) he says:

The philosophy of forces is a theory of life, a *weltanschauung*. It is possible that it may have been devised to justify a given behaviour, or that a particular adaptation of nature may have conditioned this behaviour, but always the philosophy of forces strictly governs in fact the whole of Bantu life.

It explains the human motivations of all Bantu customs. It decrees the norms in accordance with which personality in the individual shall be kept unaltered or allowed to develop. This does not mean that every Bantu is able to enumerate the cardinal truths of his philosophy, but it is not less true that the “*muntu*” who neglects to orientate his life in accordance with the ancient norms laid down by Bantu wisdom will be treated as “*kidima*” by his fellows: that is to say as a sub-human, a man of insufficient mind to count as a “*muntu*.” The normal “*muntu*” knows his philosophy, he recognizes the forces in being.

(Tempels 1959:74)

Tempels’ treatment of philosophy here is parallel to the notion of *ntumbuluko* among the Tsonga. The combination of what he calls the vital force which orientates Bantu behaviour, philosophy of forces and Bantu ethics (1959:115-137) are all covered in the concept *ntumbuluko*. The requisite to know one’s philosophy, customs or wisdom which guide life and determine one’s personality or personhood is a core element of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga worldview. One of the important conclusions of Tempels’ study is his acknowledgement of Bantu thought forms when he says:

Even before we "rethought" Bantu philosophy, before grasping clearly its profound influence upon every act and deed of the "*mntu*," we were beginning to suspect, perhaps, that everywhere there was a Bantu way of thinking which deeply influenced their behaviour. We were even thinking that we must take account of it. Such a reality cannot be disguised, ruled out, denied or ignored by any conscientious educator. The question now is to know how and to what extent we must take this reality into consideration.

(Tempels 1959:170)

This conscious attempt to recognise and take into account the Bantu ways of thinking, contributed towards the development of theological methods which allow our explorations of this way of thinking as the locus of theologizing. Among the Tsonga, *ntumbuluko* represents a Tsonga worldview, a Tsonga philosophy of being and life. This must not be viewed in the negative sense as a huge challenge, but it is also an opportunity and a possibility of greater theological development for the church. Tempels argues that:

If the Bantu have a defined philosophy, a profound corpus of wisdom and an established code of behaviour we can, perhaps, find in it a real foundation on which the Bantu peoples will be able to build their civilization.

(Tempels 1959:170)

Although we are not building Bantu or Tsonga civilization, this statement helps one to see how, in the case of *ntumbuluko* as a defined philosophy, a profound corpus of wisdom and, to use the most recent term, the deep indigenous knowledge system and an established code of conduct among the Tsonga peoples, *ntumbuluko* can be a foundation on which Tsonga Christianity can develop. When Christian witnesses know how to speak of *ntumbuluko* thought forms as Tempels suggests: "We feel that we should speak "from one school of wisdom to another," "from one ideal to another," "from one conception of the world to another conception of it" (1959:168), we will be better able to communicate the gospel of Christ among the Tsonga.

After analysing *ntumbuluko* from an ontological and philosophical point of view we need to proceed to looking at it phenomenologically using specific literary works. These literary works will be looked at separately so as to provide another theoretical angle for the understanding of *ntumbuluko*.

### 3.3 Phenomenological interpretative approach to the study of *ntumbuluko*

According to Smart (1983), phenomenology has its origin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the thoughts of Edmund Husserl and developed into a philosophical movement as well as a method of studying and analysing religion 'the phenomenology of religion' (1983:444). This method of studying religious phenomena is mainly descriptive and it is used in studying human consciousness. Smart states that Husserl saw in Rudolf Otto's (1917) *The Idea of the Holy* a 'masterly analysis of religious consciousness' (1983:444).

Some comparativists adopted the method mainly on its *eidetic* vision (form and essence of religion) and developed typologies of religious experience. This approach is well represented by van der Leeuw's *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*. Neutrality and typology were the two approaches. These approaches have two interesting statements which say: 'Reality shows itself through manifestations of divinity and power in which humans encounter the eternal. Their rituals celebrate the recurring or cyclical nature of life, which is threatened by the sense of history (:444). Phenomenology thus has put emphasis on experience and this emphasis on religious experience: 'in turn has generated an interest in the actual relationship between experience and the interpretations which colour and overlay it' (:444).

It is only in the aspect of its descriptive nature and its emphasis on experience and analytical interpretation of religious phenomena in the human consciousness that we chose to use aspects of the phenomenological approach. It is used in this study as an interpretative tool for the study of *ntumbuluko* as a Tsonga phenomenon and reality thereof emerging from their experience and encounters. We will not discuss all the philosophical issues related to phenomenology, but we use only two phenomenologist philosophers in order to gain a different angle of interpretation of *ntumbuluko*.

In this section I will use Berger's (1966) theory of the social construction of reality, Horton's (1993) theory of explanation, prediction and control of reality and Turner's (1977) theory of the primal religions. Turner will be used alongside Kraft's (1979) *Christianity in Culture*, which discusses worldview. These works will be used as

theoretical models for the interpretation of *ntumbuluko*. They help to integrate and locate the study of *ntumbuluko* in the broader academic field of studies and they also become an initiation for the non-Tsonga readers or students of *ntumbuluko*.

### 3.3.1 Understanding *ntumbuluko* as construction of reality (Berger)

In the title of this thesis I mentioned an encounter between Christianity and culture in the interaction of Christian and Tsonga theoretical constructs of reality. This wording in the title was an attempt to use Berger's (1966) theory of the social construction of reality as an interpretative approach to *ntumbuluko* as expressed in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Excluding its introduction and conclusion, the book is divided into three parts. The introduction presents and discusses the problem of the sociology of knowledge. It points out the problem of "reality" and "knowledge" in relation to the "man in the street" (ordinary people), the "philosopher" and the "sociologist". According to the author, the sociologist's understanding of "reality" and "knowledge" falls in between those of the "man in the street" and the "philosopher". After presenting this complexity of different degrees of apprehending reality, he lists various scholars in the field of the sociology of knowledge, pointing out their particular contributions to the discipline. He attributes to Max Scheler, a German philosopher, the genesis of the discipline and, in its development, he acknowledges the contributions of many others including Marx<sup>76</sup>, Nietzsche, Weber, Derkheim, Pareto, Mannheim, Mills etc. These names became important in the theorizing of the sociology of knowledge.

Part one of the book discusses the foundations of knowledge in everyday life. The author discusses themes like the "reality", "social interaction", "language" and "knowledge" of everyday life. He stresses the importance of "common sense knowledge" in conducting or directing everyday life, and the influence that these theoretical constructs have upon this "common sense". Part two analyses various

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<sup>76</sup> Marx is the father of Marxism. His sociology of knowledge was more concerned with the study of "ideology" which he defined as: 'ideas serving as weapons for social interests' and "false consciousness" defined: 'thought that is alienated from the real social being of the thinker' (Berger 1966:18). However, Lenin was more fascinated by Marx's concepts of "substructure/superstructure (:18). It is out of this fascination that Marxism Leninism was born and changed the history of Russia. This brand of Marxism is the background of the Mozambican revolutionary history referred to in the introduction to this thesis.

models and processes of “institutionalization” of the society and the “legitimation”(sic) of such institutions. One of the author’s main arguments in this part is that Man (human being) is a social product (Berger 1966:79). Part three presents the “internalization” of the reality process through “socializations”(sic). The “internalization” incorporates a possible “transformation” of the “subjective reality”, which could theologically be called “conversion”. The section also discusses theories of “identity”. The conclusion sums up the theoretical issues of sociology in general and of the sociology of knowledge in particular.

It is not in our interest to discuss each and every aspect or theory presented in this book, but to pick up some issues relevant to the thesis, especially those parts that can help in the interpretation and understanding of *ntumbuluko* from a sociological perspective. According to Berger (1966), the book is intended as: ‘a systematic, theoretical treatise in the sociology of knowledge’ (1966:7) and that its basic argument is that: ‘reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs’ (:13). The question then is: “can we say that *ntumbuluko* is a Tsonga social construct? If yes, can the analytical theories of the sociology of knowledge help us understand *ntumbuluko*?” In what follows, I attempt to test this hypothesis.

To analyse *ntumbuluko* in this perspective we must assume that *ntumbuluko* is a “reality” around which a body of “knowledge” is constructed in the Tsonga context. Then we need to see how “reality” and “knowledge” are defined by Berger (1966). Berger (1966:13) defines “reality” as: ‘a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognise as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot “wish them away”)’ and he defines “knowledge” as: ‘the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics’ (:13). In my opinion the basic meaning of the two definitions is that: phenomena have a being independent of human will, and that phenomena are real. This definition of “reality” and “knowledge” can be compared to the definition of *ntumbuluko* by Mundlovo and Khosa, based on the *kanyi* tree phenomenon at Magude and the ancestral spirits phenomena among the Tsongas of Mozambique.

So far, I think, based on the fact that *ntumbuluko* is a body of “knowledge” that came to be socially established as “reality”, *sui generis*, in Tsonga society (Berger 1966:15), we can say that *ntumbuluko* is a socially constructed reality; although we cannot account for the whole process of such construction. But the story of the *Murime* and *Mutchapi* movements, and the taboos and rituals thereafter, which caused a radical change in the areas of divination and which introduced a new dynamic into the relationship between the living and the dead (the living-dead theory) is an example of such processes. These phenomena created a body of knowledge and reality that is given to Tsongas as: ‘*a priori* to individual experience, providing the latter with its order of meaning. This order, although it is relative to a particular socio-historical situation, appears to the individual as the natural way of looking at the world’ (:20) this is what Scheler called: the ‘relative-natural worldview (*relativnatürliche Westanschauung*) of a society’ (Berger 1966:20).

In the same way that Berger (:20) thought that the *Weltanschauung* concept could still be regarded as central to the sociology of knowledge, I also think that it could be regarded as helpful, if not central, for the interpretation of *ntumbuluko* from the point of view of the sociology of knowledge. For it does include common sense knowledge and social construction of knowledge, which is the theorizing of ideas called *Weltanschauungen* (everyday life and reality) in the sociology of knowledge (:27).

According to the author, the reality of everyday life is ‘reality *par excellence*’ (:35), in which one is attentive in the fullest way, and it is experienced with full consciousness of the “here and now”. What is “here” and “now” becomes one’s consciousness *realissimum* and one’s world *par excellence*. Similarly, one’s “here” is others’ “there” (:36-37). Since one’s own world is not that of others and one’s experience of reality is not that of others, there are multiple realities and therefore one needs to interpret one’s reality. When this experience is not everyday experience, e.g. religious or mystical experience, when one tries to “translate” it into everyday reality the process of translation suffers “distortion” (:40). In this process, language plays an important role (:52-53).

What does this say in terms of our topic? We must take *ntumbuluko* as the reality *par excellence* for the Tsonga people and, from that, understand why they are more

attentive to *ntumbuluko* than to the gospel. *Ntumbuluko* is their consciousness *realissimum* of “here” and “now”, and even of their “then”, and it is their world *par excellence*. We must acknowledge that their “here” is *ntumbuluko* and that Christian faith is their “there”. *Ntumbuluko* and Christian faith are two different theoretical constructs of reality. Their interaction requires the translation of both the Tsonga “here” (*ntumbuluko*) and the Tsonga “there” (Christian faith), a process which is fraught with distortions. This calls researchers and students of *ntumbuluko* to caution themselves in their analysis of it, giving attention to the vernacular language.

Berger (1966:66-67) argues that human instinctual organization is underdeveloped, compared to that of other mammals, that they are unspecialized and undirected and that this problem is compounded by the fact that humans are born before the foetal period has been completed. This period takes the first year of the child’s life to complete, in terms of organism development. Some significant organism development that takes place in the womb of an animal takes place outside it in the human infant. This, then, provides the humans’ plasticity and flexibility to human biological constitution: ‘as it is subject to a variety of socio-cultural determinations’ (:66). It follows that there are numerous ways of becoming and being human. All this leads to the argument that: ‘man constructs his own nature, ... man produces himself’ (:67).

Although this theoretical assumption can be seriously theologically questioned, it does reveal in its context that experienced phenomena, which become a body of knowledge and the *de facto* reality in a given society, become deeply and intimately attached to the very fabric of that society and become part of their relative nature, which is part of their peculiarity. Applying this to *ntumbuluko*, we must think of it as being intimately attached to the Tsonga experience and understanding of humanness, which is what in fact I observed in my fieldwork. Within this reality Tsonga people find *ntumbuluko* to be their “nature”, and so the Tsonga response to whatever may be labeled “*ntumbuluko*” or “of *ntumbuluko*” can well be described as what Berger calls

'reification'<sup>77</sup> (:108) by means of which the individuals may disclaim responsibility for what they do or say (:108). One example of "reification" among the Tsonga is the way men disclaim responsibility for polygamy and how women accept it, although they suffer a great deal, and also in the way rituals and taboos are undertaken and revered.

In such a situation it is helpful to explore the notion of "internalization", through which one absorbs into oneself the world in which others live. This notion gives us a sociological approach to understanding the world of *ntumbuluko* in which the Tsonga people live (:150). This process calls for "participation" in the Tsonga being (:150). For the Tsonga, their "internalization" of the world of *ntumbuluko* occurs through what Berger calls 'primary socialization' (:151,154), but, for the understanding of *ntumbuluko* by the student of *ntumbuluko*, there is a need to undergo "secondary socialization", "internalization" and "identification" (:151-52). It is from this theoretical thought that one can see the position of the Christian faith in Tsonga thought.

To the Tsonga, Christian faith always comes as secondary socialization (:158) and this process requires training (:159), since the secondary socialization must encounter the self and the already-existing world (*ntumbuluko*), which resists (:160) the secondary one. Thus, the encounter of the Tsonga people with the Christian faith is an interaction which must integrate different bodies of knowledge (:160), namely *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. Only in this way, under a mutual "identification" process of the Tsonga and the Christian witness, does a new constructed reality (:177-78) emerge ("Tsonga Christian construct of reality"). This process, called "alteration" (:177-79) is "conversion" in theological language. In this "alteration" a new perspective (:179) of *ntumbuluko* is built up, thus leading to reinterpretation and reconstruction of reality *de novo* (:181), in which the past or *ntumbuluko* becomes *praeparatio evangelii* (:179).

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<sup>77</sup> Berger (1966) gives an example of the effect of reification saying that: 'a peasant couple being married may apprehend the event with a similarly reifying shudder of metaphysical dread. Through reification, the world of institutions appears to merge with the world of nature. It becomes necessity and fate, and is lived through as such, happily or unhappily as the case may be' (:108).

To sum up, we must ask whether Berger's "Sociology of Knowledge" insights can help us understand *ntumbuluko* and, if "yes", can we consider *ntumbuluko* to be a sort of social construct of reality among the Tsongas? Taking into account the definition of "reality" and "knowledge" and what is meant by "construction" with reference to everyday life and phenomena experience as known to be real by the people and the way they apprehend and interpret it, I am of the opinion that from a sociological point of view we can consider *ntumbuluko* as a social construct of reality. The analysis of the social impact on humans, reification, socialization, internalization, identification, etc. help us to understand the depths of *ntumbuluko* and the process through which such depth is achieved, as well as the process through which *ntumbuluko* is continually being constructed as a "relative natural worldview" or *Weltanschauung* for the Tsongas. But, it also provides us with theoretical approaches and frameworks for research, secondary socialization and mutual identification in the process of understanding Tsonga people for the sake of the gospel. It also gives us a theoretical notion of alteration, reinterpretation and reconstruction of reality, which allows Christian conversion, new creation, new identity and appropriation of faith in the Tsonga context. This allows a possibly unique expression of Christianity in the Tsonga context.

Finally, we must suggest that, to understand *ntumbuluko* as a theoretical construction of reality, we must consider four axioms, namely:

- 1) *ntumbuluko* is a form of theoretical thought
- 2) *ntumbuluko* is a social construct of the Tsonga people
- 3) its construction is based on the experience and knowledge of the reality of everyday life among the Tsonga people, and
- 4) these experiences and realities of everyday life self-authenticate the recognition of the being(s) that are behind these experienced realities of life, being(s) that are independent, powerful and beyond their full understanding and control.

Therefore, to understand *ntumbuluko* as a construction of reality does not mean that *ntumbuluko* is an imaginary reality. It is an experiential reality. So, all the religious life, rituals, ceremonies, divination, magic, etc. are a response, dialogue and coexistence with the transcendence of the being(s) behind all their experiences and the

reality in which they exist and live. The being(s) and the phenomena they experience are independent of them, are powerful and beyond their full understanding and control. If this is the picture we have of *ntumbuluko*, could Horton (1993) help us see if *ntumbuluko* is also a theoretical framework for the explanation, prediction and control of reality in the Tsonga context?

### 3.3.2 Approaching *ntumbuluko* as explaining, predicting and controlling reality (Horton)

All references to Horton in this thesis are to Horton (1993) *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on magic, religion and science*. Horton's work is divided into two parts; the critical part, from which he answers and counter-attacks his critics, and the constructive part. Although in the latter part he tries to advance some constructive ideas, his critics follow him and repeatedly he finds himself having to fight them back. Whilst I do not wish to engage in the debate, my concern is to see the treatment he gives to the theories of the "explanation", "prediction" and "control" of "reality" in his thought, as expressed in this book. Whether he treats the theories in a critical or constructive manner is immaterial and of lesser importance to my purpose. I want to see whether or not we can approach or understand *ntumbuluko* as an "explanation", "prediction" and "control" of reality.

Horton, in his anthropological comparative study of human thought-systems and the sociology of thought uses "explanation", "prediction" and "control" (of reality) as the central interpretative framework of his study (Horton 1993:12). To highlight the power of "explanation", "prediction" and "control", and people's dependence thereon, he argues that, even when politicians manipulate people, they manipulate not ideas but 'the people's dependence on ideas as a means of ordering, explaining, predicting and controlling their world' (Horton 1993:55). According to the author, African traditional religious thought is central to common sense, because of its concern for the "diagnosis", "prediction" and "control" of events. For, to him: "'explanation / prediction / control" refers to religion as a system of theory and associated practice directed towards the comprehension and practical control of events in the everyday space-time world' (1993:5).

From this perspective he argues against Western Christianity's loss of this aspect of religion (1993:57) and, within Africa, he points to this legacy in the mission churches, thus resulting in breakaway movements which he calls "spiritualists" but which are also called AICs. He points out the success of these movements in their recovery of the explanation, prediction and control mechanisms of religion. Some people in the mission churches hold dual membership, because the spiritualists cure while the other form of Christianity transports their souls to heaven (:57-58). In my research, most Christian leaders complained about the spiritualist movements. One hears of "sheep-stealing" complaints in the main-line churches of Mozambique.

Neo-Tylorianism argues against such theoretical ability as that of explanation, prediction and control of those they call "pre-literates", whose explanatory theories they consider, mistaken and totally "wrong-headed" (:59). But, to Horton, the explanatory theories of Africans are not much different to those of Westerners, as demonstrated in the Azande<sup>78</sup> study. He warns that the Western belief-system (represented by the liberals) is in the nature of transitory things, but, in the sphere of "higher" human behaviour, "pre-literate belief-systems may from time to time be the sources of insights that shake some Western foundations" (:61). Could this be paralleled with the Natal Mercury's quote from Steve Biko:

We reject the power-based society of the Westerner that seems to be concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing their spiritual dimension. We believe that, in the long run, the special contribution to the world by Africans will be in this field of human relationships. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.

(Natal Mercury 12 Sept 2002)

Horton's warning to liberals, and Biko's statement, have deep implications for our Christian witness. Ours is a Christianity well influenced by the mistaken belief-

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<sup>78</sup> Evans-Pritchard's book *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* is considered a classic. This book is widely used by Horton to prove his argument of similarities. He even uses it to counter Prof. Winch's critique of Evans-Pritchard. The argument of Horton is that what is mistaken is the scientific: reasoning for being atheistic and he hopes that one day science will come back to its former theistic approach. And that, if that happens, theology will come back and resume the explanation, prediction and control of reality, which was abandoned as a survival tactic amid scientific threat in the field of knowledge theory.

systems of the West and our approach, with this Christianity to those with a theoretical belief-system that has much to offer to us. This, then, requires us to approach *ntumbuluko* and the Tsongas with a humble spirit, being prepared to learn from the Tsonga belief-system. This may help us to correct our theoretical shortcomings as we seek to be witnesses of Christ, helping the Tsongas to internalize the gospel into their everyday life. Such learning must mainly try to understand and re-incorporate the “explanation”, “prediction” and “control” aspects of our Christian discourse.

Horton (1993:9) criticises Western theology for neglecting the explanation/prediction /control aspects of the Christian faith. The author points out that this aspect of religion (explanation/prediction/control or theoretical comprehension and practical control of events in everyday life and the world) is lost in the modern Western religious discourse. To him: ‘Unfortunately for the Theologians, modern Western religious discourse is virtually unique in confining itself to the communion aspect of religious life, whilst leaving the explanation/prediction/control aspect to the sciences. Even in the earlier West, religious discourse dealt with both aspects. In virtually all other religious traditions, moreover, such discourse not only has always dealt with both aspects, but continues to do so. It follows that, *used by itself*, modern Western religious discourse is not an adequate instrument for the translation, either of earlier Western religious discourse, or of non-Western religious discourse generally [Horton’s italics]’ (Horton 1993:9).

He calls for: ‘re-amalgamation for the purposes of translation of areas of discourse that has been separated from religious discourse in the course of Western history’ (:9). Maybe this is one of the major weaknesses of Western theology and Christianity in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Western missiology and theology is devoid of aspects of religious discourse, which are essential to the primal worldview. Bediako G (1997; 2000) argues that Christian faith belongs to the primal worldview category. Ignoring the above-mentioned aspect and relegating it to the sciences, as Western theology did, is tantamount to abandoning an integral and essential part of the discourse of Christian faith to the sciences.

However, Professor Winch argues against “explanation”, “prediction” and “control” as being of any importance to non-Western cultures. He sees these as propositions of the modern west, since preoccupation with “explanation”, “prediction” and “control” is central to science and technology. To him, in the study of other cultures, one must first master one’s own culture in order to study and understand other cultures, without imposing cultural ideas marginal in the host culture (Horton 1993:139). To Winch, Evans-Pritchard and others who: ‘interpret mystical utterances as statements of hypothesis whose point lies in the area of explanation, prediction and control of everyday events, are simply projecting their own obsession with the goals of science and technology’ (Horton 1993:143).

But Horton contends that:

By accepting explanation, prediction and control as the principal end governing the development and persistence of African mystical thought, we are able to provide a coherent interpretation of a whole congeries of cultural phenomena which would otherwise have remained puzzlingly (sic) disparate’.

(Horton 1993:154)

The “congeries” or disorderly collections of cultural phenomena to which he is referring is the reaction of African people to Christian missionary activity (:154). There was a positive response to Christian teaching (about the Supreme Being), but, at the same time, the most active branch of African Christianity is that where “Africanization” has decisively taken place (:155). People heard of the active and morally concerned Supreme Being; throughout the continent thousands of people came to the churches. But, when they were inside, they found that they had been misled. They themselves lived in a “cosmos of spiritual forces” whose powers could be tapped to improve man’s lot in the “here and now” and it soon became clear that in the (Christian) churches nothing of that kind was on offer (:156), thus, many of those thousands forsook the church, taking with them the new message, but using it as the basis of a ‘comprehensive schema for the explanation, prediction and control of events in the space-time world’ (:156). To illustrate this, he quotes a question asked of the early evangelists in the East Niger Delta: ‘Does your God wish us to climb up to the top of a tall palm tree, open our hands, and drop off?’ (:156). With this question, they highlighted the lack of concern for every day life issues in missionary

Christianity. He also gives many statements made by Africans in the spiritualist churches in his fieldwork to support his argument.

According to Kraft (1995:93), although the evangelical Western missionaries encountered people at the point of their need to commit themselves to Christ and pointed them to the truths of the Bible and the Christian faith and experience, they had nothing to offer either to confront or to replace their sources of spiritual power. In this way, a powerless Christianity was developed, as in the West. As a result, large numbers of non-western Christians follow a powerless Christ and so go to native priests, diviners, shamans and medical practitioners when they need healing or supernatural guidance. It is interesting to note that Kraft and Horton both lived and researched in Nigeria.

Horton further argues that, in the West four hundred years ago, science was based on the beliefs about God, when such beliefs served as a theory in terms of which they explained, predicted and attempted to control the events of the world around them (:157). It was only when the post-Newtonian paradigms in the physical sciences dispensed with the theistic component, and when the achievements of science in the areas of explanation, prediction and control became difficult to challenge, that religious leaders and theologians abandoned the field of explanation, prediction and control of reality in everyday life (:158).

Horton starts his postscript by summing up his thesis with the following propositions:

- (1) Both types of thought enter into human social life to make up for the explanatory, predictive and practical deficiencies of everyday, common-sense reasoning.
- (2) Both perform this function by portraying the phenomena of the everyday world as manifestations of a hidden, underlying reality.
- (3) Both build up their schemas of this hidden reality by drawing analogies with various aspects of everyday experience.

(Horton 1993:348).

Now, the remaining question is: can *ntumbuluko* be approached as an explanation, prediction and control of reality? To answer this we must ask other questions. Does *ntumbuluko* have a schema intended to explain, predict and attempt to control events of everyday life? If we go back to the story of the *Mapude* cult and divination,

presented elsewhere in this study, we can see some examples of *ntumbuluko* acting as a schema to explain, predict and control rain and death in the Mukambi-Feha society. Among Tsonga people diseases, calamities, misfortunes and even environmental and ecological disasters are explained and predicted, and various attempts to avert or control these catastrophic or beneficial events are provided in the form of *ntumbuluko*. Thus Horton provides a helpful theoretical interpretative framework to *ntumbuluko* as an explanation, prediction and control of reality.

If my conclusion that *ntumbuluko* can be considered as an explanation, prediction and control of reality, from a phenomenological or social anthropological point of view, is correct, it is a serious and critical challenge and an invitation to the church in Africa in general, and to the church in Southern Mozambique in particular. It is critical challenge because part of the reason for *ntumbuluko's* dominance in Tsonga Christianity or Christian thought, against which many informants complained, is the fact that the kind of Christianity that main-line churches present to the Tsonga people is irrelevant to their everyday life situation. It is a Christianity devoid of spiritual and intellectual tools to offer an explanatory, predictive and reality-controlling ministry. It only offers "flights of the soul to heaven", while *ntumbuluko* and the religious movements they called *magico* churches do cure and deal with spirits and witchcraft in people's lives. Furthermore, since the Tsongas, like the Nigerians of Horton, are not willing to "climb up to the top of a tall palm tree, open their hands and drop off" (:150), they entrust their lives where it matters the most – i.e. to *ntumbuluko*!

But *ntumbuluko* also becomes an invitation for the church to reflect deeply, theologically and missiologically. This reflection is to be translated into a recovering of the explanation, prediction and control of reality function of the Christian faith among the Tsongas. This, then, could be the major contribution of *ntumbuluko* to Tsonga Christianity.

### 3.3.3 *Ntumbuluko* as worldview (Turner and Kraft)

Turner (1977), speaking about the basis of the primal worldview, says: 'there are mysterious powers to which man can relate; these powers are abroad in the world for both good and evil; and the physical can be the vehicle of spiritual power' (Turner 1977:29).

*Ntumbuluko* can also be understood as part of the primal worldview, or a system of relating to mysterious powers in the Tsonga environment and existence. In this scheme, *ntumbuluko* is an attempt to gain all the "good" and avert all the "evil" of spiritual powers. This is achieved through using various techniques that include the observance of *swiyila*<sup>79</sup>, rites and spirit-negotiation (i.e. through mediums or prophets) and manipulation techniques to appease and "control" spiritual powers.

The author gives some features of the primal worldview as follows: kinship with nature, acknowledgment of human weakness, awareness that man (human being) is not alone, the need for and possibility of a relationship with spiritual powers, a belief in after-life and a sense of the physical as sacramental of the spiritual (Turner 1977:32). Although *ntumbuluko* cannot be reduced to a religion but is a broader and bigger concept, in which religion is just one of many aspects, the features of primal worldview according to Turner help us understand *ntumbuluko* at the level of a worldview.

Kraft (1979), talking about the process of constructing a worldview, argues that people from different cultures have different understandings of reality (1979:26-27) and that it is from this complex that worldviews and paradigms are constructed (:29). He defines worldview as:

Cultures pattern perceptions of reality into conceptualizations of what reality can or should be, what is to be regarded as actual, probable, possible, and impossible. These conceptualizations form what is termed the "worldview" of the culture. The worldview is the central systematization of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their

<sup>79</sup> *Swiyila* – a Tsonga term for prohibitory laws. Laws that are supernaturally policed and, if violated, one suffers consequences inflicted upon the person by the spiritual powers unless a neutralizing or pacifying ritual is administered to the person.

value system. The worldview lies at the very heart of culture, touching, interacting with and strongly influencing every other aspect of the culture.

(Kraft 1979:53)

To Kraft, worldview serves as:

- (1) an explanation of reality
- (2) a method for the evaluation and validation of institutions, values and goals
- (3) the psychological reinforcement of beliefs and behaviour
- (4) a method of integration (systematization and ordering of perceptions of reality), and
- (5) a "transformation" (movement) from one model of reality to another) (1979:54-56).

Worldview, as defined and outlined here, has some resonance with Berger's theories of the social construction of reality, as well as with Horton's explanation, prediction and control theories. It serves well as an interpretative theoretical framework for the understanding of *ntumbuluko* from a missiological, anthropological perspective.

We shall see how Kraft's idea of reality and worldview as well as other alternative words he uses with related meanings such as "model" "theory" "paradigm" and of course "worldview" can help us understand *ntumbuluko* (1979:31). We can see that the use of these terms as explanations of reality gives us clarity to the possible meanings of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga culture.

To summarise the four interpretative approaches presented by Berger, Horton, Turner and Kraft, we find "being", "beings" and "spiritual powers" as descriptive of phenomenal and experiential reality. Reality emerges out of or from the relationship of humans with other beings or spiritual powers, within a defined social context and situation. We can then conclude that *ntumbuluko* arises out of such an existential, vital relationship of the Tsongas with their environment, and with natural and supernatural phenomena, beings or spiritual powers, which reveal or manifest themselves to them through signs and wonders in many different ways at different times, in various places and through various events, occasions, situations and crises.

### 3.4 A critique of interpretative approaches

According to Haralambos and Holborn (1990), Berger and Luckman's views are very open to criticism. In their sociology of religion, they assume that religion unites society, neglecting situations where it is divisive (Haralambos & Holborn 1990:657). They are also regarded as thinking that religious beliefs are widely held by members of a society, failing to take into account the members who are indifferent to established beliefs (1990:657).

Considering this criticism, what does it imply for the understanding of *ntumbuluko*? This needs to help us understand that, although *ntumbuluko* is the common and shared reality, *a priori*, of the Tsonga people, it may not be a uniting factor in all instances but could also be divisive. This aspect of the divisiveness of *ntumbuluko* is evident from my personal and family story in the introduction and will also be discussed in relation to a criticism of Horton. We can say that *ntumbuluko*, in as much as it is a source of solidarity among the Tsonga, can be a source of social and communal divisiveness. And also, although we can understand *ntumbuluko* as Tsonga reality, we need to understand that not all regard it in the same way.

Concerning Horton's theory, Haralambos and Holborn argue that the sociology (of religion) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was concerned with two questions: 'How did religion begin?' and 'How did religion evolve?' (1990:645). With these questions, the sociology of religion is inspired by evolutionary theory and its works are closely influenced by an attempt to trace the evolutionary beginning and development of religion alongside human cultural and intellectual development. With such an affinity with evolutionary theory, we can conclude that the sociology of religion may not have an adequate theoretical basis for providing an accurate interpretation and explanation of religious phenomena.

There is something we need to understand in relation to Horton's view and proposal about the return or recovery of "explanation," "prediction" and "control" of reality is that, in fact, he is suggesting that since he believes that African primacy in religious life is 'explanation/prediction/control' (Horton 1993:192) over communion with the divine, this primacy should be guided by this 'theory-in-practice' (1993:192). He is

suggesting this for a few reasons, including the fact that he is concerned that Christianity has lost its "explanation," "prediction" and "control" of reality dimension and was to counteract the 'Devout' (1993:193) in their view.

Horton's problem with Western Christianity is that it no longer deals with issues of source and destiny, the daily life experience in which explanation prediction and control are essential. Thus, Western theology has lost its teleological (i.e directed towards an ultimate goal) significance and is simply concerned with communion with God. On the other hand he sees a concern with the everyday *experience* of reality which it explains and interprets. It also enables Africans to have some power over their lives (at least allegedly) therefore they are given the sense that they can have some form of control over their lives through their religion. Christians "devout" westerners simply want to communicate with God without taking into consideration the kind of power in life.

It is precisely in this sense that Horton's argument is relevant to our discussion because this study is an attempt to say that the African Christian, in the Tsonga context, has to have *power* (explanatory, predictive and controlling), just as *ntumbuluko* has power. *Ntumbuluko* is power for everyday living and, if Christianity is to be relevant for Tsonga Christians, it should also have power.

However, one needs to acknowledge that this power has its problems and challenges for the Christian church and theology. The example Horton gives of the AICs having recovered that dimension and the stories that are emerging from their use of the "explanation," "prediction" and "control" of reality or events illustrates the problem.

As in *ntumbuluko*, the explanation, prediction and control of reality may degenerate into magic, witchcraft and the manipulation of spiritual powers. This degeneration disrupts social order and family<sup>80</sup> structures, poisoning the whole social atmosphere

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<sup>80</sup> One of my aunts disappeared, after her son was told by diviners that she was a witch and he threatened to butcher her, and she is no where to be found. No one knows whether he murdered her and buried her secretly, or whether she was devoured by crocodiles.

and creating conflicts and violence. Witch-hunting and witch-killing are well-known phenomena in Africa, and also in Europe before the Enlightenment.

Such degradation is reported among the various AICs in Mozambique, especially the Zionists. Prophets accuse some people of witchcraft and so conflicts start. In Chibuto, Gaza, according to Matsombe (2002, interview), many women go to Zionist bishops and prophets to perform rituals intended to cause mystical incidents or accidents, resulting in their husbands dying underground on duty in the mines in South Africa. Why should women want to have such prediction and control of reality in relation to the lives of their husbands? Because, if such a death does take place, the mining company will build a decent house and pay a survival pension to the widow as long as she lives, and that will help her to have a good financial life. This is causing many family conflicts.

As we celebrate the recovery of the explanation, prediction and control of reality as a part of religious discourse, we need to be prepared to deal with the problems associated with this recovery. We need to have in place a theology which counters the degeneration of explanation, prediction and control of reality.

Finally, concerning the approaches of Turner and Kraft, they fall under Horton's concept of "Devout's" defined as all Christians who study African religion and he regards the "Devout" study of African religions as inadequate (1993:161-193). He finds the "Devout" to be bound by ideological and orthodox limits. The "Devout" use their Christian religious discourse to translate African religious discourse (:165). With this 'recipe' (:165) the "Devout" view all African religious systems as channelled to the Supreme Being or God. Because of that the "Devout" put little stress on the "explanation," "prediction" and "control" of reality (:166). This view can be deceptive, according to Horton, in that it stresses that more attention be given to the Supreme Being than to lesser spirits, when in such cultures there is not even an idea of such a Supreme Being (:172). He also argues that some of the problem with the "Devout" is the destiny of African traditional religion worshippers before the advent of Christianity and the Christians. With such a problem, according to Horton, the "Devout" tries to establish continuity between the religious past of African people and Christianity, thus re-interpreting African religions in terms of Christian faith.

Horton's criticism of "Devout" includes me myself, because he defines "Devout" as including *all* Christians who study African religion. This helps me to understand that our worldview and predisposition as Christians is a kind of "spectacles" through which we see and interpret reality, including *ntumbuluko* for that matter. As such, our study is partial because it does not relate to the subject in its own right, but it judges and analyses it on the basis of the other, in this case analysing and judging *ntumbuluko* on the basis of and in relation to Christian faith.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to test whether *ntumbuluko* could be understood as: (1) a construction of reality; (2) explaining, predicting and controlling reality; and (3) a worldview. The field data give (1) definitions of *ntumbuluko*; (2) various uses of *ntumbuluko* in everyday life; and (3) the importance and value of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga consciousness, as well as its influence in the apprehension of the Christian faith among Tsongas.

It is fascinating to see, with new light and insight, how uniquely the Tsonga people experience life and reality. One wonders at how comprehensively *ntumbuluko* is an everyday hermeneutical tool of life for understanding, explaining, predicting and controlling desires, natural phenomena, calamities, misfortunes, death, disability, human and superhuman relationships and more.

From this broad understanding of what *ntumbuluko* is and what its function and role in the Tsonga society are, we start seeing the reasons why there is a relational problem between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. *Ntumbuluko* is a real challenge to the gospel in Mozambique, inviting and requiring deep theological and missiological reflection.

The next chapter attempts to describe this challenge, whilst chapter five presents a theological response to it.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4 UNDERSTANDING *NTUMBULUKO* FROM DIFFERENT BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS: An Interpretation based on the biblical use of *ntumbuluko*, theological debates on law, the gospel, faith, culture, continuity and discontinuity

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide possible biblical and theological interpretations of *ntumbuluko*. It builds on the use and meaning of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga Bible with a detailed study of the history and evolution of the use of the word *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga Bible. It includes tables with verses in which the word is used and, for some tables, includes the Greek and Hebrew words translated as *ntumbuluko* or with the root *ntumbuluko*.

From the biblical basis, this chapter will interpret *ntumbuluko* in terms of law and the gospel. It will seek to answer whether *ntumbuluko* can be regarded as preparatory to the gospel, in the same way that the Old Testament law is preparation for the gospel. This interpretative attempt will be followed with a brief look at the concept of *Missio Dei* and a discussion on Christian identity (continuity and discontinuity) drawn from Bediako's (1992) study of various second century theologians and twentieth century African theologians. This brief look at Bediako's detailed study will serve as an example of various Christian responses to the question of the relationship between culture and Christian faith. With these examples we shall interpret *ntumbuluko* in terms of the Pentateuch theology of *reshit* and the Johannine theology of *arche*; the Pauline theology of principalities and powers (*arche*); and the Pauline theology of the "flesh." Finally we shall present a synthesis of the various descriptions and interpretations of *ntumbuluko*, which will stress the challenge of *ntumbuluko*, which chapters five and six will then seek to address.

#### **4.2 *Ntumbuluko* -the biblical interpretation of its use and meaning**

This section aims to present the biblical use of the term *ntumbuluko* in the vernacular biblical text and establishes the biblical meaning of *ntumbuluko* in each verse, paragraph, chapter and book in the scripture in the Tsonga language and two other languages, Txitxopi and Gitonga, which use the term *ntumbuluko* as a biblical concept. This will help us expose the biblical use and meaning of *ntumbuluko*, which will help us interpret *ntumbuluko* from a biblical point of view. Our sources will include, besides the biblical text, material from the Bible Society archives in Cape Town.

First of all one needs to ask what it means to establish the “biblical meaning” of a Tsonga concept. *Ntumbuluko*, being a Tsonga pre-Christian concept, has made its way slowly into the Bible. Not long after the publication of the first Tsonga Bible, *ntumbuluko* joined other Tsonga concepts that became part of the divine vocabulary and biblical language. In fact it was used right from the start, as soon as Genesis was translated, but only in its verbal form relating to the “beginning” or “creation” (*ku tumbuluka* and *ku tumbuluxa*).

##### **4.2.1 Historical background of the translation of the Bible into Tsonga language and the use of the term *ntumbuluko***

According to Smit:

During 1875 Paul Barthoud and E. Creux on behalf of the Mission Remande or the French-Swiss Mission, established the mission station, Valdezia, in that part of the North-Eastern Transvaal known as the “Spelonken” area, and started work among the Ma-gwamba.

(Smit 1970:222)

Paul Barthoud was then joined by his brother Henri. They started to learn Tsonga and do translation work. Smit has this to say concerning their work: ‘Berthoud’s pioneer work on the translation of the Bible into Tsonga deserves honourable mention. He was faithfully assisted by his brother, Henri, as well as his other colleagues, E. Creux and A. Jacques in this venture’ (Smit 1970:222). While Smit indicates that Berthoud and his colleagues started mission work at Valdezia among the Tsonga only in 1875,

with language learning that was temporarily interrupted due to misinformation (Smit 1970:222) and then resumed with the information that Sotho would help, proved untrue. Reyneke (1979:2) says: 'Paul Berthoud, his brother Henri, and other colleagues, E Creux and A Jacques, started to translate the Bible at Valdezia in the Northern Transvaal in 1875.'

According to Reyneke, '[i]n 1883 the Tsonga "*Buku ya Tsikwembu*"<sup>81</sup> (The Lord's Book) with five chapters from the Old Testament and portions of the New Testament was published' (Reyneke 1979:2). According to Smit (1970:222) the book included 57 hymns, the first chapter of Genesis and the Ten Commandments. The full New Testament, *Testamente le Yint'sha yi-nga Evangeli ya Yesu Kriste Hosi ne mokuthuri wa vanhu*, was published in 1894. With this publication, the first use of the *ntumbuluko* concept in its verb form appears in Gen. 1:1 '*Eku sunguleni Šikwembu ši tumbuluše...*' (In the beginning God created...). But in John 1:13 and Romans 8:6,13 the word employed was "*nyama*" (flesh), Romans 1:26 used "*mokhuva (lo wululameke)*" (good or righteous custom) and 1 Co 11:14 "*timbelu,*" (hearts). In 1907 the *Bibele yinga Testamente ya Khale ni léyints'ha* (The Holy Bible in Tsonga) was published, this being the first complete Tsonga Bible. Its title for the first chapter of the Bible is: '*E ku tumbuluka ka tilo in misava*' (the origins of heavens and earth). And Gen. 1:1 reads: '*E ku sunguleni Šikwembu ši tumbuluše*'... But this was to change in the 1929 revision of the Tsonga Bible. *Ntumbuluko* started to be used not only as a verb, but also as a noun or substantive.

#### 4.2.2 *Ntumbuluko* makes its way into the Holy Scriptures of the Christian faith

The 1929 edition, reprinted in 1953 and 1973, replaced the words "*wululameke*" and "*timbelu*" or "*timbilu*" in Rom 1:26 and in 1 Co 11:14 with "*ntumbuluko*". This was the first use of that term in the Bible. Thus far there were only two verses in the entire Bible containing the word *ntumbuluko* and it was used once in each of the two verses. Both entries were in connection with Pauline theology. The two uses were both in a positive sense. In Romans 1:26 the word *ntumbuluko* replaced "*mokhuva wa vona lo*

<sup>81</sup> Since then, the spelling has changed to *Šikwembu* and now in the *Mahungu la Manene* to *Xikwembu*. *Tsikwembu* here is rendered as the Lord, but now "*Hosi*" (King) is rendered as the Lord and *Xikwembu* as God. The same word means ancestor(s) and the spirits of a medium in Tsonga culture.

*wululameke*.” A literal translation would say “their righteous custom” and the NIV has “natural relations.” The word replaced by *ntumbuluko* is actually “the righteous”, since “*mukhuva*” still appears with the word *ntumbuluko* in the 1973 reprint and even in the *Mahungu la Manene* (1989). Transliterating Rom 1:26b from Tsonga into English would read: “In their midst, women turned their righteous custom into an unrighteous one.” This is the translation of the Greek *φυσικην* (*phusiken*) and *παρα φυσιν* (*para phusin*) meaning “natural” and “against nature” as heterosexuality vs. homosexuality. It is in relation to the same concept *phusis* (nature) that the word *ntumbuluko* was also used in 1 Co 11:14. In these two verses or in the first two uses of *ntumbuluko*, *ntumbuluko* is related to the Pauline theology of *phusis*, meaning (1) natural and (2) nature.

#### 4.2.3 *Ntumbuluko* becomes a more dominant theme in the Bible

According to the Bible Society of South Africa (BSSA) and Keyneke, the French-Swiss Mission felt a need for a thorough revision of the Tsonga Bible. This work was done under Rev. P T Leresche, until his death in a car accident. In 1961 Leresche and his committee (the Swiss Mission) published the Gospel of Mark, and then that of John in 1965. The BSSA launched its translation work in 1967 and published the Gospel of Luke in 1968. On a date not indicated, the BSSA invited Rev. Theo R Schneider to lead the translation committee working with Marivate and Selapyane on the editorial committee (Smit 1970:223; Keyneke 1979:2 and BSSA 1989:2). This translation was done following the dynamic equivalence theory and ‘the latest scholarly editions of the Hebrew and Greek source texts.’ According to the BSSA: ‘The team has been guided in its task by comprehensive lexical, exegetical and translation manuals, placed at its disposal by the Bible Society of South Africa’ (BSSA 1989:2). The document boasts of having used the best specialists and scholars to do the work:

The translation has been constantly monitored by a large body of stylists, reviewers, and consultants drawn from all the main churches at work among the Tsonga<sup>82</sup>. The final editorial committee consisted of the Rev S D Maluleke, Mr M J Makuvele, Dr D C Marivate, Mrs A K

<sup>82</sup> The above claim of the BSSA needs to be confronted with the apparent decline of acceptance that their work is now suffering in Mozambique, and the complaints of the Mozambican translators.

Manyike and Dr T R Schneider, ably assisted by Prof M C Dippenaar, Rev E F C Mashava, Prof C B N Nkondo and Mr M Rikhotso.

(BSSA 1989:3)

The final outcome of this work was the *Mahungu la Manene* or Tsonga Bible. This Bible uses *ntumbuluko* widely. The question is, how did this version come to use *ntumbuluko* more than other versions? With this question I went to the BSSA archives in Cape Town. Dr. Eric Harmanson helped with archival information available. According to: 'Tsonga 1954-1971, P1. Tsonga Bible Revision, Review Committee Meeting P4:18°: "We have rendered *sarx* as follows in Romans (cf. minutes meeting 2-3 Dec. 69, No 15, P5)<sup>83</sup> "*miri*" = ("body") in 2:28; 8:3d. "*ntumbuluko wa laha misaveni*" ("earthly nature or simply" "*ntumbuluko*" = "created, human nature" in 6:19; 7:5,18,25; 8:3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12,13; 9:8; 13:14."

Unfortunately, there was nothing else found in the archives explaining and giving the meaning of the use of *ntumbuluko* in other passages like Romans 1:26a, 26b, 27; 11:24 and in other books beginning with the Gospel of John (1:13); and following with 1 Co 11:14; 15:44,46; 11 Co 4:11; Gal 5:13,16,19; 6:8; Eph 2:3; Heb 1:3; 2:14; Jude 10. In *Mahungu la Manene*, in 8 different books of the New Testament involving 3 or 4 New Testament authors out of the 8 or 9 authors, there are at least 30 verses that use the word *ntumbuluko*. This archival information is very important although it does not explain all the uses, but it deals with the use of the term *ntumbuluko* to translate the Pauline theology of *sarx* (flesh), which represents the most problematic use of the term in the Bible and in Tsonga culture. So, *ntumbuluko* also came to mean "created," "human nature" or "earthly nature." In Galatians *ntumbuluko* is associated with a long catalogue of sins called works of *ntumbuluko*.

With this new usage in the Scriptures, *ntumbuluko* is also used to translate other Greek words in the New Testament totalling five in all (with roots in *phusis*; *sarx*; *psuchikos*; *panta* and *autos*), and *ntumbuluko* is used widely in other Tsonga languages, especially in the Ronga New Testament. The old version of Ronga uses *ntumbuluko* only rarely, but the new version New Testament uses *ntumbuluko* even in

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<sup>83</sup> These minutes are no longer in the archives. We worked all possibilities to locate them, with Dr. Harmanson, but without success.

some verses in which *Mahungu la Manene* does not use it. The Xitswa Bible and New Testament are both still in their old version and they only use *ntumbuluko* in 1 Co 11:14. But *ntumbuluko* has also made its way into other non-Tsonga languages in southern Mozambique. The Txixopi and Gitonga New Testaments (there are as yet no complete Bibles in these two languages) also use the term. They also have different spellings. Txixopi uses *ntumbuluko*, like the three Tsonga languages (Ronga, Shangaan and Xitswa), but sometimes it uses *mtumbuluko*. Gitonga uses *tumbunuko*. But the contested<sup>84</sup> Ronga or Xiroga New Testament spells it *ntumbuluku*. However, all these spellings refer to the same concept as the Bible translators explained. To help visualise the evolution of the use of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible we will present some charts.

#### 4.2.3.1 Tsonga languages

##### i Xitswa (chart 1)

	A Biblia go Basa (1972) (Xitswa Bible)	A Testamenta Giswa (1972) (Xitswa New Testament)
1 Co 11:14	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>

The meaning of *ntumbuluko* in the Xitswa Bible and the New Testament is very simple; it has been used only as a rendering of *phusis* (nature). Two things are worth noting here: One is the fact that the above edition is preceded by the 1929 edition of the Tsonga Bible and of its 1953 reprint. The second thing is that the use of *ntumbuluko* is much in line with the first use also in the Tsonga (Shangaan) Bible. It was first used in connection with *phusis* (nature) and its various forms (natural, naturally, etc.). Let us see also how the use of *ntumbuluko* developed in Ronga.

<sup>84</sup> According to Ngomane (2003, interview) the Rongas reject the Ronga New Testament.

## ii Ronga (chart 2)

Text	Ronga Bible 2001	Ronga NT 2001	Greek	KJV	NIV
Rom 1:26a	<i>antumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	natural	natural
v26b	<i>miri</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	against nature	unnatural
v27	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntwanano</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	natural	sinful nature
7:5	<i>nyameni</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
v18	<i>anyameni</i>	<i>antumbulukweni</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
v25	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
8:3	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκα</i>	sinful flesh	sinful nature
v4	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
v5	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκος</i>	flesh	sinful nature
v6	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σάρξ</i>	carnally minded	mind of sinful man
v9	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
v12	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
9:8	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	flesh	natural
11:24a	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	nature	nature
v24b	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	nature	nature
v24c	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>lowunene</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	nature	nature
13:14	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	flesh	natural
1 Co 11:14	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φύσις</i>	nature	natural
Eph 2:3	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
Jude 7	<i>matumbulukela</i>	<i>mantumbulukela</i>	<i>φυσκώς</i>	flesh	sexual immorality
Jude 10	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluku</i>	<i>φυσκώς</i>	naturally	instinct

The Ronga Bible uses *ntumbuluko* more than the Tsonga (Shangaan) Bible (1929 edition and its 1953 and 1973 reprints). This can be explained by the fact that it is a recent publication. But, in spite of its more recent publication, it still has been done according to the Tsonga 1929 style, language and orthography. So it is still an equivalent of the old Tsonga version. One can also note that *ntumbuluko* is used with balance. The use of it to translate *phusis* and the Pauline theology of the "flesh" is in equilibrium. Romans 8 is the only chapter in which *ntumbuluko* is closely associated with the "flesh" or sinful nature, and is thus negative. But the more explicit negative use of the term in Galatians has been avoided in Ronga. Wherever else *ntumbuluko* has been used in Ronga it is used positively (Rom 1:26,27; 7:5,18,24; 9:8; 11:21,24; 13:14; 1 Co 11:14 and Jude 7).

There are some questions one can ask concerning the Ronga Bible's use of *ntumbuluko*. Is it a moderate start which will develop to more negative use in the future? Is it an attempt to redeem *ntumbuluko* from the very negative use in *Mahungu la Manene*? The answer is not clear, but it is interesting to observe the evolution of the use of *ntumbuluko* in Scripture in southern Mozambique. The next chart presents the use and meaning of *ntumbuluko* from two other languages of southern Mozambique, which are not of the Tsonga family.

## iii Txitxopi and Gitonga languages (chart 3)

Text	Txitxopi NT	Gitonga NT	Greek	KJV	NIV
Jn 1:13	ntumbuluko	tumbunuko	σάρκος	flesh	natural
Rom 1:26a	mtumbuluko	vama	φύσιν	natural	natural
v26b	mtumbuluko	tumbunuko	φύσιν	against nature	unnatural
v27	mtumbuluko	gutshangana ni vagadzi	σάρκος	natural	sinful nature
4:17	vanga	tumbunugisago	ζωοποιούντος	callesh	calls things
7:5	txithu	tumbunuko	σαρκί	flesh	sinful nature
v14	ntumbuluko	nyambana tshivba	σαρκικός	carnal	unspiritual
8:3a	mmidi	tumbunuko	σάρκα	flesh	sinful nature
v3b	-----	tumbunuko	σαρκικός	sinful flesh	sinful nature
v3c	-----	tumbunuko	σαρκικός	flesh	sinful man
v3d	mmidini	tumbunuko	σαρκί	flesh (8:4)	sinful man
v5a	mmidi	tumbunuko	σάρκα	flesh	sinful nature
v5b	mmidi	tumbunuko	σάρκος	flesh	nature desires
v6	mmidi	tumbunuko	σάρκος	carnally minded	mind of sinful
v8	mmidi	tumbunuko	σάρξ	flesh	man
v9	mmidi	tumbunuko	σαρκί	flesh	sinful nature
v12	mmidi	tumbunuko	σαρκί	flesh	sinful nature
9:8	mtumbuluko	tumbunuko	σάρκος	flesh	natural
11:24a	mtumbuluko	tumbunuko	φύσιν	nature	nature
v24b	mtumbuluko	mavelego	φύσιν	nature	nature
v24c	ntumbuluko	gale	φύσιν	natural	nature
v36	mtamo wakwe	tumbunuko	φύσιν	nature	natural
13:14	mmidi	tumbunuko	τὰ πάντα	all things	all things
1 Co 11:14	mtumbuluko	tumbunuko	φύσιν	flesh	sinful nature
15:44a	mtumbuluko	muthu	φύσις	nature	nature
v44b	mtumbuluko	wuthu	ψυχικόν	natural	natural
Gal 5:13	sa ha mafuni	tumbunuko	ψυχικόν	natural	natural
v16	nyama	tumbunuko	σαρκί	flesh	sinful nature
v17a	nyama	tumbunuko	σάρκος	flesh	sinful nature
v17b	nyama	tumbunuko	σάρξ	flesh	sinful nature
v19	ntumbuluko	tumbunuko	σάρξ	flesh	sinful nature
v24	nyama	tumbunuko	σάρκος	flesh	sinful nature
6:8a	ntumbuluko	tumbunuko	σάρκα	flesh	sinful nature
v8b	ntumbuluko	tumbunuko	σάρκος	flesh	sinful nature
Eph 2:3	mtumbuluko	tumbunuko	σάρκος	flesh	sinful nature
Heb 2:14	mtumbuluko	givili ni novba	σάρκος	flesh	sinful nature
Jude 7	ntumbuluko	gu bhayana khu wama	αὐτῶν	same	humanity
Jude 10	mazivelo a sihari	tumbunuko	φυσκῶς	flesh	sexual
				naturally	immorality
					instinct

The analysis of the use of *ntumbuluko* in the Txitxopi and Gitonga New Testaments indicates that the Tsonga concept is also becoming dominant in these two languages. We can start calling *ntumbuluko* a concept of southern Mozambique which goes across cultural and linguistic barriers. Gitonga has an indiscriminate use of *ntumbuluko*, using it in almost all the verses in which *Mahungu la Manene* uses the term and, going beyond *Mahungu la Manene*, developing its own meanings. But the essential Gitonga use is to translate the Pauline theology of the “flesh.”

Txitxopi has a different approach. The Txitxopi New Testament, in comparison to the Gitonga one, uses *ntumbuluko* selectively. For instance, it does not use *ntumbuluko* to translate “flesh” in Romans 8. *Ntumbuluko* is used in relation to nature or natural (*phusis*) not flesh (*sarx*). But, in Galatians there is a change and *ntumbuluko* is used to translate the theology of the “flesh.” One thing we can say is that *ntumbuluko* has a very interesting theological relevance and is making its presence more strongly felt in the Scriptures and may come to be of interesting theological significance in Mozambique. The following charts focus on the Tsonga Bibles (Shangaan) to complete the presentation of the use and meaning of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible.

#### 4.2.3.2 An overview of the emergence of Tsonga Bibles and the term *ntumbuluko* (chart 4)

Text	Testaments		Bibles (editions and reprints)		
	Tsonga NT 1894	Tsonga OT 1896	1906/1907	1929,53,73	1989
Gen. 1:1	-----	<i>tumbuluše</i>	<i>tumbuluše</i>	<i>tumbulušile</i>	<i>tumbuluxile</i>
Jon. 1:13	<i>nyama</i>	-----	<i>nyama</i>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>
Rom. 1:26	<i>mokhuva...wo lulama</i>	-----	<i>...lulameke</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>
8:6	<i>nyama</i>	-----	<i>nyama</i>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>
v13	<i>nyama</i>	-----	<i>nyama</i>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>
1 Co. 11:14	<i>timbelu</i>	-----	<i>timbilu</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>

This small chart helps to demonstrate the evolution of the Tsonga Bible, as well as that of the use of the term *ntumbuluko*. The first use was in its verbal form in relation to creation in Genesis 1:1. The 1929 version started with the conceptual use of *ntumbuluko* in only two verses to translate *phusken* and *phusis* (natural and nature) respectively. Actually, until the 1953 reprint there was only one verse (1 Co. 11:14) that used the term *ntumbuluko*. It is the 1973 reprint that has also included Rom. 1:26. But the 1989 edition changes the picture completely.

The following chart demonstrates how *Mahungu la Manene* started to use *ntumbuluko* prevalently. We will do that by comparing *Mahungu la Manene* with the 1929 edition using its 1973 reprint. We will also give the Greek and English equivalents to help us see what meaning of *ntumbuluko* is implied in each use of the term in the Tsonga Bible.

#### 4.2.3.3 The absence of the term *ntumbuluko* in the old versions of the Tsonga Bible, and its prevalence in the new *Mahungu la manene* version

**Chart 5**

<b>Text</b>	<b>old Tsonga Bible</b>	<b>Mahungu la manene</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>KJV</b>	<b>NIV</b>
<b>Jn 1:13</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	natural
<b>Rom 1:26a</b>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	natural	natural
<b>v26b</b>	<i>unga lulamangiki</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	against nature	unnatural
<b>v27</b>	<i>mukhuva wa kona</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	natural	sinful nature
<b>2:14</b>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>φύσει</i>	nature	nature
<b>6:19</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	nature	natural selves
<b>7:5</b>	<i>nyameni</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v18</b>	<i>nyameni</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v25</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>8:3</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v4</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>entumbulukweni</i>	<i>σαρκα</i>	sinful flesh	sinful nature
<b>v5a</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v5b</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	nature desires
<b>v6</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v7</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σάρξ</i>	carnally minded	the mind of sinful man
<b>v8</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	carnal mind	sinful nature
<b>v9</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v12</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v13</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>9:8</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σάρξ</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>11:24a</b>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	flesh	natural
<b>v24b</b>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	nature	nature
<b>13:14</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	nature	nature
<b>1 Co 11:14</b>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>φύσιν</i>	flesh	natural
<b>15:44a</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>φύσις</i>	nature	nature
<b>v44b</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ψυχικόν</i>	natural	natural
<b>v46</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>ψυχικόν</i>	natural	natural
<b>II Co 4:11</b>	<i>mmirini</i>	<i>entumbulukweni</i>	<i>ψυχικόν</i>	natural	natural
<b>Gal 5:13</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	mortal body
<b>v16</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκί</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v19</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>6:8a</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>v8b</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκα</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>Eph 2:3</b>	<i>nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>Heb 1:3</b>	<i>šilo hikwašo</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>σαρκός</i>	flesh	sinful nature
<b>2:14</b>	<i>ngati ni nyama</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>τὰ πάντα</i>	all things	all things
<b>Jude 10</b>	<i>ku tšariwa</i>	<i>ntumbuluko</i>	<i>αὐτῶν</i>	the same nature	humanity
			<i>φυσκῶς</i>	naturally	instinct

*Manene* we find 35 uses of *ntumbuluko*, as against one use in the 1953 reprint of the 1929 edition and five uses in the 1973 reprint of the 1929 edition of the Tsonga Bible.

We find that *ntumbuluko* is used with the following meanings:

- 1) natural;
- 2) nature;
- 3) sinful nature;
- 4) humanity;
- 5) all things and
- 6) instinct

When *ntumbuluko* is used as “nature” and “natural” it is used positively and one is expected to do things according to *ntumbuluko*. To do things contrary to *ntumbuluko* is equated to sinning. Homosexuals are indicated as engaged in a kind of sexual relationship which is against *ntumbuluko*, and God brings judgment upon those who act and live against *ntumbuluko* (Rom 1:18-32). When *ntumbuluko* is used as “all things,” “humanity” and “instinct” (Hebrews 1:3; 2:14; Jude 10) it is neutral. It is neither negative nor positive in itself. Its positiveness and negativeness depends on the context in which it is used. But when *ntumbuluko* is used as sinful nature it is always negative and opposed to the spirit and is the enemy of one’s spiritual life.

We will need to discuss the different meanings of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible later on, but now we need to see the last chart presenting other grammatical forms of the concept *ntumbuluko*.

4.2.3.4 Words with the root “ntu” or “tu” derived from *ntumbuluko*

Chart 6

Text	old Tsonga Bible	Mahungu la manene	Hebrew	Greek	KJV	NIV
Gen 1:1	<i>tumbulušile</i>	<i>tumbuluxile</i>	בָּרָא		created	created
V21	<i>endla</i>	<i>tumbuluxa</i>	וַיִּבְרָא		created	created
V27a	<i>endla</i>	<i>tumbuluxa</i>	בָּרָא		created	created
V27b	<i>endla</i>	<i>tumbuluxa</i>	בָּרָא		created	created
V27c	<i>endla</i>	<i>tumbuluxa</i>	אֵד		created	created
2:1	<i>endliwa</i>	<i>tumbuluxa</i>	עָשָׂה		2:2 made	doing
v3	<i>tumbuluša</i>	<i>tumbuluxa</i>	עָשָׂה		made	made
v4	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>tumbuluxeni</i>	לַעֲשׂוֹת/בָּרָא		created	creating
Jn 1:3a	<i>endliwile</i>	<i>tumbuluxiwile</i>		ἐγένετο	made	made
V3b	<i>endliweke</i>	<i>tumbulukeke</i>		ἐγένετο	made	made
V3c	<i>endliweke</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		γέγονεν	made	made
Rom 1:20	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		κτίσεως	creation	creation
2Co 4:11	<i>mmirini</i>	<i>entumbulukweni</i>		σαρκί	mortal flesh	mortal body
5:17	<i>šivumbiwa</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		κτίσις	creature	creature
Gal 4:8	<i>šiviri</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		φύσει	nature	nature
Eph 1:4	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>tumbuluxiwa</i>		καταβολῆς	foundation	creation
2:3	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		φύσει	nature	nature
Col 1:15	<i>endliwa</i>	<i>tumbuluxiweko</i>		κτίσεως	creature	creation
V16a	<i>tumbulušiwile</i>	<i>tumbuluxile</i>		ἐκτίσθη	created	created
V16b	<i>tumbulušiwile</i>	<i>tumbuluxiwile</i>		-----	-----	-----
V16c	<i>endleriwe</i>	<i>tumbuluxeriwe</i>		ἐκτίσται	created	created
3:10	<i>tumbulušeke</i>	<i>tumbuluxeke</i>		κτίσαντος	created	creator
Heb 4:3	<i>vumbeni</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		καταβολῆς	foundation	creation
9:26	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		καταβολῆς	foundation	creation
11:3	<i>lungisiwile</i>	<i>tumbuluxiwile</i>		κατηρτίσθαι	formed	formed
1Pe 1:20	<i>tumbuluka</i>	<i>tumbuluka</i>		καταβολῆς	foundation	creation

In general, all the words with the root (n)tu are related to:

- 1) creation;
- 2) creator;
- 3) making;
- 4) foundation;
- 5) forming and
- 6) creating.

From this we see that the concept is also associated with “creation,” “creating,” “forming,” “making something,” “foundation” or “forming of something.” It is closely associated with “the beginning,” “creation” and “creator of the world” and “everything.” It is from this association that it is associated with “nature” and “the natural order of things.”

To summarise the meaning of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible, especially from the New Testament, we can say that it means:

- 1) biological birth (which is natural) Jn 1:13; Ro 9:8;
- 2) heterosexuality (sex between men and women, i.e. natural relations) as opposed to homosexuality (considered to be unnatural relations in the NIV) Ro 1:26a, 26b, 27 (and a perversion) Jude 7;
- 3) human nature as opposed to spiritual nature Ro 7:14;
- 4) sinful nature Ro 8:3,4,5,6,7, 8,9,12,13;
- 5) customs and natural law Ro 2:14; 11:24; 1 Co 11:14;
- 6) all things or cosmos Hb 1:3;
- 7) humanity Hb 2:14 and
- 8) instinct Jude 10.

The dictionary defines *ntumbuluko* as (1) creation; (2) cosmos; (3) created; (4) natural; and (5) old custom. The biblical meaning or theological meaning of *ntumbuluko* goes beyond the dictionary meaning. To the above eight theological meanings of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible from the New Testament one can add its Old Testament theological meaning, which is related to the “creation,” “foundation” and “the beginning of everything” and thus related to the creator or the power that causes the beginning and nature in general. The theological meanings of *ntumbuluko* offer many possibilities for theological research. One such possibility is illustrated in this as we study law and the gospel with reference to *ntumbuluko*. Although I may not claim to have presented all the uses of *ntumbuluko* in all the 8 vernacular Bibles and New Testaments, and I cannot claim to have given all its meanings, yet this helps us see the development of the use of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible in southern Mozambique and the relevance of *ntumbuluko* as an important theological concept, the meaning of which evolves as its significance becomes increasingly apparent in the interaction between gospel and culture.

### 4.3 Understanding *ntumbuluko* in terms of the law and the gospel

Christ said He came to fulfil (sic) the law, not to abolish it. Is this law not in both *Ntumbuluko* and Old Testament? Is Christ capable of fulfilling the law in *Ntumbuluko*? Is it possible for Tsonga Christians to look at *Ntumbuluko* in terms of the Gospel, rather than as a rival of the Gospel? The main reason why the Old Testament is part of the Bible is because Christians read and understand it in terms of the Gospel (the good news). Answers to those questions will make a contribution to contextualised theological research.

(Moila 2003, examiner's comments)

In order to answer the above questions, we need to find the relationship between the law and *ntumbuluko*. But, before answering that question, we need to establish what the theology of “the law and the gospel”, particularly Pauline theology, which is dealt with under the topic law, so that we can establish a way of using that theology to understand, examine and interpret *ntumbuluko*. For that assessment of *ntumbuluko* (from the perspective of law and gospel) we will use a limited but classical body of literature, including works by Martin Luther and John Calvin on the law and the gospel.

From the information given in chapter two of this study, we know that *ntumbuluko* is also defined as ‘the law’ or ‘the supreme law’ from which all other laws in Tsonga culture are derived. The question is how to apply the theology of law and gospel to the law in *ntumbuluko*. Does the term “law” in the Bible include *ntumbuluko* law and laws? We can find help from Morris’ commentary on Romans, in which he uses a definition of law as: ‘a *rule* governing one’s actions, *principle*, *norm*’ (Morris 1988:144). After giving this definition, Morris says that some of the Pauline uses of the term “law” fit the definition above. He adds that, although Paul speaks mostly of Mosaic Law, sometimes he speaks of “law” in general, and his conclusions about “law and gospel” do apply in general to other non-Mosaic laws. A similar opinion concerning the generality of the Pauline use of “law” in some instances in Romans is also found in Sandy (1902).

#### 4.3.1 Assessing *ntumbuluko* in terms of law and gospel

The question is how can the theology of law and gospel help us handle the law in *ntumbuluko*? Luther quotes Augustine saying:

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested; that is, God imparts it to the believer by the Spirit of grace without the work of the Law, or without the help of the Law. Through the Law God opens man's eyes so that he sees his helplessness and by faith takes refuge in His mercy and so is healed.

(Luther 1954:60-61)

In this quote, Augustine is demonstrating how God's grace brings spiritual healing, or salvation, without the work or help of the law. But at the same time he identifies the law as being the divine instrument for opening humanity's eyes for them to seek God's mercy. Luther quotes Augustine also saying:

The Law was given in order that we might seek after grace. Grace was given, in order that we might fulfill the Law. It was not the fault of the Law that it was not fulfilled, but the fault was man's carnal mind.

(Luther 1954:61)

The law is here identified as a preparation for the gospel. It is given so that humans should seek after grace. Grace is not given to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Like Paul in Romans, Augustine and Luther are here grumbling about the uselessness of the law for one's salvation, but are careful not to vilify the law that God gave to Moses. With that they are careful to place the blame on humanity for not fulfilling the law. As we can see, the law and gospel debate is very complex. One extreme is to present the Mosaic Law as evil, wrong and faulty, which might be an affront against the character of God who gave the Law. The other extreme is proclaiming salvation by the works of the Law, which is an affront against the sacrificial death of the Son of God.

According to Calvin, Paul's statement: '*Because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* Even among learned scholars there is some doubt what is meant by *the works of the law*. While some extend them to include the observance of the whole law, others restrict them to ceremonies alone' [Calvin's italics] (Calvin 1947:130-31; 1960:69). Calvin is also of the opinion that it does include the observance of the whole law. According to Calvin (1960: 72) 'the Gospel should not seem to be contrary to the law in conferring free righteousness.' He then argues that the gospel does not need the assistance of the law, but it is confirmed by its testimony (1960:72). He adds:

And if the law bears testimony to free righteousness, it is evident that it was not given to teach men how to obtain righteousness for themselves by works. Those, therefore, who wrest the law for this purpose, pervert it. But, if proof of this truth is desired, one should examine in order the main heads of the Mosaic teachings, and it will be found that in the beginning man, having been cast from the kingdom of God, had no other means of restoration than that contained in the evangelical promise concerning the blessed seed, by who, it was foretold, the serpent's head was to be bruised, and in the commandments proof of our iniquity, and from the sacrifices and oblations we shall learn that salvation and purification are found in Christ alone. If we come to the prophets, we shall find the clearest promise of grace and mercy.

(Calvin 1960:72-73)

Like Augustine and Luther, Calvin presents the law as a preparation for the gospel. For him, there is gospel in the law. The rituals and ceremonies are pointing to Jesus. Calvin, for that matter, quotes Jesus saying: 'I came not to destroy (the law), but to fulfil it' (Calvin 1960:81). He explains the problem of gospel and law in the following words:

Since the Gospel puts an end to the Mosaic ceremonies, its intention is held to be the destruction of the ministry of Moses. And further, since the Gospel obliterates all righteousness of works, it is believed to be opposed to all those testimonies of the Law in which the Lord affirms that He has prescribed there the way of righteousness and salvation.

(Calvin 1960:81)

Calvin conclusively believed that the law leads us to Christ and that the rituals are confirmed in Christ (1960:81). We can see that Augustine, Luther and Calvin regarded the Law as a divine preparation for salvation in Jesus.

However, Sandy and Headlam (1902) and Murray (1959) present a rather radical view of law and gospel. Sandy and Headlam argue that the law and grace issue in Romans gives a similar answer to: 'No man can serve two masters Mt 6:24' (Sandy & Headlam 1902:168), and it is equal to "saved by grace! Not serving the law." The two go on to use the dead husband analogy to indicate that, once one is saved, one is free from the dead husband, the law (1902:171-72). Murray uses the analogy of the dead person and the law, saying: 'The law binds a man as long as he lives, and the implication is that when he dies that dominion is dissolved' (Murray 1959:240).

So far, we have two different views on law and gospel. We have one that sees the law as a preparation for the gospel which leads one to Christ and which is fulfilled in one's conversion. The other view sees the law as the old husband, now dead, whose

wife is no longer bound under him and is free. The conversion is also interpreted as dying from/to the law to live in Christ. The first view gives the idea of continuity and the second that of discontinuity.

The question whether Christ is capable of fulfilling the law in *ntumbuluko* and whether it is possible for Tsonga Christians to look at *ntumbuluko* in terms of the gospel, rather than as a rival to the gospel, has many possible theological answers. Tatian and Tertullian would answer the question differently to Justin and Clement of Alexandria among the early church theologians. John Mbiti would echo Justin and Clement's answer and *ntumbuluko* would probably qualify as '*praeparatio evangelica*' (Mbiti 1970d:36). But Byang Kato, together with Tatian and Tertullian, would probably hesitate or even say "away with such attempts, be forewarned and forearmed." The five typologies of responses given by Niebuhr (1951) are a classical example of the variety of possibilities.

Let us not rush into this discussion here, since we need first to see another auxiliary concept which will help discuss the implications of the question of this chapter. We need to see what insight we can gain from the missiological concept of *Missio Dei*, which may help us resolve the law and gospel question.

#### **4.3.2 Assessing *ntumbuluko* in terms of *Missio Dei* in relation to law and gospel**

Niebuhr (1951) demonstrated in his five models that neither of the above responses is able to explain the complex issues around culture and Christian faith in such a concept as *ntumbuluko*. Due to this we must look as much as possible for varieties of responses in the conviction that each one of them will broaden our understanding of *ntumbuluko* and its implications. It is within that context that the study of *Missio Dei* is necessary. According to Bediako, exploring Sanneh's work, the *Missio Dei* concept challenges us to 'stimulate the emergence of a genuine indigenous Christian tradition ...in the local setting; [as] a fresh cultural incarnation of the Faith' (Bediako 1995:122). Such penetrating cultural incarnation of faith requires a combination of various approaches to culture rather than a single one. The *Missio Dei* concept has been strongly held by some theologians such as Hoekendijk and Aringa (1971) to demonstrate that: 'we have no business in "articulating" God. In the final analysis,

“*missio Dei*” means that God articulates himself, without any need of assisting him through our missionary efforts in this respect’ (Rosin 1972:88; Bosch 1997:392).

According to Wickeri:

*Missio Dei* thinking emphasizes the radical activity of God in history, and challenges liberals’ and conservatives’ pietistic and “good works” ideas of mission. Christian mission is not an activity of the deeply-committed or the well-meaning. It is not one among many church activities. The church was seen as an instrumentality of God rather than as the originator of mission rediscovered in the colonial era. Indeed, *missio Dei* became a way of criticizing the whole missionary enterprise as it was then understood in the churches. God has been working in the world all the time, and in all places, creating and redeeming, liberating and saving, whether the churches in the West realized this or not. God’s work in all cultures was seen to be part of salvation-history and something that challenged all human institutions and provoked a crisis in the church and its mission. *Missio Dei* called the triumphalism of the missionary movement all over the world to a prophetic judgment.

(Wickeri 2004:187).

With such a view of *Missio Dei* one could easily conclude that God has been articulating himself to the Tsonga through the law in *ntumbuluko* in the same way as he did to the Hebrews in the Mosaic Law throughout history. But still the problem remains. Even if we establish the divine presence in *ntumbuluko*, and call it *praeparatio evangelica*, that does not guarantee a single response. We can see that there was discontinuity and continuity in Augustine, Luther and Calvin and in Murray and Morris in their study of the law and gospel in Romans. With a concept like *ntumbuluko* which is positive (a preparation for the gospel), negative (a rival of the gospel) as well as neutral (nature and natural), one position will not be helpful. One needs to use various approaches for each aspect of *ntumbuluko*; it calls for continuity in discontinuity and discontinuity in continuity.

One thing we need to say is that *ntumbuluko* is a profound theological and missiological challenge for contextualised research and ministry in Mozambique. But for now we shall continue attempting to interpret *ntumbuluko* theologically, using Bediako’s (1992) study of gospel and culture in the Patristic period and in 20<sup>th</sup> century Africa’s quest for authentic Christian identity.

#### 4.6 Understanding *ntumbuluko* in terms of theology and Christian identity

According to Bediako K (1992), Tertullian's rejection of Graeco-Roman philosophical and intellectual tradition was due to its association with heresy (Bediako K 1992:117-18). He also viewed the perversion of truth as driven by demonic forces that are operative in philosophy (1992:120).

Tertullian is more concerned with the possibility of the truth being adulterated by culture (1992:124) and less concerned with validating the 'relevance of the truth to the world' (:124) but writes more against heresy (negative reactive scholarship). Tertullian is described as having regarded the world as under the power of demons and evil spirits (:125). Maybe this view of the world and world's truth (philosophy) helped him to maintain that 'One becomes Christian, one is not born such' (:125) in his *Apologeticum*. Becoming a Christian is central and once that happens, one needs nothing else. However, although Tertullian is seen as an example of radical discontinuity, we can discern another tendency that emerges. By his arguing: 'the antiquity of the Christian Scriptures, the Old Testament makes them the source of all later wisdom. It is from Christian sources, therefore, that philosophers have derived their semblance of truth comparable to Christian ideas' (:119).

From the above quote one could argue that the alluded association of Graeco-Roman philosophy with the biblical revelation warrants philosophy as a preparation for the gospel (*praeparatio evangelica*) however perverted and corrupted by the philosophers' desire for personal glory and eloquence in the process of propounding this wisdom (:119). But such an interpretation of Tertullian's thought may have to deal also with his way of viewing 'poetic fables and philosophical tenets' (:120) as demon-instigated imitations of various Christian teachings (:120) which suggests that philosophy is demonically inspired rather than emanating from Christian sources, as he seems to suggest in "*de praeparatio evangelica*."

In summary, we see two poles in Tertullian's response to culture and faith. He has one pole of radical discontinuity where Graeco-Roman intellectual heritage and culture are regarded as demon-instigated and are to be discontinued when one comes to faith. The other pole is his association of the Graeco-Roman intellectual heritage and culture as deriving from a Christian source and biblical revelation in the Old Testament. This gives a parallel value and contribution of philosophy in preparing

humanity for the gospel, since its source was meant to do that. Here we see the continuity tendency that only starts taking shape in the thought of Justin. We need to establish the interpretative value of the two poles in relation to *ntumbuluko*. For now we shall turn our attention to Justin.

Justin aimed at merging Greek philosophy with the Christian gospel to an extent that this was possible or compatible (:138). In doing so, he is identified by Bediako as the first Christian to attempt to harmonise the relationship between Christian faith and philosophy (:138). Justin thought of philosophy as ‘unified and original God-given philosophy’ (:139) which is to be distinguished from the products of ‘the diverse philosophical schools’ (:139) which he viewed as a degeneration of the first. In his conversion Justin, found *the philosophy* (not the corrupted one) (:140). According to Bediako K, it is interesting that Justin merges philosophy with Christian faith without making any mutation of Christian teachings and beliefs (:141) for it was the ‘only safe and profitable philosophy’ (:141).

According to Bediako K (1992), Justin does not think of truth as having two sources, philosophical and biblical, but only one (:142). Christianity is not one of the philosophies, but *the philosophy*. According to Bediako K, Justin is not interpreting Christianity as the fulfilment of Greek philosophy, he is not advancing ‘continuity’ ideas (:142).

Justin, as interpreted in Bediako K, does not regard philosophy as a “bridge” or “preparation” for Christianity. He sees philosophy (Platonism) as a serious rival of the ‘True Philosophy’ (:142), that is, Christianity. Philosophy did not prepare him for conversion, but philosophy’s destruction of him is what prepared him (:142). He also, like Tertullian, identifies error or false prophecy with the work of evil or unclean spirits and demons (:144). He contrasts these prophets with the Old Testament prophets. However, Justin still believed there were “Christians” before Christ, being those who demonstrated knowledge of the ‘one Truth which is the Word’ although their knowledge was partial (:153).

His list of Christians before Christ has Jews and Gentiles together. This seems to suggest that he makes a parallel comparison between the pre-Christian past of the two.

In this way, Bediako K considers him to have contributed to the interpretation of every “non-Christian” tradition (:156). Justin is thus suggesting pre-incarnation activities of Jesus Christ in different cultures and/or Jesus’ activity prior to the missionary’s activity in each culture. What Justin rejects in Graeco-Roman culture is the religious traditions, not the philosophy itself.

We can sum up Justin’s philosophy by saying that he makes a distinction between “unified and original God-given philosophy” and the products of “the diverse philosophical schools” which are the degeneration of the first. He also defines Christian faith as “the only safe and profitable philosophy” or “the True Philosophy.” But he is very radically against Graeco-Roman religion as he sees in it erroneous demonic imitation. He separates philosophy from religious traditions and then he rejects religious tradition and accepts philosophy as God-given and describes Christian faith as the true and only safe and profitable philosophy. He then rejects philosophies from various schools of philosophy as degeneration of the true philosophy. We find that his method of dealing with Greaco-Roman culture was separation and distinction, and then selection of what to reject and what to accept from his cultural heritage. Tertullian only argued for the source of philosophy to be the divine revelation, but then having been so corrupted by philosophers that what remained in philosophy were demon instigated imitations of various Christian teachings and therefore should all be rejected. Justin sees something good and redeemable in philosophy and so he makes a distinction in order to take and use what is profitable from it while rejecting what is degenerate. We see that besides a mere acknowledgment of all wisdom deriving from God in revelation (Tertullian) we can also separate, distinguish and select some elements in dealing with *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith, as we see happening in the thinking of these theologians. Before looking at the theological implications for *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith, we need to bring Clement’s contribution here.

According to Bediako K (1992), Clement of Alexandria was the first to clearly defend the view that ‘Hellenistic philosophy and intellectual tradition is virtually on a level with the Old Testament revelation, as preparatory training (*propaideia*) for the Christian era in the Graeco-Roman world’ (:182). For him the, ‘highest moral, religious and intellectual insights in Hellenistic tradition, especially in philosophy,

were compatible with the Christian Gospel' (:182) and so Clement urged for accommodation between Christianity and Hellenistic culture (:188).

In doing so, according to Bediako K, he responded to the attack against Christianity which, in the idea of Celus, Christianity was 'a grave and dangerous defiance of customary law' (:188). Bediako K explains that custom as used in the critique against Christianity is 'an intellectual principle for interpreting human existence' (:188) which was sacralized. Clement regarded custom (Graeco-Roman religion) as an error and the temples as places of initiation to error (:190). He considered Greek religious tradition heroes as 'deceivers through whom demons produced illusions to procure the ruin of men, leading them into idolatry' (:190). The destructive activities of demons in the religious tradition, according to Bediako K, is compounded by the sanctions of this custom (:190). Holding onto custom is a form of the 'lowest slavery' (:190) preventing people from enjoying 'that truly noble freedom which belongs to those who are citizens under heaven' (:190). Jesus is viewed as the liberator from custom that came into the world. This liberation is liberation from tyrannical demons, bringing moral and intellectual transformation (:190) that no other could in the past religious experience.

Clement had to dispute also the new appearance of the gospel in relation to other religious traditions of the world that claimed antiquity. He goes to the concept of the beginning to identify Christianity or Christians from the beginning, or even before the creation of the world, since Christ was in the beginning and Christians have their identity in him (:191). The "error" in Graeco-Roman religion is then located with the fall and Satanic deception within the biblical history of the beginning (:192). This gives an interpretation of Greek history in a way that has never been done before. According to Bediako K, Clement places the pre-incarnate Christ's activities also in the Graeco-Roman culture and history. But he did not appeal to religious traditions but to reason. And although he was convinced that a glimpse of truth in Hellenistic philosophy was by divine inspiration and gave knowledge of God, he declared Scripture as the firm foundation of truth (:196) and called for repentance and belief for salvation (:192-93). He saw spiritual and divine power only in the Scriptures and concluded that they lead to salvation guiding humanity against religious delusion (:196). He used the Old Testament to attack Hellenistic idolatry as a contextual

message to the Greek's (:197) traditional religion. He then called for the Greeks to abandon custom and inherited error in his appeal to traditionalists (:197).

Clement's identification of conversion in relation to his culture as a moral choice between darkness and light, godlessness and godliness, and his call for abandonment of the "old way" (custom) and the embracing of Christian faith even if that displeases one's human parents (:198) is a very radical call to faith as we can read some of his words: 'Custom strangles man; it turns him away from the truth; it leads him away from life; it is a snare, an abyss, a pit, a devouring evil' (:198).

Summarizing Clement, we could say that he also uses separation and selection methods in dealing with Graeco-Roman culture. He sees in philosophy (its highest moral, religious and intellectual insights) a preparation for the gospel. But he separates and isolates Graeco-Roman custom and rejects it as error. He calls people to abandon custom by accepting the liberating faith in Christ. This abandonment of custom will guarantee freedom from the tyrannical demons. Custom is no preparation for the gospel, but is a turning away from the truth and life and a devouring evil. With his positive evaluation of Graeco-Roman culture and philosophy, he calls for rather radical conversion which is to be, among other things, demonstrated by abandoning idolatry and custom and being liberated from the tyranny of demons. The term philosophy was a very positive one in Clement's apprehension. He even called Christianity as "philosophy" but never as "custom" – he also called the Old Testament the "Barbarian philosophy" or the "Mosaic philosophy" (:200) – to Clement Christian life is equated to philosophical life. Genuine intellectual enquiry in Hellenistic philosophy and Barbarian philosophy ought to lead to the philosophy according to Christ (:200). Clement equated prophets with philosophers. However, Bediako K comments that Clement's idea is much more complex than just equating philosophy with Scripture, and that he never appeals to philosophy. Philosophers are children until Christ makes them men (:203).

Custom as defined here is, although not in all aspects, very comparable to *ntumbuluko*. The difference is that *ntumbuluko* includes the highest moral, religious and intellectual insights, thus the philosophy, of the Tsonga people. One cannot

easily be successful in separating custom from philosophy in *ntumbuluko* as Clement was in the Graeco-Roman context.

Following Tertullian, we could corroborate his view that the Old Testament is the source of all later wisdom and conclude that it is from Christian sources that Tsonga (philosophers) have derived their semblance of truth in *ntumbuluko*, comparable to Christian or biblical ideas, but reject *ntumbuluko* as demon-instigated imitations of various Christian teachings (:119-20). This view is of no use. The Tsonga Bible does not make it easy for one to take such a view of *ntumbuluko* since, in some instances, it appeals to *ntumbuluko* (Ro 2:14; 11:24; 1 Co 11:14; Hb 1:3; 2:14). The Tertullian response only helps when applied where *ntumbuluko* denotes sinful nature (Ro 8:3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12,13) and/or the works of sinful nature (Ga 5:13,16,19; 6:8).

Justin's model starts by separating philosophy from religious tradition and rejects religious tradition. Then the following step is accepting philosophy but distinguishing between the true philosophy and the degenerate one. In using this model, one needs to find ways of separating *ntumbuluko* from Tsonga religious traditions and then to identify "unified and original God-given *ntumbuluko*" and to distinguish it from the products of "diverse Tsonga contexts", which are to be regarded as a degeneration of the first. In this approach, conversion could be described as having found "the only safe and profitable *ntumbuluko*." This way of responding to *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith issues would come closer to what one informant suggested. Machava (2001) used terms such as "*ntumbuluko* of Christ" and "*ntumbuluko* of God" as a Tsonga idiom to express the concept of Christian faith in the Tsonga thought form. It is very promising and very contextually relevant to speak of Christian faith as alternatively (1) "the *ntumbuluko*," "*ntumbuluko* of Christ," and/or "*ntumbuluko* of God." The hardest task is distinguishing this *ntumbuluko* from the other, here referred as "degenerated *ntumbuluko*."

Before we conclude analysing how second century theological thought can help us respond to *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith issues, let us see how to apply the Clementine model.

In Clement's model we could, based on the high sense of morality, religious traditions and "intellectual" insights of the Tsongas derived from *ntumbuluko*, well regard *ntumbuluko*, even if not on a level with the Old Testament revelation, as preparatory training for the Christian era in the Tsonga context. With the same freedom that Clement called Christian life "philosophical life", we could well call it "*ntumbuluko* life", and the misunderstanding that could arise with such a use among the Tsonga would not be much more severe than Clement's "philosophical life" might have caused. We could well speak of biblical or Christian *ntumbuluko* without fear of contradiction. But Clement came to such conclusions after successfully separating and isolating custom from philosophy. He discharged his unreserved attack and critique against custom and urged people to abandon it, seeking liberation from custom and demonic tyranny in Christ. How can one separate and isolate custom from *ntumbuluko*? Bediako's definition of custom in Clement's context as a "principle for interpreting human existence" fits very well as a definition of *ntumbuluko*. Besides, *ntumbuluko* is also defined in the dictionary as old custom, and in Ro 2:14; 11:24; 1 Co 11:14 *ntumbuluko* denotes customs or customary law. Although *ntumbuluko* might look more like custom in some aspects, it is also connected to philosophy. Custom and customary law on one hand, and wisdom and the love of wisdom (*filosofia*) are intimately and firmly linked in the Tsonga consciousness and worldview.

Separating and isolating custom from philosophy in the Tsonga context is not only very difficult but it is also superficial. It implies forcing a dualistic dynamic, which is absent in *ntumbuluko* and in Tsonga thinking or apprehension of *ntumbuluko*. Because of that, the use of the term *ntumbuluko* is ambiguous even in the biblical text in Tsonga from one text and context to another. If one reads the word *ntumbuluko* in the Bible one's first reaction is to assume one understands its meaning. But if one reflects one finds that one does not understand it at all. In a verse or even within a paragraph and period, *ntumbuluko* can be used to mean totally different things and there is no easy way of distinguishing its meaning without the help of the context in which it is used.

We can conclude this study of the responses of the second century theologians to the question of culture and faith in relation to Christian identity by indicating that the

three theologians give us models that are not easily applied to dealing with *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith issues. The separation, isolation, distinction, selection and rejection that they used in their hermeneutics of culture cannot easily be used in responding to *ntumbuluko* issues. But the models give us both positive and radical approaches to *ntumbuluko*. This is not a strange finding, because the biblical use and meaning of *ntumbuluko* gives the same picture. On one hand the three theologians, and the Tsonga Bible, give us positive interpretation of *ntumbuluko*, which frees us to view *ntumbuluko* as preparatory for the gospel, and we can even speak of “*ntumbuluko* of Christ,” “*ntumbuluko* of God,” “the *ntumbuluko*,” “*ntumbuluko* life” as a new Tsonga idiom in the Christian faith. But we also find from the three theologians and the Tsonga Bible the need to keep a balance between our positive outlook of *ntumbuluko* and a radical call for the abandonment of *ntumbuluko* by embracing the liberating faith in Christ and being saved and liberated from the tyranny of the demonic powers that are operative in *ntumbuluko*. As ambiguous as it sounds, that is how the concept is used in the Bible. Rom 8:6,13 equates *ntumbuluko* with death and warns that those who live by obeying or living according to *ntumbuluko* will die. In Ro 1:26,27 God punished those who abandoned *ntumbuluko*. In Ga 5:19 the catalogue of sins is called the works of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga Bible, but in Hb 1:3 Jesus is said to uphold all *ntumbuluko*. This illustrates how ambiguous the term is even in its use in the Bible. We cannot suggest that the translators used it wrongly and thus made it ambiguous, because the ambiguity of the term is also present among the Tsonga traditionalists. There was one person who refused me an interview in 2001 because in his village there was a clan that used the term *ntumbuluko* to justify their sexual immorality and to excuse themselves from acknowledging any wrongdoing and from taking responsibility because they were just following or discharging their *ntumbuluko* duties. But to other people from the same village, *ntumbuluko* was life and God-given, while for him it was evil and an evil-protecting concept.

We shall now see some selected twentieth century African responses to the same issue of faith and cultural identity. We will focus on Mbiti and Kato, because of the contrast and similarities of each with the two main approaches of the second century theologians studied above. That will give us modern and African examples of responses to the problem that are analogous with the second century, and we can

move within a historical and contemporary framework of possible and multiple responses to the question of *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith.

According to Verkuyl, the central question of African theology is: 'How can we best do our theology so that the gospel will touch Africans most deeply?' (Verkuyl 1978:277). According to Bediako K, the communicative theology has been taken to its farthest in Mbiti (1992:308). Mbiti suggests ways in which: 'the Gospel might in fact be interpreted as the fulfilment of African cultural values' (:314). Bediako K says that Mbiti adapted this approach from Niebuhr's (1951) types of responses (:314).

According to Bediako K:

Part of Mbiti's argument involves a reversal of the earlier derogatory assessment of African culture and an inclusion of Africa in the general theory that Christ is the fulfiller of all human cultures.

(Bediako K 1992:314)

Bediako K, further argues that:

In final analysis, Mbiti's interpretative key is determined by his own theological commitment, which is Christian and motivated by the thesis that all the religious traditions of Africa, other than the Christian, constitute, in their highest ideals, a *praeparatio evangelica*.

(Bediako K 1992:318-19)

Here in these two quotes we see how Mbiti, besides reversing the negative assessment, includes Africa in the generally-held theory that Christ is the fulfiller of all human cultures. In a similar fashion to Clement, Mbiti regards the highest ideals of African religious traditions as being preparatory for the gospel of which Jesus Christ is the fulfiller as he was interpreted in relation to other cultures.

This comes closer to Professor Moila's question as to whether or not Christ could fulfil the law also in *ntumbuluko*, and whether *ntumbuluko* could be looked at in terms of the gospel. Without going into the details of the arguments, one could say that if Christ is the fulfiller of all human cultures, is not *ntumbuluko* part of human culture? The answer is obviously 'yes', and the logical progression is to say 'why could he not also fulfil law in *ntumbuluko*?' This is the same in looking at *ntumbuluko* in terms of

the gospel. There is no reason why God could not prepare Tsonga people for the gospel using *ntumbuluko* in its highest ideals, unless we could see close to no conversion among the Tsonga people. Before trying to answer these questions we shall take other examples.

In the Roman Catholic context, Mulago, discussing adaptation, considers certain aspects of African culture and religion as: 'providential "stepping-stones" to meanings inherent in Christian formulations' (Bediako K 1992:356). According to Bediako K, the adaptation of Mulago, although not based on Tempels, is connected or related to Tempels' discovery of 'striking analogy in the ontological thought of the Bantu' (:360) with his Christian Catholic thought. Mulago sees many doctrines comparable to Bantu traditions and religion. But it is time we introduce another voice, quite different to the two African voices of Mbiti and Mulago, in responding the cultural challenge. The voice appropriate here is that of Byang Kato.

Kato presents an antithesis to the basic thesis of the other African theologians in Bediako's study (:386). He is considered to have been a "*reactionary*" writer in African theology, and unique for that matter (:386). Bediako K describes him as someone deeply rooted in conservative evangelical tradition, which he calls a North American variant of Christianity (:386).

Kato spoke of "integral Christianity" incorporating elements from African pre-Christian tradition which involved the peaceful evolution of Africans from pagan to Christian beliefs and ways (Bediako K 1992:387). This African pre-Christian past is the area in which, according to Bediako K, Kato chose to be very different to his contemporary African theologians.

Critiquing Mbiti, Kato views his positive assessment of African pre-Christian past as one out of ignorance, since Mbiti was born and raised in a Christian family and had not experienced African Traditional Religion in the sense one does if born into a non-Christian family (:387). According to Bediako K, in Kato's view: 'The beliefs of African traditional religions only locate the problem; the practices point away from the solution; the incarnate risen Christ is the answer, Christianity is a radical faith and it must transform sinners radically' (:389).

In this radical discontinuity, Kato is comparable to Tertullian in the second century. Kato regarded the African theology of ecumenism as syncretistic, poisonous and universalistic (:393) and he condemned Black theology for basing itself in human experience and called for its rejection (:394). To Kato, acceptable theology was biblical theology, but which is allowed to respond to cultural context (:398-99). Mbiti has commended Kato for his position on the Bible as the basis of theology (:414).

As we come to the end of this section, we also have in the modern Africa two continuity theologians and one discontinuity theologian. Here again we have two possible responses. Taking Mbiti's thought, we can look at *ntumbuluko* as *praeparatio evangelica*, and from Mulago's idea we can interpret *ntumbuluko* as a stepping-stone for Christian faith. These ideas have resonances with Justin's and Clement's ideas. But Kato suggests we should view *ntumbuluko* as pointing the Tsonga away from truth, rather than preparing them for the gospel. Conversion is a radical break and discontinuity from *ntumbuluko*. The analysis of the six theologians studied here reveals a tension between continuity and discontinuity.

Bediako K argues that Fasholé-Luke understands African Christian theology as pointing to the reality that conversion is continuity (:427-28). According to Bediako K continuity and discontinuity in the early church may be misleading (:429), because Tatian and Tertullian, and Justin and Clement of Alexandria have views that are not totally exclusive of each other. They both had continuity and discontinuity in varying degrees (:429). Each of them chose what to discontinue and what to continue (:430).

Maybe this is the only way we can go forward in the question of *ntumbuluko*. We need to develop hermeneutical tools for choosing what to discontinue and what to continue in *ntumbuluko*. We cannot hold one view (continuity or discontinuity) exclusively. We cannot also separate philosophy from *ntumbuluko* or custom from *ntumbuluko*, as was easy within Graeco-Roman culture. We have to identify things or elements in *ntumbuluko* that need to be discontinued and those to be continued. Such selections are determined by one's theological and denominational tradition and conviction. *Ntumbuluko* is both preparing people for the gospel and at the same time it is pointing them away from it. It has a double role. To some, even the Old

Testament, the divine revelation, pointed them away (and it still does) from the gospel of Christ. And, if that can happen with the revealed *praeparatio evangelica*, it happens even more with an un-revealed one. Thus, *praeparatio evangelica* is also *un-praeparatio evangelica*. Therefore, *ntumbuluko* has this double function among the Tsonga of un-preparing people for the gospel. Seeing only one role or function of *ntumbuluko* may suggest one or single-sightedness.

#### 4.7 Understanding *ntumbuluko* in terms of *arche* and *reshit*

This section will study two verses which, in the original languages, use the terms “*arche*” and “*reshit*” which are both translated as the “beginning”. After discussing with some of the informants about the use of the concept “beginning” to define *ntumbuluko*, I concluded that this concept is central and basic to the understanding of *ntumbuluko*. For that reason we must engage in a dialogue concerning the understanding of the beginning as *ntumbuluko* (Tsonga); as *arche* (Greek); and as *reshit* (Hebrew).

Mundlovo defines *ntumbuluko* with the following words: ‘The question of *ntumbuluko* brings us to the creation of humans and we can ask, “what was the beginning of human existence?” *Ntumbuluko* is the beginning... (Mundlovo 2001, interview). For Mundlovo, *ntumbuluko* is simply the beginning. Further, he defines *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power that causes things to begin. Khosa also defines *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power. Finally Ndzukule defines *ntumbuluko* as the foundation of everything.

The use of these terms to define *ntumbuluko* indicates that, in the Tsonga understanding of it, *ntumbuluko* is related to all these concepts. The above understanding or definitions of *ntumbuluko* have some fundamental resonances in other cultures. Accord to Frankfort:

Like Hesiod, the Ionian philosophers gave their attention to the problem of origins; but for them it assumed an entirely new character. The origin, the *ἀρχή*, which they sought was not understood in the terms of myth. They did not describe an ancestral

divinity or progenitor. They did not even look for an 'origin' in the sense of an initial condition which was superseded by subsequent states of being. The Ionians asked for an immanent and *lasting* ground of existence.

(Frankfort 1946:251)

They concluded that: Ἄρχή means "origin". Here gods are in a subordinate position in relation to ἀρχή. The Greek people's understanding of ἀρχή is parallel to the Tsonga understanding of *ntumbuluko* as origins or power that caused the beginning and causes things to happen or to begin. Arche translates the Hebrew ראשית (*reshit*) which is a dominant theme or concept in the OT with profound theological implications.

In Hebrew the first words of the first verse in the Bible say: בראשית כרא אלהים (*bereshit bara Elohim*) and are translated "In the beginning God created" (Gn 1:1). The ideas of beginning, creation and *Elohim* (God) are introduced together with that of heaven and earth. "Beginning", "creation", "gods", "heavens" and "earth" were probably rich concepts among the Hebrews. In relation to its root (*ro'sh*), *reshit* can also mean the highest place, the summit, tower (Gn 11:4) and headstone or cornerstone. The question we can now ask is whether the human author of Genesis 1:1 understood the meaning and implications of the word he chose to use. Wenham, dealing with the theology of Genesis 1-11 argues that:

Gn 1-11 as we read it is a commentary, often highly critical, on ideas current in the ancient world about the natural and supernatural world. Both individual stories as well as the final complete work seem to be a polemic against many of the commonly received notions about the gods and man.

(Wenham 1987:12)

All the arguments lead to the conclusion that (1) *Reshit* is not there by coincidence, (2) *Reshit* is not there to support any other word, (3) *Reshit* is there for a purpose and (4) this purpose is to critique and correct the cosmological and metaphysical concept of the origins and the power that caused the origins or beginning which was part and parcel of the Hebrew consciousness. Whoever the author(s) was, the use of the term *reshit* had a theological and missiological motif.

According to Holmgren (2000),<sup>85</sup> רֵשִׁית is a fascinating concept encompassing the beginning and the end. Heaven and earth, which were worshipped by many cultures as gods, are just a creation of *Elohim* and *Elohim* caused the beginning. *Reshit* was, above all, humans and gods submitted to *reshit*. But now “god heavens”, “mother earth goddess”, “god moon”, and “god sun” were no longer gods, but a creation of *Elohim*. Other meanings include: power, principality and principle. No wonder the author of John starts the fourth Gospel this way: ‘Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος’ (‘In the beginning was the word’ Jn 1:1). Did the author of John know the pre-Christian debate and understanding of ἀρχή or was it a mere coincidence or just a literary style of his? To answer the question, let us consider some scholarship on the Gospel of John, especially on the concept of ἀρχή and its use in the Gospel of John.

To Brown (1966:XCII), the Bible teaches that the author is John the Apostle.

Genesis 1 described God’s first creation. John’s theme is God’s new creation. It is brought about through the agency of the Logos, the very Word of God. The Word was “in the beginning”. The term rendered “beginning” can also denote “origin” in the sense of basic cause.

(Morris 1971:73)

Brown also argues that “in the beginning” in John was parallel to Genesis 1:1 as it is in LXX. According to Barrett, John 1:1-5 are cosmological and are intended to give the following message: ‘The eternal divine Word, God’s agent in creation, is the source of light and life for men’...(Barret 1955:125). Bernard (1928) puts, side by side, John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1 from the Septuagint:

John 1:1 ἐν ἀρχῇ ὁ λόγος

Genesis 1:1 ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν (1928:1).

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

Genesis 1:1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

IN the beginning God made the heaven and the earth

John 1:1 ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος

In (the) beginning was the Word, and the Word was with – God, and God was the Word

<sup>85</sup> The above comment was expressed in a letter Henry Holmgren wrote to the author after reading my comparison of *ntumbuluko* and *reshit*.

According to Mayer:

As we read John's Gospel and his three letters, we are impressed with the simple, childlike, intuitive, yet profound, mystical depth of the man. 'He does not deal much with the outside of things, but often appears to speak with the simplicity of a child; but under the simple form are concealed thoughts which wander through eternity. It is easy to conceive what a satisfaction must have been to Christ to have in the circle of His followers one in whom the profundities of His doctrine and the finer shades of His sentiments were sure of sympathetic appreciation'.

(Moyer 1951:32).

According to Findlay: 'Paul and John are the two master-minds of the New Testament. Of all the men that ever lived, these two best understood Jesus Christ' (in Moyer 1951:32-3). Here we are being presented with someone who understood Jesus Christ best, one in whom the depths of Christ's doctrines and an appreciation of the finer meanings of Christ's sentiments resided. We can say that a profound understanding of Jesus was central for John. John was from Galilee, called "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Is 9:1; Mt 4:15) (a term much used to indicate the Greeks in the Bible). The phrase: 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος' can be translated: 'In beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and God was the word. In saying that "in beginning was the word and the word was with God and God was the word" John is, in other words, saying that the Jesus Christ that I am preaching to you is the true and eternal ἀρχῇ, who is God himself. Jesus is presented as the logos in ἀρχῇ and that this logos is God the creator of everything that exists. The true active cause of everything that exists is Christ. I think that what John, or whoever the author was, did was a profoundly courageous theological and missiological translation and communication of Jesus Christ and of the doctrine of incarnation. It is as if John were saying: "People! ἀρχῇ is the intelligent and active word of God; God himself is the intelligent and active word.

In our theology and missiology we must learn, ask, listen and answer *ntumbuluko*-rooted questions and deal with spiritual powers operative in *ntumbuluko* in all spheres of life, life events and life activities. If our theological engagement takes this direction, we will be more able to understand *ntumbuluko* and ourselves and, more importantly, incarnate Christ into *ntumbuluko*. With this understanding, we will be able to take the gospel to deeper layers of Tsonga life and consciousness.

The next section will take the study of *arche* further, looking its relation to principalities and powers in relation to *ntumbuluko*.

#### 4.8 Understanding *ntumbuluko* in terms of principalities and powers – *arche*

The academic category of my informants used the term “power” and “invisible power” to describe some aspects of *ntumbuluko*. Khosa used the term ‘power’ nine times and Mundlovo used it two times to describe *ntumbuluko*. In his description of *ntumbuluko*, Khosa says: ‘We can say that *ntumbuluko* is a power that we do not see (an invisible power), that is capable of changing/turning...our lives. All this happens because we believe in this power. This power comes from our grandparents...the symbol of this power are the spirits of the dead’ (Khosa 2001, interview). Khosa explained the nature of the power saying: ‘this power can harm. The power of *ntumbuluko* can harm if one does not remember the departed ones... This is the way this power harms’ (Khosa 2001, interview).

Khosa gives two ideas about the powers in relation to *ntumbuluko*. First he speaks of (1) *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power and then of (2) the invisible power of *ntumbuluko*. Mundlovo on the other hand is not quick to describe *ntumbuluko* in terms of powers but, as our interview narrowed down into phenomenological issues, he gave an example of a strange phenomenon taking place in his town called Magude Kanyini. He called the mysterious power of that *kanyi* tree “something of *ntumbuluko*” and then called it an invisible power. Such references to invisible power in relation to *ntumbuluko* warranted the proper study of this phenomenon using the theology of principalities and powers.

Also in the introductory section of this study, in the section on family story, we discussed at length the issue of powers. Terms such as “spiritual powers,” “spiritual power encounter,” “evil forces or evil spirits;” “the power of God,” “the victory of Jesus over the powers” as guaranteeing liberation from the powers and principalities are frequently used. Both my use of the term “powers” and that of my informants made it necessary that we give a brief treatment to the subject of powers and principalities.

However, we need to indicate that the field of principalities and powers is a vast one and full of theological controversies. McAlpine identifies four approaches to interpreting principalities and powers in Christian theological traditions, namely:

- (1) Reformed tradition
- (2) Anabaptist tradition
- (3) Third Wave tradition and
- (4) Social Science tradition

The Reformed tradition tends to be more demythologizing and views principalities and powers as human institutions and structures. Some of the authors in this category are Hendrikus Berkhof (1962 [1953]) *Christ and the Powers*, Michael Green (1981) *I Believe in Satan's Downfall*, Walter Wink (1978, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1990d), , Bill Kellermann (1989, 1991), Oscar Cullmann (1956), Stephen Charles Mott (1982), Richard Mouw (1976, 1990) and others (McAlpine 1991:5). The Anabaptist tradition emphasizes freedom given by the gospel as against the powers which are mediated by social structures. Its writers are, among others, Gerhard Lohfink (1984) *Jesus and Community*, Norbert Lohfink (1987) *Option for the Poor*, John Howard Yonder (1972) and René Padilla (1976). The group was born out of the Lausanne movement and views powers as opposing evangelism and engaging themselves in deliverance as well as in spiritual warfare with territorial focus (1991:5). In the last category, the Social Science tradition, the author says that scholars in this tradition can also be placed in the above traditions. This group relegate the discussion around principalities and powers to social sciences such as psychology and anthropology.

It is not my objective to go into all these complexities and controversies. I want to give a general perspective and then to discuss principalities and powers in relation to *ntumbuluko* in this study. I will see how various scholars, without necessarily identifying them with the four traditions, understand and interpret principalities and powers so that we can see how to interpret *ntumbuluko* in terms of the language of principalities and powers.

In studying principalities and powers the question of whether one is mythologizing or demythologizing is also a controversial one. Berkhof is criticized by Karl Barth for being 'too "mythological"' (Berkhof 1962) and Barth refused to publish Berkhof's *Christ and the Powers* because Barth's theology was already under fire by Bultman. On the other hand, other critiques launched a critique against Berkhof for demythologizing the powers. A close look at his epilogue (1962:65-7) illustrates how he interprets powers as human structures when he says: 'The contribution Paul makes to ethics and to our understanding of political and social life needs no further emphasis after what we observe in our final chapter' (1962:67).

Discussing Paul's conception of powers, Berkhof says:

In short, the apocalypses think primarily of the principalities and powers as heavenly angels; Paul sees them as structures of earthly existence.

(Berkhof 1962:23)

After noting the demythologizing of Paul, Berkhof concludes: 'One can even doubt whether Paul conceived of the Powers as personal beings. Wink describes his work this way:

The three volumes comprising this study are themselves the record of my own pilgrimage away from a rather naïve assurance that "principalities and powers" mentioned in the New Testament could be "demythologized," that is, rendered without remainder into the categories of modern sociology, depth psychology, and general systems theory. The Powers, I thought, could be understood as institutions, social systems, and political structures.

(Wink 1984:4-5)

Although he recognises something that cannot be reduced to physical structures, 'something invisible, immaterial, spiritual, and very real' (Wink 1984:5) the invisibility here is of physical structures. He does not easily consider principalities and powers as personal beings.

Although Adu-Boahen does not do a systematic study of principalities and powers, because his writing is pastoral rather than academic, nevertheless he associates demons with principalities and powers:

Demons are evil spirits who probably fell with Satan in his rebellion... There is a hierarchy of demons in Satan's kingdom which is mentioned in Ephesians 6:10-12 as Principalities, Powers, Rulers of the darkness of this world, and the spiritual wickedness in high places.

(Adu-Boahen 1999:32)

This identification of principalities and powers with demons represents a viewpoint of Pentecostal, Charismatic, AICs (spirit/prophet healing type) and the New Free Church or Fellowship movement, called New Christianity in Gifford (1998). This category was not surveyed in McAlpine's work and they represent the most rapidly growing section of Christianity in the world particularly in African Christianity. There is little consideration amongst this group for the fact that principalities and powers in the New Testament also refer to human office bearers and human institutions without, sometimes, taking note of the possible demonic inner aspect of such human office and institutions.

In this thesis we just give a background which will help one understand the use of the language of powers. Although Arnold's (1992) *Powers of Darkness* does not discuss whether or not the powers are personal beings, he starts his chapter six highlighting the "demythologizing" of the principalities and powers as a negative effect of enlightenment (Arnold 1992:89). But when it comes to the question of whether the principalities and powers are separate or independent entities, he is very clear in identifying principalities and powers as part of the kingdom of Satan (1992:92-3). Arnold sees these powers and principalities as demonic powers operating in World Religions where they are known as gods and goddesses (:94-98). Page (1995) is critical of the most recent research identifying principalities and powers with 'the impersonal social forces that determine human existence' (1995:240) and argues that:

To demythologize the powers and equate them with socio-political structures, however, fails to do justice to the historical context of the New Testament, which belief in the spiritual realm was widespread, and to the explicit statements about these powers in the New Testament.

(Page 1995:240)

After this argument, Page identifies principalities and powers as:

- (1) supernatural beings;
- (2) fallen angels and;
- (3) malevolent spirits (Page 1995:243, 254-55).

One interesting study in this field that has not been looked at yet is that of Caird (1956) *Principalities and Powers*. He points out that:

Gustaf Aulen has reminded us that *the classical doctrine* of the Atonement represented the death of Christ neither as a satisfaction paid to God nor as a moral influence on men, but as a victory over evil powers.

(Caird 1956:vii)

Caird names other writers who urged that principalities and powers be given serious attention, including Paul Tillich, C S Lewis, J S Stewart, T W Manson and others (1956:vii-viii). Paul Tillich, for example, in *The Interpretation of History* (Tillich sa:77) implied that: 'the demonic is the product of an abuse of human creativity' (Caird 1956:vii) but, after listening to his critics, in *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (Tillich sa:343) he admitted the possibility that: 'the powers of evil are personal agents' (Caird 1956:vii). But Caird himself does not make clear whether he believes that powers are personal beings. He fits better the Reformed category, as one can see from his statement: 'I have tried in these pages to expound Paul's view of man's dilemma, that he lives under divinely appointed authorities – the powers of state, the powers of legal religion, the powers of nature – which, through sin, have become demonic agencies' (1956:101).

Nonetheless we need to appreciate Caird's contribution to other aspects. He argued:

In the face of the evidence which I have presented, there can be little doubt that his [Paul's] "Principalities and Powers" included the powers of state, though we shall find that he greatly enlarged the conception of the Powers so as to include the Jewish religion, and indeed the whole natural order, under the demonic reign which the Jewish had seen at work in the Gentile world.

(Caird 1956:16)

The association of principalities and powers with the demonic reign that Caird makes here is a unique contribution in the Reformed tradition. Another contribution he makes is his identification of principalities and powers of 1 Co 15:24 as spiritual beings, and also that the rulers of 1 Co 2:6-8 as spiritual beings or angelic rulers behind Pilate, Herod and Caiaphas (Roman state and Jewish religion) are the earthly

representatives and human agents of the principalities and powers in the case of the crucifixion of Jesus.

However, Caird, like other Reformed theologians accused of demythologizing the powers, believes in the changing of Paul's mind which he thinks is reflected in Paul's prison letters, where the principalities and powers will also be saved and reconciled to God through Christ.<sup>86</sup> We can justifiably assume that he is critical of liberation/deliverance from principalities and powers. According to Caird:

Since 1909 when Dibelious wrote *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, the majority of work on Paul's theology, and especially those written in English, have given it the niggardly acknowledgment of few pages. Yet the idea of sinister powers and their subjugation by Christ is built onto the very fabric of Paul's thought, and some mention of them is found in every epistle except Philemon.

(Caird 1956:viii)

In chapter three Caird speaks of how the Synoptic gospels present the ministry of Jesus in relation to powers and principalities. According to Caird: 'Matthew and Luke record sayings of Jesus which prove that he himself thought of his ministry as a battle against the powers of evil' (Caird 1956:70)

This brings us closer to our discussion of Reformed thinking concerning the use of powers and principalities as an interpretation of *ntumbuluko*. In my use of the language of powers as well as liberation/deliverance the understanding is closer to that of the Third Wave, as presented above. But at the same time my understanding of the general field of principalities and powers is a combination of more traditions than one (all the four approaches, and more) depending on the case, situation and context. One can see in McAlpine's survey that the four traditions' responses overlap, so they are not rigid responses.

My informants identified *ntumbuluko* with principalities and powers as:

- (1) something of *ntumbuluko*
- (2) invisible power

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<sup>86</sup> Page (1995) is very critical of this view.

- (3) *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power
- (4) the power of *ntumbuluko* and
- (5) the spirits as the power of *ntumbuluko*.

Here there are two levels of identification of *ntumbuluko* with principalities and powers. The terms ‘something of *ntumbuluko*’ and ‘the power of *ntumbuluko*’ suggest that principalities and powers are agents of *ntumbuluko*. Whether that power of *ntumbuluko* is a spiritual entity or being, or not, is not the question. We are speaking of invisible spiritual powers, not humans or institutions. The *kanyi* tree is not the invisible power. The tree is not a spirit or principality and power and it has no spirit, but has become a dwelling of principalities and powers. These powers embody the spiritual and supernatural authority of *ntumbuluko* over humans.

But, with Khosa’s description of *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power, we have another assumption. *Ntumbuluko* itself as a concept is a Principality and a Power, which has principalities and powers that operate under it. These powers of *ntumbuluko* include the supposed spirits of the dead (ancestors).<sup>87</sup> It is interesting to see this association of *ntumbuluko* with principalities and powers. At least Page and Caird also used the term ‘invisible powers’ in reference to principalities and powers. We find here that the Greek concept of *arche* is not only related to *ntumbuluko* as the beginning but also in its relation to principalities and powers in Pauline theology.

Taking *ntumbuluko* in its meaning as law and custom we again find *ntumbuluko* related to *arche*. According to Caird, Paul regarded the law as a demonic agent and related it to principalities and powers (Caird 1956:43). Caird suggests: ‘(1) Either Paul regarded the law itself as one of the powers, or (2) behind the law he perceived the existence of angelic beings who were responsible for the law’s enforcement’ (Caird 1956:44). *Ntumbuluko* can be viewed in itself as a power over the Tsonga people and also, behind *ntumbuluko*, there are invisible spiritual beings that are responsible in enforcing *ntumbuluko*. Ndzukule, one of the informants, speaks of “the invisible police of *ntumbuluko*.”

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<sup>87</sup> We are not going to discuss the concept of ancestors here. We mention them only in passing.

The concepts translated as *ntumbuluko* in the New Testament are mainly *phusis* and *sarx*. According to Caird, principalities and powers include natural order (Caird 1956:16). The most predominant word translated *ntumbuluko* is of a *sarx* root, translated "flesh" in the KJV and "sinful nature" in the NIV. Wink (1992) defines *sarx* as dominated existence. He considers the translation of *kata sarka* as "flesh" as a most unfortunate English translation (Wink 1992:61). He interprets *sarx* as:

- (1) physical substance or body;
- (2) self or one's being;
- (3) human being or humanity in general.

According to Wink:

Life lived "according to the flesh" (*kata sarka*) denotes the self externalized and subjugated to the opinions of others. It is the self socialized into a world of unauthentic values, values that lead it away from its own centeredness in God. It is the beach-head that the Domination System establishes in our beings. *Sarx* means more than "the pursuit of the merely human, the earthly-transitory;" it is pursuit of the values of the Dominion System.

"Fleshly" or "carnal" refers to a life that has abandoned the transcendent and become fixated on personal satisfaction...The best paraphrase I can render for *kata sarka* is "dominated existence" – a life lived according to the dictates of the Domination System.

(Wink 1992:61-62)

According to Wink (1992:62), in this existence (Dominated Existence): 'our bodies are the locus of conflict in which God and the Powers struggle to become embodied.' From this argument Wink indicates that *sarka* as "Dominated Existence" and the Domination System are objects of the wrath of God and his redemptive activity (Wink 1992:63). Although Dominated System and powers, in Wink, are not necessarily spiritual beings, his analysis helps us to see *ntumbuluko* as *phusis* and as *sarx* strongly associated with spiritual powers or principalities, and as powers that manipulate nature and dominate our existence or *ntumbuluko*. The view of our being or bodies as the locus of conflict in which God and the powers struggle to become embodied, is sufficient to warrant liberation/deliverance from *ntumbuluko* as an invisible power, and from the power of *ntumbuluko* as presented by my informants. Liberation/deliverance is necessary in *ntumbuluko* in the same way that it was necessary from the law as a power from the powers operating behind the law.

Liberation is also necessary from *ntumbuluko* as custom and religious tradition, as the second century theologians argue. One needs to be freed from *ntumbuluko* as principalities and powers to enjoy freedom from the demonic tyrant.

But at the same time one needs to celebrate *ntumbuluko* which is a preparation for the gospel, and which was divinely pre-established to preserve and guide humanity for salvation and for the glory of God in Tsonga society, but which is now superseded by the incarnate Christ. From that *ntumbuluko* comes the only possibility for us to draw deeper theological insights for the articulation of our faith. That *ntumbuluko* is centred in Christ and he becomes its embodiment and realization.

#### **4.9 Biblical use of the term *ntumbuluko* as an interpretation of Pauline theology of the “flesh”**

The term *ntumbuluko* is widely used in the Bible to translate different ideas and words and this study would not be complete without finding out how the Bible uses this term and what its meaning is in the Bible.

In the old Tsonga version and in Xitswa Bibles the term *ntumbuluko* is used very seldom. I could find the term only in 1 Cor 11:14, translating the Greek word φύσιν (nature). However, it is too soon for me to conclude that this is the only use of the word *ntumbuluko* in these two versions. It is very difficult even to find words of the same root “*ntu*”. Words that are translated *ntumbuluko* in the new version were translated “*nyama*” (flesh) from the root σάρξ (Rm 8:6,13). This term and its related terms, e.g. “body” and “in the flesh” are used no less than 23 times in the NT. This suggests that in the old version and in Xitswa the word *ntumbuluko* was not as favoured by the translators for translating the words with the above root as it was in the *Mahungu la Manene* (1989). This version uses the word *ntumbuluko* no less than 34 times in the NT to translate five different Greek words.

If one refers back to the charts and one can ask why the translators of the new version increased the use of the term *ntumbuluko* from two (1 Cor 11:14) to thirty four uses, and decreased the term *nyama* from twenty three uses to one in those verses (Gl 5:17) ?!

Rev. Matsombe, a participant in the translation process, explains this change as moving from more figurative and abstract language to concrete language, which is easy to understand and can penetrate deep into Tsonga consciousness. However, Chamango, another participant in the translation process, disagrees and regards *ntumbuluko* as yet another example of figurative language which is difficult to interpret and understand.

If we follow Matsombe's argument, the change was made in order to replace an unintelligible language with an intelligible and concrete one which speaks deeply into the heart of Tsonga culture. Is that happening? Well, let me share a short story.

In December 2001 I conducted the funeral of a member of our church, one of my informants, in Johannesburg. When, after a family meeting, I read: '*Loko mu hanya hiku ingisa ntumbuluko mutafa...* (If you live by listening [following or obeying] *ntumbuluko* you will die)' (Rm 8:13) many people asked me to write down that verse for them, and others marked that passage in their Bibles. Why? Because it said something about *ntumbuluko* which is the basis and essence of their being and life. The gospel had just touched the nerve of the Tsonga culture and there was a response or reaction. They wanted to know the verse and to read it carefully themselves.

Another question that we must ask, even before considering the use of the term *ntumbuluko* to translate, say, Rm 8:13 and to be excited about it, is: What is *σάρξ* (*sarx*), translated "flesh" in the KJV and "sinful nature or mind" in the NIV? Dr. Yung, in his paper read at the "Deliver Us from Evil Consultation" convened by The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in August 2000, says:

A third area that also needs to be reexamined is how we are to understand the 'flesh' (*sarx*) or 'sinful nature.' The word *sarx* carries different meanings, one of which refers to the sinful principle operative in humanity. It is often translated 'flesh' (Rom 8:3; RSV) or 'sinful nature' (NIV). However, much of the discussion on *sarx*

consciously or unconsciously perceives it as some static metaphysical reality, in line with the Greek understanding of *physis* or 'nature', although the word is never used in connection of the idea of the sinful principle in humanity. This is reflected in the language that is used for sin or sinful nature: 'a total corruption of man's being', 'sin which defiles every part of man's nature', original sin is defined as 'inherited sin' or 'the internal necessity which is rooted in the perversity of human nature', 'a person is not a sinner because he sins, he sins because he is a sinner.' Consequently, in our theological understanding, we think of the 'flesh' or 'sinful nature' as something metaphysical in humanity, in the same way that we think of human nature as something metaphysical. In this view, sanctification comes as a result of some metaphysical change taking place in the depth of our being. The role that we assign to Satan is hardly more than that of a tempter! [Yung's italics].

It appears that New Testament conceives of the 'flesh' in much more dynamic terms. When Paul, for example, speaks of the 'mind of the flesh' (Rom 8:5f), he juxtaposes it with the 'mind of the Spirit'. The latter is not some metaphysical part of redeemed humanity, rather some aspect of our being in which the Spirit is dynamically at work. Similarly the 'mind of the flesh' should not therefore be conceived as some static metaphysical part of fallen and redeemed humanity, but something in which evil is dynamically at work instead! Further, H. Seebass (1975:676) argues that, in Paul's understanding of the 'flesh' in Col 2:18, he asserts that "the mind of the flesh"... is preoccupied with angelic powers to whom as *sarx* man seems to be in subjection. 'Similarly, in Eph 2:2f Paul pursues a related thought. 'In its desires the flesh is open to the powers and influences of this world, which themselves are not flesh and blood'...

The above, together with other descriptions of him in the bible (sic) clearly means that Satan is certainly more than just a tempter in relation to sin. He actively seeks to influence us. He instigates us to rebellion. He blinds us with lies. He instills fear to prevent us from being faithful, and offers pleasures to draw us from obedience. He desires to mould our thinking with values that are opposed to God. Often, he goes even beyond these to constrain us to sin and do evil, this being most clearly seen in the lives of the demonized. Taken together, does this not suggest the possibility that, as much as the Spirit is dynamically at work in the 'mind of the Spirit,' the devil is dynamically at work in the 'mind of flesh' (Rom 8:5f)?

If that is the case, then this raises the intriguing possibility that we may need to rethink our language about sin and sinful nature, and how to link these much more with spiritual and demonic bondage in our lives. Although we may not have to jettison traditional conceptions *in toto*, it does mean that we need to expand our ideas of how Satan keeps us in bondage and how we are then to grow in holiness. If the above is correct then it would appear that we may need to think of life in terms of two spheres, one in which Satan is at work to hold us in bondage to sin and death, and the other in which God is redemptively (sic) at work to effect freedom from sin and death. Before our conversion, we are primarily in the satanic sphere and under his bondage. After conversion and as we grow in holiness, we are moved gradually and increasingly, but never totally in this life, into the sphere of divine operation. Such a conception of sin and grace will need more careful stating. But it will explain many things in a clearer manner, such as how do we understand Satan's power at work in enslaving us in sin, especially those people who appears to be demonized. And this will pave the way for more helpful treatments of the sanctification process...

(Yung 2000:9-10)

If Yung is right in his suggestions as to how to understand  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\iota\varsigma$  and about the need to rethink the language to use to describe sinful nature, we can safely say that the translating team made a sound choice in their rethinking of the language

(terminology) from *nyama* to *ntumbuluko*. They have made a huge contribution to theological development in the Tsonga context, especially a theology inspired by the vernacular language, as in my case.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries we were hearing the wonders of God in our own languages, but now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we hear deep and lofty academic, theological and missiological engagements, debates and discourses in our own languages. We inaugurated that era by studying the different uses of the concept or term *ntumbuluko* in the Bible.

#### **4.10 Conclusion – a synthesis on biblical and theological interpretations of *ntumbuluko***

Our study of the biblical use and meaning of the term *ntumbuluko* revealed six basic meanings of the concept *ntumbuluko* in the Bible. In the New Testament *ntumbuluko* means:

- (1) natural;
- (2) nature;
- (3) sinful nature;
- (4) humanity;
- (5) all things; and
- (6) instinct.

In the Old Testament there are also six meanings of *ntumbuluko*, namely:

- (1) creation;
- (2) creator;
- (3) making;
- (4) foundation (beginning);
- (5) formation; and
- (6) creating.

From these meanings, which we do not claim to be exhaustive, we deduced eight theological interpretations, based on the biblical text in Tsonga. The meanings are as follows:

- (1) biological birth (natural);
- (2) heterosexuality (natural);
- (3) human nature as opposed to spiritual nature;
- (4) sinful nature;
- (5) customs and natural law;
- (6) all things or cosmos;
- (7) humanity; and
- (8) instinct.

On the question of looking at *ntumbuluko* in terms of law and gospel we surveyed various responses on the topic and also on other parallel theological fields that attempt to answer the question of culture and faith. From Augustine to Calvin and from Tatian to Kato we always found a variety of responses, which are not mutually exclusive, a radical continuity or discontinuity, but which are much more complex and interrelated. This brought us to the conclusion that there cannot be only one response; there have to be a variety of responses, as Niebuhr's types suggest.

The next part, the challenge, will make extensive use of Niebuhr as a model to respond to various issues in that section. However, we found that Jesus the fulfiller of all cultures and God in his *mission Dei*, have been working in all cultures, including in Tsonga and through *ntumbuluko*, and therefore we can view *ntumbuluko* as preparatory to the gospel. However, the second century theologians taught us discernment and the need for continuity in discontinuity. We need to develop tools to select what we need to discontinue and to call for radical discontinuity in the same way Clement of Alexandria called for people to be liberated from custom and the tyranny of demonic forces operating within custom.

This led to the study of *ntumbuluko* in terms of *reshit*, and *arche* as the beginning and as principalities and powers. That aspect of *ntumbuluko* (principalities and powers) is one of those areas needing radical discontinuity and the liberating work of Christ to free people from the tyranny of demonical forces or principalities and powers. Also we found that *ntumbuluko*, as a translation of the Pauline theology of the "flesh," also refers to a dominated existence, under which one's being becomes the locus of a spiritual power encounter. All this proves the importance of the *Christus victor*

doctrine of atonement. Christ as victor over the powers guarantees us victory and liberation from principalities and powers. All these compound the challenge of *ntumbuluko* to Christian faith.

## PART FOUR:

### CHALLENGE

Now, here in this country [Mozambique], after Marxism, which was against religion, *ntumbuluko* and divination are ruling/dominating very powerfully. *Magandzelo* (places of libation, worship also called *tipangu*) are re-established with the government support/authority, projects are inaugurated with *mhamba* (an address of thanksgiving prayer to the dead), diviners/mediums were given a new name and they do have an association (*Associacao dos Medicos Tradicionais Mocambicanos* [AMETRAMO] [the Association of Mozambican Traditional Doctors]). They are no longer called *tinyanga* [plural of *n'anga*] (diviners/mediums), they say these are equally doctors in the same manner as those trained and graduated from schools, these ones being doctors in *ntumbuluko* or *ntumbuluko* doctors.

(Khosa 2001, interview)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5 NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL: A Challenge and an Invitation to Deep Theological and Missiological Reflection in Mozambique

#### 5.1 Introduction

Considering the descriptions of *ntumbuluko* found in this study it is clear that *ntumbuluko* is indeed a challenge to the gospel. This challenge calls for the stretching of missiology and theology to new and unfamiliar levels and territories of theologizing. However, if we want to penetrate these areas of life with the gospel and to make Christ the Lord of Tsonga life, the questions become important missiological and theological issues. Such questions as well as others must be allowed. They are not 'trivial' issues (Walls 1989:14), these questions and issues are the 'key to conduct' (Walls 1989:13) and are basic to their metanarratives.

My theological and missiological task here is not an easy one. Some of the issues that I must discuss are related to the most private and personal areas of life. Take, for instance, the very detailed discourse and regulations on sex, sexuality, reproduction, impurities and their related rituals, which is the most socially protected or secret discourse in *ntumbuluko*. These are not issues that one discusses within parent/children relationships. These issues are discussed in their ritual or ceremonial contexts. In the family context, they are discussed between grandparents and grandchildren, mothers and daughters, uncles/aunts and nephews/nieces. They are also discussed by *masungukati* or *mapwsatsi* in a *ntumbuluko* ritual context. Besides the fact of its being a protected discourse, I am faced also with the lack of an established scholarship on *ntumbuluko* from which I could follow an example and methods. However, if the study of *ntumbuluko* is placed in its broader contexts of gospel and culture, and Christianity or Christian faith and culture, there is good scholarship available.

Therefore I will start this section with a short survey of studies in gospel and culture. This survey will devote much space to Niebuhr's (1951) *Christ and Culture*,

considered to be a seminal work in the field. I will also include a collection of papers from the Lausanne consultation on the "gospel and culture". After being informed by this survey, I will examine the challenge of *ntumbuluko* to the gospel. Then I will propose a way forward which suggests a form of relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, answering theological questions and accounting for the missiological and pastoral implications of conversion.

## **5.2 An overview of the gospel and culture debate as a prologue to the *ntumbuluko* and the gospel challenge**

The gospel and culture debate is an old theme. It has also been an area of intense scholarship, but has never been exhausted. It is the continuation of the OT journey and the struggles of the living God and the human race. In the modern era Christian theologians, missiologists and anthropologists such as Jenkins (1983)<sup>88</sup>, Ryken (1995)<sup>89</sup>, Carson & Woodbridge (1993)<sup>90</sup>, Kraft (1979)<sup>91</sup>, Bediako K (1992) and Tanner (1997) consider Niebuhr's (1951) *Christ and Culture* to be a classical book in this field. Some of these authors based their studies on Niebuhr's five approaches; others quoted or recommended his book for those who want to pursue studies in gospel and culture. The second book that I consider to be important in this study is Stott & Coote's (1980) *Down to Earth*, which is another version of Stott & Coote's (1979) *Gospel and Culture*. *Christ and Culture* is the work of a single author, while *Down to Earth* is a collection of papers by various authors. These two works will be dominant in this overview. However, before considering the two classical documents

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<sup>88</sup> Jenkins uses Niebuhr's five types of attitudes towards culture in his "Culture" in Richardson & Bowden (1983:137-141).

<sup>89</sup> Ryken considers Niebuhr's (1951) *Christ and Culture* as a classical book.

<sup>90</sup> Carson is a Research Professor of the NT and Woodbridge is Professor of church history and history of Christian thought. Both of them were working at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, now Trinity International University (USA). In their preface to *God and Culture: Essays in Honor of Carl F. H. Henry* (1993), they identify Niebuhr's (1951) *Christ and Culture* as a classical book. They also say that, since its publication, it has been common practice to adopt its typology of the five possible Christian responses to culture.

<sup>91</sup> Kraft (1979) *Christianity in Culture* part III "God Through Culture" (:103-115) used Niebuhr's (1951) *Christ and Culture*.

on the subject (gospel and culture) we need to present a literature review of the gospel and culture debate in Africa, and particularly among evangelical Africans.

### 5.2.1 Literature review on gospel and culture

There are many books and articles written by Africans on the subject of the gospel and culture. The objective of this study is not to do an exhaustive review of such studies, but will be a selective one to give a background to the discussions on gospel and culture in Africa, before working with two classical texts on the subject.

Tienou in his *Theological Task of the Church in Africa* (1990), discussing “Christianity and African culture” in chapter 2, points out that:

Culture has increasingly come to the forefront in the worldwide theological debates of our time. The Conference on Salvation Today held at Bangkok in 1973, the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974, and the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches revealed to the general Christian public what specialists had debated for years: how do we Christians deal with the diversity of cultures in this world? How does culture affect and shape the expression of the Christian faith?

(Tienou 1990:19-20)

In answering the above questions, Tienou indicates that African Christianity has two tendencies in general. One tendency is what he describes as a Tertullian<sup>92</sup> discontinuity tendency and the other is Clement's<sup>93</sup> continuity and compatibility tendency (1990:21). Clement considered Greek philosophy and culture a preparation for the gospel. But to Tertullian “Jerusalem had nothing to do with Athens” and called “away” from trying to produce a cultural Christianity based on philosophy

<sup>92</sup> Tertullian, a North African theologian, wrote in his *Prescription Against Heretics*: ‘Heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy.... What, indeed, has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between Academy and the Church? Our instruction comes from the “porch (*stoa*) of Solomon” who himself taught that “the Lord should be sort in simplicity of heart.” Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic compositions! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the Gospel! With our Faith, we desire no further belief’ (In Ferm 1964:5).

<sup>93</sup> Contrary to Tertullian, Clement, also a North African theologian, had this to say in the *Stromata*: ‘Philosophy is in a sense a work of Divine Providence.... Before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety, being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration.... Philosophy was given to the Greeks directly and primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks.... [It] was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ.... The Greek preparatory culture, therefore, with philosophy itself, is shown to have come down from God to men’ (In Ferm 1986:12).

Scripture interpretations. And he tells evangelicals that they need not fear “culturally differentiated Christianities”, because it has been always so (:23).

Bediako K (1992) also demonstrates clearly the impact of culture on Christian thought in both the second century and in modern Africa. He demonstrates, by studying second century theologians and modern African theologians side by side, that culture did have an impact on the Christian thought of the second century and continues to have one in modern Africa. He presents Tertullian, with his radical discontinuity (1992:100-126) and Clement of Alexandria with his unifying continuity (:174-207), as models or patterns that the gospel and culture debate in Africa is following. Mbiti's view, he says, is comparable to Clement's view on culture, while Tertullian finds a following in Byang Kato (:303-334, 386-416).

In his conclusion, Bediako makes an important observation. He notes that the advocates of Justin and Clement's view (i.e. continuity) in Africa, namely Idowu, Mbiti and Mulago (:436), with their positive evaluation of Pre-Christian heritage in Africa, have said little about the failings on the African side. Bediako K attributes this silence as a response to the Eurocentric derogatory evaluation of the African past, but also suspects that this could indicate ‘a methodological problem in African theology’ (:437). For him it is in this gap that the “Tertullianic” voice of Byang Kato finds its ‘deepest significance’ (:437). Although Kato's theological outlook is criticised by Bediako K, he recommends that, in the light of the omission of the positive evaluation of culture, one needs to take ‘more seriously’ (:437) Kato's Tertullian tendency. Here Bediako K suggests the combination of the two views (positive and radical) evaluation of gospel and culture.

With this commitment, Bediako K has written various articles on gospel and culture such as “The relevance of a Christian approach to culture in Africa” (1992c), “Gospel and Culture: Guest Editorial” (1999), “Gospel and Culture: some insights for our time from the experience of the earliest Church” (1992) “Scriptures as the hermeneutic of culture and tradition” (2001).

Mbiti has also written on gospel and culture. After making reference to the debates on gospel and culture (indicating the same gatherings that Tienou mentioned) and

(:21). According to Tienou, in theory evangelical Christians agree with Tertullian, seeing a radical discontinuity between Christianity and African Cultures (:22) but, in practice, Tienou points out that African evangelicals carry two cultural loads (or live Clement's view).

Tienou indicates in his study the need for careful definition of what is meant by culture. He warns that even anthropologists and ethnologists who are experts in the field hardly agree on a single definition of culture (:20). His question is: 'how should we theologians make ourselves understood when we use the term culture?' (:20). He answers his question by giving Mbiti<sup>94</sup> and Willowbank's<sup>95</sup> *Gospel and Culture* definitions of culture. Then he argues that whatever definition one takes, one is to take into account that culture cannot be separated from philosophy, religion and spiritual values (:20).

Tienou points out that the attitude that one takes to culture will determine one's × theological method. For him, the problem of evangelical Christians in Africa is: 'We have learned to think of our customs as pagan, but we have rarely provided appropriate substitutes for the cultural elements we ask people to discard' (:22). To Tienou, African evangelicals need to develop what he calls a "right attitude towards African culture." 'Missionaries and pastors need to have a right attitude towards culture and a sympathetic understanding of it, if they are to help Christians out of this devastatingly syncretistic way of living' (:22). Tienou also plainly tells evangelicals in Africa that there is no 'de-cultured gospel' (:22) and that they need to examine culture very closely, with the help of social sciences, to perceive elements that are or are not compatible with the gospel. This, according to Tienou, would help evangelicals to develop a theology of culture and resist making absolutes of our

<sup>94</sup> According to Mbiti: 'culture...means [the] human pattern of life in response to man's environment. This pattern is expressed in physical forms (such as agriculture, the arts, technology, etc.), in inter-human relations (such as institutions, laws, customs, etc.), and in form of reflection on the total reality of life (such as language, philosophy, religion, spiritual values, worldview, the riddle of life-birth-death, etc.) (Mbiti 1978:273).

<sup>95</sup> According to the Willowbank report: 'Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions, which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity' (Stott & Coote 1979:435).

giving his working definition, already quoted elsewhere, at the 1976 PACLA assembly Mbiti outlined his points on "Gospel and Culture" indicating that:

- 1) God takes the initiative,
- 2) the gospel enters and traverses culture
- 3) Africans respond to the gospel and that
- 4) the gospel is not a cultural monopoly.

In the relation gospel and culture, Mbiti sees God as an invader of culture in his love. The highest point of that "invasion in love" is the incarnation, in which the gospel and culture meet and faith is generated and Christianity is produced (1978:273). The gospel, according to Mbiti, bridges between one culture and another, and becomes a partner to the culture. Culture becomes an instrument of the gospel, for instance language as cultural heritage it is also the medium for the transmission of the gospel (:273). He argues that one's response to the gospel must be within one's culture in repentance, love and worship. And, since the gospel is not a monopoly of any culture, no culture should imprison the gospel (:275). For Mbiti, culture is an ally of the gospel. But he concludes by saying:

- 1) African culture must bring glory to God
- 2) the Bible must judge African culture, and
- 3) there should be openness to other cultures (:281).

While others are very positive about the interaction between gospel and culture, Kato is radical in his approach. His writings do not, however, address gospel and culture as such, his theme is the "African religions" field, where he feels that studies done during his time were of "universalistic" tendencies. In his *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* (1975) he warns against the preservation of incompatible cultural elements among the converted, like "juju" (witchcraft) and idolatrous symbols or elements of culture (Kato 1975:174-175). In his (1974) "Contextualization and Religious Syncretism in Africa" he is critical of how contextualization, by accommodating cultural elements that are incompatible with the gospel can lead to syncretism. He identifies, among others, "cultural revolution" as an incentive to syncretism by promoting 'a return to the traditional socio-religio-cultural way of life in Africa' (Kato 1985:26). He argues: 'Not only should the message be preached in the language best understood by the congregation, but the terminology of theology should

be expressed the way common people can understand. Nevertheless, theological meaning must not be sacrificed on the altar of comprehension' (1985:24). In a similar statement of his suspicion against contextualization in the interaction of gospel and culture, Tienou criticizes Adeyemo and Padilla for unnecessarily castigating each other over the issue of "contextualization" vs. "biblical theology in an African setting" (Tienou 1990:28).

Finally, we can also see that the debate on gospel and culture among the evangelicals has risen to another level of development. We have the gospel and culture consultation (Willowbank Consultation), which Professor Kwame Bediako, a signatory of the Lausanne covenant, attended. Bediako, as the General Secretary of the African Theological Fellowship<sup>96</sup> (ATF) has developed, on behalf of ATF and in conjunction with the University of Natal, South Africa, MTh and PhD programmes on African Christianity in which the course work includes a module on "Gospel and Culture." This study is partly the product of my participation in that programme. I have been interacting with the topic since 1990.

With these, let us focus on the two classical works on the gospel and culture debate in the form of the two books that will follow. We will examine the content of the debate on gospel and culture in these two books in more detailed form than the above works, especially *Christ and Culture* being a classical work on the subject.

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<sup>96</sup> The ATF has a Journal called: '*Journal of African Christian Thought*' which has dedicated entire volumes to "gospel and culture" debates and the ATF "gospel and culture" conference and seminars. Vol. 2, No. 2 of December 1999 was dedicated to the "Gospel and Culture" debate and it has eight articles and a Bibliography on gospel and culture. It includes "Gospel and Culture: Guest Editorial" by Bediako, K (1999), "Gospel and Culture in Luke/Acts: A woman's meditation" by Senavoe (1999), "Gospel and Culture: some insights for our time from the experience of the earliest church" by Bediako, K (1999), "Ethnicity and the Gospel" by Aboagye-Mensah (1999), "Researching Gospel and culture issues: tools of research" Howell (1999), "Researching historical background of cultural issues" by Perbi (1999), "Researching morals and rituals" by Kudadjie (1999), "Researching witchcraft" by Akrong (1999), and "Gospel and culture: an initial selected bibliography from the Zimmermann Library" by Laryea (1999). Vol. 4, No. 1 of June 2001 was also dedicated to the "gospel and culture debate" and it has seven articles excluding editorial and bibliography on gospel and culture. It has the following articles: "Scriptures as the hermeneutic of culture and traditions" by Bediako, K (2001), "Symposium: towards a theological perspective on culture and tradition" by Perbi, Kudadjie and Akrong (2001), "Letting the gospel re-shape culture: theological creativity in mother tongue" by Laryea (2001), "The widowhood rite of the Fante" by Aidoo-Dadzie (2001) "Akan widowhood rites: a pastoral response" by Senavoe (2001), "The religious and theological significance of the *Priisigu* among the Mamprusi" by Wandusim (2001), and "The twin festival of the Ga people – a Christian response" by Adjei (2001).

### 5.2.2 Niebuhr's (1951) *Christ and culture* review

According to Niebuhr, the debate about the relation between Christianity and civilization that is being carried on in our time, is 'many-sided' (Niebuhr 1951:1). Historians, theologians, statesmen and churchmen, Catholics and Protestants, Christians and anti-Christians participate in this debate. Niebuhr sees this conflict (Christian faith vs. civilization) as starting with Jesus, who, although he was a Jew, confronted Jewish culture (1951:2-3).

Niebuhr says that Jesus is rejected all over the world because of his relationship to culture (:4-5). From this point of view, he gives a definition of a Christian and of culture. He defines a Christian as 'one who believes in Jesus Christ'... 'a follower of Jesus Christ' (:11). Moreover, he describes a Christian as:

[O]ne who counts himself as belonging to that community of men for whom Jesus Christ – his life, words, deeds, and destiny – is of supreme importance as the key to the understanding of themselves and their world, the main source of the knowledge of God and man, good and evil, the constant companion of the conscience, and the expected deliverer from evil.

(Niebuhr 1951:11)

In defining culture, he says:

What we have in view when we deal with Christ and culture is that total process of human activity and that total result of such activity to which now the name *culture*, now the name *civilization*, is applied in common speech. Culture is the 'artificial, secondary environment' which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values. This 'social heritage,' this 'reality *sui generis*', [italics mine] which the New Testament writers frequently had in mind when they spoke of 'the world,' which Christians like other men are inevitably subject, is what we mean when we speak of culture [Niebuhr's italics].

(Niebuhr 1951:32)

Niebuhr quotes Malinowski arguing that culture is always and essentially lived, experienced and scientifically observed socially. Culture is the organization of human beings into permanent groups (:32-33). Following this argument, Niebuhr says:

Whether or not this is the essential fact, it is an essential part of the fact. Individuals may use culture in their own ways; they may change elements in their culture, yet what they use and change is social. Culture is the social heritage they receive and transmit. Whatever is purely private, so that it neither derives from nor enters into social life, is not a part of culture.

(Niebuhr 1951:33)

Niebuhr bases all the above definitions of culture on the works and definitions of Malinowski (1944; 1947), Downson (1947), Spengler (1926), Robinson (s a), Brinkmann (s a) and Benedict (1934). After his use of these works he gives his own extensive definition, which I quote in full:

Culture, secondly, is *human achievement*. We distinguish it from nature by noting the evidences of human purposiveness (sic) and effort. A river is nature, a canal culture; a raw piece of quartz is nature, an arrowhead culture; a moan is natural, a word cultural. Culture is the work of men's minds and hands. It is that portion of man's heritage in any place or time which has been given us designedly and laboriously by other men, not what has come to us via the mediation of nonhuman (sic) beings or through human beings insofar as they have acted without control of the process. Hence it includes speech, education, tradition, myth, science, art, philosophy, government, law, rite, beliefs, inventions, technologies. Furthermore, if one of the marks of culture is that it is the result of past human achievements, another is that no one can possess it without effort and achievement on his own part. The gifts of nature are received as they are communicated without human intent or conscious effort; but the gift of culture cannot be possessed without striving on the part of the recipient [Niebuhr's italics].

(Niebuhr 1951:33)

His definition stresses that culture is human achievement, the work of human minds and hands. This work and achievement is transmitted and received through a learning process. This work and achievement are designated for an end or ends and values. To him, culture is concerned with 'the temporal and material realization of values' and with the conservation of these values (:34-37). It is in this pluralism of values that culture is guaranteed the realization and conservation of these values, that Jesus Christ, and God the Father, the eternal gospel and the universal church may find their place in this great cultural pluralism complex (:38-39). It is with this great cultural complex in mind that Niebuhr presents the typical answers to the Christ and culture dialogue in Christian history. The typical answers are (1) Christ against culture; (2) the Christ of culture; (3) Christ above culture; (4) Christ and culture in paradox; and (5) Christ the transformer of culture.

**(1) Christ against culture –**

The “Christ against culture” position affirms the sole authority of Christ over Christians and rejects culture’s claim to loyalty (:45). The author suggests that this position was the first Christian position, both logically and chronologically. It is logically first because it appears to be in line with the Christian principle of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is chronologically first because it represents the attitudes of the first Christians.

In the NT literature the author identifies 1 John and Revelation to be more related to this position than other books (:45-46). There are also some writings of the second century which reiterate this position, presenting Christianity as a separate way of life which is distinct and separate from culture (:49). Among others, Tertullian held this position and fought against the Greek philosophy’s influence in Christian thought. It is from this position that movements like Monasticism, Mennonites and Quakers developed, as well as the thinking of people like Tolstoy (:56). However, after the first and the second centuries, another position became dominant. This position saw the relationship between Christ and culture differently. In this position Christ is not against culture, he is the fulfilment of culture.

**(2) The Christ of culture –**

The “Christ of culture” exponents contended that Christ is the fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations, the perfecter of its true faith (:83). According to Niebuhr, this approach allows the accommodation of culture. In Christian history Gnosticism represented this approach, in contemporary times this is the dominant approach or position in Protestantism. Niebuhr says that this approach is often inadequately defined as “liberal” and “liberalism”. He would rather call it “culture-Protestantism”, following Barth’s (1947:83-84) definition. Niebuhr associates this view with the Judaizers, Nazarenes and Ebionites of the Jewish Christianity in the early church (:85); among the Gentiles, it is associated with Gnosticism as indicated above.

In attempting to reconcile Christian faith with Gnosticism, Abélard gives Gnostic solutions. Later on there were attempts to reconcile the Christian faith with evolution and enlightenment, producing many forms of culture-Christianity in the Western World in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (:86-94). However, other groups of Christians do not accept

this position of the accommodation of culture, but they also do not accept the anti-culture position. They propose yet another position in which Christ is neither “against” nor “of” culture, but is above it.

### (3) Christ above culture –

The “Christ above culture” position is a rejection or opposition to the above two positions (anti-culture and accommodation) since it attempts to find a synthesis of the Christ and culture problem (:116-20). According to Niebuhr, in history Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas adopted this position. Clement, a stoic philosopher, is considered to have been close to the *praeparatio evangelica* notion in his approach to culture (:124-29). Still others feel that neither the anti-culture, accommodation nor synthesis approaches answer the Christ and culture problem. They see a paradox in this relationship of Christ with human culture.

### (4) Christ and culture in paradox –

This position is characterized more by its dualistic theology (:149). This theology leads those with this view to live in conflict – conflict between God and humans (:150). This approach or position emphasizes the “new beginning”, and the “miracle of God’s grace” under which forgiveness is possible (:151). Niebuhr classifies Paul, Marcion and Luther in this position. Luther, for instance, believed that all things are corrupt, including Christian life and theology (:153). This position is also considered radical in its view of the nature of culture. It is also considered Trinitarian or Binitarian<sup>97</sup> in its emphasis (:156-62). The author also argues that Paul used this approach in dealing with some cultural issues, such as, for instance:

The works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like... Those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God [Gl 5:19-21].

(Niebuhr 1951:163)

Marcion is also considered to have been a follower of Paul in his radical approach to Christian Judaism; however, he was accused of heresy because of his rejection of the

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<sup>97</sup> Binitarian stands for those who emphasize God the Father and God the Son in their teachings and life, excluding, ignoring or overlooking the third person of the divine, God the Holy Spirit.

OT and for, among other issues, his use of Gnostic ideas and notions in his theology (:167). Even so, none of these positions answers the question of the relationship between Christ and culture. The next position sees this relationship as culture-transforming.

##### (5) Christ the transformer of culture

This position is also called the "conversionist" position or approach. Their approach to culture is close to that of the dualists. Niebuhr says that this approach is also found in the Gospel of Matthew, the Epistles of James, the Pauline Epistles, the Gospel of John and in the writings of theologians such as Tertullian, the Gnostics, Clement, Augustine, Tolstoy, Ritschl, Kierkegaard and Maurice (:190). This approach is not concerned with the external aspects of culture but with the heart and subconscious life (:191) i.e. the deepest and most fundamental elements in one's humanity. The author calls conversionism a "now" Christianity, with less interest in the past or future dealings of God and humanity (:195). According to the author, this approach can be seen in 1 John and the Gospel of John. In these two books the author makes a conscious effort to translate and elevate Hellenistic ideas to new levels of meaning in Christ (:196-97). John used words and concepts from mystery cults to interpret Christian faith and practice. He had no regard for form, but only for meaning (:202-03). However, Niebuhr says that John is not wholly conversionist, but that his approach and rejection of the world is rather radically "Christ against culture" (204-07).

Christ the transformer of culture is the last of the Niebuhr's typologies of the Christian response to the gospel and culture debate. After presenting all the five approaches the author acknowledges that the Christ and culture, or the gospel and culture, debate is an *unsolvable* problem. He says that the answers we can find are all relative answers (:230-34). For this reason, even two thousand years after the incarnation we still wrestle with this problem. No matter what we do now, future generations will have to (and must) wrestle with the problem.

We shall now use the Niebuhrian types to give a response to gospel and culture relationship question from a Niebuhrian viewpoint.

### 5.3 Approaching *ntumbuluko* with insights from gospel and culture debates following Niebuhr's models

In our review of Niebuhr's work we find that he presents five typical answers to the Christ and culture question. We will use his models to suggest various possible ways of responding to *ntumbuluko* and faith question. For the sake of argument and coherence we will substitute Christian faith with Christ and culture with *ntumbuluko* in this section, so that we interact Christ with *ntumbuluko*.

#### 5.3.1 Christ against *ntumbuluko*

The Christ against *ntumbuluko* position affirms the sole authority of Christ over the believer, thus rejecting *ntumbuluko*'s claim to loyalty (1951:45). This position (Christ against ...) is the first Christian response to the question of relating Christian faith to their cultural heritage. It appears to uphold the Christian principle of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and so it represents the attitude of the majority early Christians (:45).

According to Niebuhr, this view is also present in the biblical books. He identifies 1 John and Revelation to be more supportive to this position (:45-46). In the second century Christianity, as we have already seen in Bediako K (1992); Tienou (1990) and also in Niebuhr (1951), Tertullian was among those who held this position vigorously. It is from this position that Monasticism, Mennonites and Quakers developed (:56).

This position in relation to *ntumbuluko* means that Christ is essentially against *ntumbuluko* and *ntumbuluko* has no claim of loyalty over Tsonga believers. In other words, it calls for radical discontinuity. When one comes to Christ one needs to do away with *ntumbuluko*. From this position one can speak of conversion as abandoning or leaving *ntumbuluko*. This position was echoed by a number of my informants in the Christian practitioner's category. But we need to mention that, even so, it was not without ambiguity. Matsombe was one of those who were very radical in relation to *ntumbuluko*, but who after the interview appealed to *ntumbuluko* for moral authority for his critique against young pastors' wives, whom he regarded as indecent. We also noted that such complexity was also part of Tertullian's radicalism towards Greek philosophy.

However, 'Christ against *ntumbuluko*' is not the only possible response. After the second century another position emerged and became dominant. We must now move to it and see how it may help to guide us in our answer to the question of Christ and *ntumbuluko*. In the following position Christ is fulfiller of culture, hence he is for, not against, *ntumbuluko*.

### 5.3.2 The Christ of *ntumbuluko*

The exponents of this position argue that Christ is the fulfilment of all cultural hopes and aspirations and the perfecter of each culture's true faith. Being so, so Christ is also the fulfiller of their hopes and aspirations (:83). This position makes it possible for the accommodation of culture. According to Niebuhr, this position in the history of Christianity was the Gnostic position and in contemporary Christianity it is the dominant Protestant position. It is commonly called "liberal" and "liberalism," but Niebuhr thinks these terms are inadequate and he uses "culture-Protestantism."

Applying this position to *ntumbuluko*, Christ becomes the fulfiller of *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* finds peaceful accommodation in Christian faith under this position. The Tsonga version of what is here called "liberal," "liberalism" and "culture-Protestantism" would become "*ntumbuluko*-Protestantism" or "*ntumbuluko*-Christianity." But other forms of Christianity do not want such accommodation and also were not satisfied with "Christ against ..." So, another position, placing Christ above, was developed.

### 5.3.3 Christ above *ntumbuluko*

This position is in opposition to the first two positions. It rejects both anti-cultural and blind accommodation. The position tries to find a synthesis of the Christ and culture question (:116-20). Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas adopted this position. Clement was the first to regard culture, i.e. Graeco-Roman philosophy, as a preparation for the gospel (:124-129).

With the exception of Thomas Aquinas, we have discussed Justin and Clement elsewhere. Clement, especially, distinguished custom from philosophy and accepted philosophy as a preparation for the gospel on a level with the Old Testament preparation. He even called Christian faith a philosophy, but he radically rejected custom and called people to abandon it and to be liberated from it.

This position, as we discussed in the previous chapter, implies that one makes a decision about what to continue and what to discontinue. In this position one does not only have the option to choose what aspects of *ntumbuluko* to continue and what to discontinue, but also one accepts that *ntumbuluko* that continues as preparation for the gospel and in this position one can call Christian faith as *ntumbuluko*, without fear of contradiction. This position echoes a profound statement made by one of the informants who said: 'We try hard to find ways to express our thoughts in our own languages. And it is Jesus himself who puts us into this problem by becoming human, taking on our nature and communicating with us... We used *ntumbuluko* [as nature] to demonstrate that it is in human nature that Jesus wants to communicate' (Nhagumbe 2003, interview).

Once again, still this does not correspond to the Christian consciousness of others. Thus the paradoxical relationship of Christ with culture developed.

#### 5.3.4 Christ and *ntumbuluko* in paradox

This position has its characteristic in dualistic theology which leads its proponents to live in conflict (:149-50). This position emphasizes two concepts, "the new beginning," and the "miracle of God's grace which guarantees forgiveness". Among those who held this position historically, Niebuhr lists the Apostle Paul, Marcion and Luther. It was due to holding this position that Luther believed that all things were corrupt, including Christian life and theology (total depravity) (:151-53).

This position is also radical in relation to culture. Niebuhr sees this position in Paul when he outlines the catalogue of sins, branded works of flesh, in Gl 5:19-21. It is interesting to note that "the works of flesh" in this text is translated "works of *ntumbuluko*" in Tsonga. This position, especially in its relation to the above passage,

is very radical towards *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* in GI is evil in all its aspects and it leads to destruction and the forfeiting of the Kingdom of God.

Even so, this position does not give a clearly-defined answer to the question of the relationship between Christ and culture, or *ntumbuluko* in our context. The next and last position proposes a transforming agenda.

### 5.3.5 Christ the transformer of *ntumbuluko*

This approach is also called the “conversionist” position and its approach to culture is considered to be close to that of dualists. Niebuhr locates this position in the Gospels of Matthew and John and in the Pauline epistles and the Epistle of James. In the history of Christian thought theologians writing from this position are Tertullian, Gnostics, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, Tolstoy, Ritschl, Kierkegaard and Maurice (:190).

This approach does not concern itself with the outer aspects of culture but with the heart of culture and the subconscious life which, is the deepest and the most fundamental in one’s existence. Niebuhr sees this approach more clearly presented in the Gospel of John and in 1 John, it is a “now” Christianity. According to Niebuhr, in these two books John makes conscious efforts to translate and elevate Hellenistic ideas to new levels of meaning in Christ (:196-97). John, according to Niebuhr, used words from mystery cults to interpret Christian faith and practice without being concerned about their forms but concerned himself with the meaning that they would convey.

This makes John one of the most unappreciated and profound theologians of the Christian faith. It is from his model that we can develop the most effective ways of translating and interpreting the truth. John is a pioneer of translation as a part of cultural theological engagement. It is the dimension of translation or translatability that gives a unique distinctiveness to Bediako’s (1992) theology of engagement with culture.

This position offers us possibilities of not only trying to identify what to discontinue in *ntumbuluko*, but to engage ourselves in converting *ntumbuluko* itself. We can do that at the same time / whilst *ntumbuluko* contributes by providing a new idiom for translating the divine truth and revelation. Theology then becomes a process of translating and interpreting cultural ideas and finding meanings for them in Christ, as well as conveying Christian life in the very words and thought forms of the culture in which one is a translator and interpreter of the divine revelation and truth. In that process *ntumbuluko* becomes converted and transformed into an epistemological basis for developing theological insights.

As I indicated, this is the last of Niebuhr's typologies of response to the question of Christ and culture. But he concludes by saying that *none* of the five possible responses actually solves the problem. To use Nhagumbe's language, the problem that Christ puts us in by becoming human is an unsolvable one. We do not have a solution to the problem between Christ and *ntumbuluko*, or the *ntumbuluko* and Christian faith. Nevertheless several of the models we looked at throughout this study might guide one to find acceptable contextual and situational responses. We need to engage ourselves with the problem continually. The recommendation that we can make (if we can recommend) is the use of various positions, because even the ones that seem only minimally important play different roles in different places and times. A combination of interpretations would be satisfactory but the conversionist view, because of its translation and interpretation paradigms, offers the best method for profound interpretation.

After Niebuhr's (1951) work many other studies followed. In the following section we summarise various articles on the subject of the gospel and culture. These are a collection of papers prepared by various researchers and authors presented at the Lausanne Consultation on Gospel and Culture (Stott and Coote 1980). Included here is the Willowbank Report, the official statement of that Consultation.

#### 5.4 Stott and Coote's (1980) *Gospel and Culture or Down to Earth*

In his foreword, Stott acknowledged Niebuhr's (1951) *Christ and Culture* and Nida's (1954) *Customs and Culture*; (1960 *Message and Mission*) and (1968) *Religion*

*Across Cultures* as having introduced the “gospel and culture topic to a wider public (Stott 1980:vii). For Stott, “gospel and culture” is not merely a topic of academic interest, but is the burning practical concern of every missionary, every preacher and every Christian witness. There is, he says, no evangelism in a cultural vacuum (:vii).

Neill (1980), in his article “Introduction to Historical Perspective of Religion and Culture”, says that religion and culture are connected. In this connection the gospel stands as destroyer, preserver and creator of culture (Neill 1980:3). Then he lists some customs which cannot be tolerated, as well as some that *can* be tolerated in the relationship between the Gospel and culture (Neill 1980:10-13).

According to Marshall (1980), in his paper “Culture and the New Testament”, culture can be defined as:

Culture refers to the whole activity of man in his ability to control and utilize the environment....Culture describes those powers of man which go beyond the mere ability to survive and which are concerned with the production of things or activities which are aesthetically pleasing.

(Marshall 1980:18)

Whilst he then breaks his definition down into six components, a close examination of these reduces them to one basic definition, which sees culture as “human activity and the manner in which such activity is accomplished”. Marshall says that, although the NT does not use the term “culture”, *cosmos* should be considered the NT term for culture (Marshall 1980:30). Talking about the relationship between the gospel and culture in the NT, he argues that Hellenistic culture was the influential culture in NT times. However, as the gospel spread from Hellenistic Palestine to other cultural areas, new ideas were used to express the same gospel message (Marshall 1980:21-26). But, the author also argues that the warnings against “loving the world” (1 Jn 2:15) expresses another critical and radical NT approach to culture (Marshall 1980:30).

Kumar's (1980) paper "Culture and the Old Testament" starts by saying:

TODAY WE HEAR A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE (sic) importance of culture in the propagation of the Gospel. Certainly much damage can come to the mission of the church if cultural factors are ignored. Even though 'culture' is not an explicit subject of the Old and New Testaments, biblical studies have made it clear that human cultures have played a far more significant role in biblical history than we may at first be prepared to recognize.

(Kumar 1980:33)

Defining the word "culture", Kumar says:

Culture is the core and driving force of civilization, both ancient and modern. The word 'culture' comes from the Latin *colere*, meaning to cultivate. It indicates man's environment as shaped and patterned by the whole of human activity.

(Kumar 1980:33).

He argues that, in the creation story, much contemporary culture was used, since the story bears similarities to the Babylonian Creation Epic (Kumar 1980:34-35). He also argues that, to achieve a good understanding of some prohibitions in the OT, the cultural background of the OT is of great importance.

According to Nicholls (1980), to understand culture is to understand a people's total 'design for living' (Nicholls 1980:49). For him to understand culture is to perceive the worldview and the religious and spiritual elements of people, which are dominant factors in their cultural framework (Nicholls 1980:49). He likens this cultural framework to institutions like the family, the law, education, etc., and calls for the gospel to be constantly related to culture. With this constant relation of the gospel and culture in his mind, he outlines methods for the contextualization of the gospel to the culture (Nicholls 1980:50-54). He ends his paper by presenting "biblical foundations towards a theology of gospel and culture" which must use the prophetic principle in cultural transformation. To him, the key to understanding the role of the gospel in today's culture lies in the ministry of the prophets (Nicholls 1980:59).

Because of space limitations I will present only various definitions of culture, thus passing over discussion on fourteen other papers from the Lausanne Consultation on

Gospel and Culture. For the definition of culture I will use sources other than the Consultation papers, with the exception of the Willowbank Report.

The Willowbank Report [1978] (1980) defines culture as: 'the patterned way in which people do things together' (Stott 1980:312). In the Lausanne Covenant the Portuguese paragraph on gospel and culture refers to culture as "*usos e costumes*" (habits and customs) (Lausanne Congress 1989:245). But, for Dyrness (1997), culture is:

[A] metaphor that has come to stand for what humans have made of their particular corner of the earth. *Culture* comes from the Latin *cultura*, which means "to cultivate," which probably, for medieval believers, recalled Adam's cultivation of the Garden of Eden.

(Dyrness 1997:62)

Talking about the term "culture", Tanner (1997) also says that even though anthropologists gave it a new meaning, the term "culture" is not new. It comes from the Latin root having to do with the care and tending of animals (Tanner 1997:3). According to Tanner, Cicero developed a notion of *cultura animi* (the cultivation or culture of the mind). Francis Bacon and Samuel Pufendorf revived Cicero's notion, which developed into the different modern understandings of the term, including the anthropologists' understanding.

Besides the fact that, according to Niebuhr, the gospel and culture debate is an unsolvable problem with which each generation must wrestle, in contemporary scholarship it has, in my opinion, some fundamental weaknesses. Two of these are what I will call the "otherness" syndrome<sup>98</sup> which is inherent in the debate and the conceptual inadequacy and poverty of the Latin *cultura* for the understanding of life and the *humano* being.

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<sup>98</sup> *Otherness* syndrome: I use this term in an attempt to describe the approach of theologians, missiologists and missiological anthropologists in engaging themselves in the gospel and culture debate for others. With that approach, the Christian scholar asks and answers the gospel and culture questions of others and not his/her own questions. They endeavour to do theology for the others, not for themselves. It seems as if the gospel is at peace with their culture or as if the gospel and their culture are one and the same thing, and as if the only problem is the relationship between the gospel and the culture of others.

## 5.5 Some weaknesses in the contemporary gospel and culture debate

### 5.5.1 The “otherness” syndrome as a weakness

One of the weaknesses that I found in the literature, which is characteristic of contemporary evangelical missiology, theology and missiological anthropology, is the “otherness” syndrome. This approach does not engage the gospel with the culture of the concerned scholars, but with that of the others, especially the Third World cultures. This has nothing to do with the writers’ foreignness as missionaries writing about the host culture, it is an approach to the debate. Even when local theologians holding such an approach deal with their own culture, they remove themselves from it and approach it from the “otherness” viewpoint. This approach has little to do with detachment or objectivity; it seems to be more related to centrist subconsciousness.

Such an approach is of little help in my study of *ntumbuluko*. In this study I am not only the bearer of the gospel, or the missionary, but I am also the host culture. The debate is not about other people and me, with the gospel between us. It is about me and myself; it is between me in *ntumbuluko* as a Tsonga and me in the gospel as a Christian. This is how the gospel can penetrate *ntumbuluko* and *ntumbuluko* can penetrate the gospel. In this kind of struggle I find the Bible itself to be an excellent example to follow. Many scholars argue against the existence of contextualization<sup>99</sup> in the OT, but much contextualization is overlooked, unless one is looking for contextualization from the “otherness” point of view, in which contextualization only happens when a Western missionary comes to Africa, or goes to Latin America or Asia, and tries to preach, teach, interpret and apply the gospel in “primitive” and “animistic” cultures. In the NT and the early church we also see much of the debate

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<sup>99</sup> Hesselgrave (1989:6) notes the absence of contextualization in the OT. I think he is looking for contextualization from the “West to the rest” (Africa) point of view. Anyone who reads the Bible will find that the Hebrews interacted with God and struggled with many contextual issues in their culture. The whole biblical revelation and history is about the contextualization of the divine person, the divine will and the divine grace and love to the Hebrews and humanity. Because of the OT contextual value, I always first use Genesis to evangelize a Tsonga person, and then use the NT to make an appeal for the person to respond.

on gospel and culture being undertaken by theologians and missionaries, not for the others but for themselves. Paul speaks repeatedly of his own struggles with the gospel, and those of other fellow Jews, as he writes to the churches or defends his faith, his apostolic authority and as he gives his testimony of conversion, and explains his Jewish and Pharisaic background to kings, magistrates and those he tries to convert. This was the characteristic of theology up to the second century AD which was considered to be *apologia pro vita sua* theology (Bediako K 1992:32).

### **5.5.2 The inadequacy and conceptual poverty of the term “culture” as a weakness in the contemporary gospel and culture debate**

Another weakness that I sense in the gospel and culture debate is the problem of the concept of “culture”. All the etymological studies used in this work indicate that this word comes from the Latin *cultura*, meaning to cultivate. All the theological, missiological and anthropological definitions of culture presented in this study define culture as human activity. The inadequacy and poverty of the term “culture” is even more evident in Portuguese, for we use *cultura* for cultivation and for culture. We speak of *cultura de mandioca* (lit. “cassava culture”) and *cultura de Ndaus* (lit. “Ndau culture”). We speak of *perder a cultura* (“the loss of culture”) to mean both the loss of culture and the loss of a harvest. As this term means little in Portuguese, and Portuguese is one of the modern forms of Latin, this suggests the weakness of the term at its root.

I am not sure whether humans can simply be defined by their activities. Are we what we are because of what we do, or do we do what we do because of what we are? I believe that, if we are to go a step further in understanding humans, we need to have a concept which emanates from the essence of the human being, and human life itself. As a Tsonga, I can say that we need a concept which has an *nhu/ntu*. We as *vanhu/antu/bantu* (human beings), can only be understood through a concept which takes into account *nhu/ntu* (being or vital or life force). We cannot be understood by the term *ku rima* (to cultivate). In Tsonga, concepts like *ntumbuluko* and *xintu* are far richer and deeper than *cultura*, for they carry with them the human essence, the *ntu*, which cultivation or culture will never have, no matter how the anthropologists may try to feed in meanings to that word.

Because of this weakness, the term "culture" cannot translate the Tsonga concept of *ntumbuluko*. To do that would be like walking in the savanna, finding elephant manure, collecting the manure into a box and then looking for the elephant to fit into the box. *Ntumbuluko* to the Tsonga speaks of their nature, their life and being, their essence, and not only what they do. With this conceptual crisis, I am left with little help in my attempt to understand the problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, from the light of the gospel and culture debate. However, since there is no better term that is universally known and used, I will continue to use the term "culture" in this study.

### 5.6 Understanding the problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel challenge

It is with these culturally rooted questions that theology has to deal. In many ways, it is this inquiry, together with the scriptural answers, that is the crucial element in the contextual approach.

(Padilla 1980:69)

The understanding of the problem and challenge that *ntumbuluko* poses to the gospel will eventually lead us to the culturally-rooted questions with which our theology must deal in the Tsonga context. Talking about relating the gospel to the cultural questions and issues, Loewen (1980:118) says: 'Others have been puzzled by the fact that I treat personal salvation and the solution to cultural problems as equally central to the Gospel'. There are two basic questions that we must ask at this stage, and the answers to the two questions will help us understand the problem. The questions are: (1) why is *ntumbuluko* more authoritative than the Christian faith gospel among the Tsongas in Mozambique? and (2) why is the gospel failing to penetrate deep into Tsonga life and consciousness in the way *ntumbuluko* does?

### 5.6.1 Why is *ntumbuluko* more authoritative than the gospel in the Tsonga Christianity in Mozambique?

All my informants in the Christian practitioner category stated that *ntumbuluko* is dominant in the life of most Mozambican /Tsonga Christians across denominations. *Ntumbuluko* commands authority in their lives in a way the gospel does not. As previously indicated, among my informants in this category there are two most senior pastors of the *Igreja Uniao Baptista de Mocambique*, two senior pastors and two senior leaders or elders of the *Igreja Metodista Unida em Mocambique*, and two deacons from the *Assembleias de Deus de Mocambique*.

Rev. Matsombe gave an example of his own nephews, who consulted diviners and who, after the death of their father, performed *ku vuyisa mufi kaya* (bringing the dead home) in accordance with *ntumbuluko*. He said: 'this is what Christians who live in/by *ntumbuluko* do' (Matsombe 2001, interview). He went on to say that such Christians are in the darkness. Matsombe blames the modern missionaries for this problem in the Churches. To him:

"Today's" missionary does not learn the culture of the people in which s/he is working in order to be able to show them what is evil... "Today's" missionary is unable to transfer people from *ntumbuluko* [to the kingdom of light].

(Matsombe 2001, interview)

For Rev. Mangwele the situation was so frustrating that he said:

I start feeling that I worked/laboured for nothing. Our people did not listen; they follow *ntumbuluko*. They are in the gospel but their neighbours know how they live. How can one expect others to abandon what one is doing? How can one convert others if one is not converted? Some even say: 'I cannot abandon our *ntumbuluko*'. This pains and troubles me.

(Mangwele 2001, interview)

My Methodist informants also complained that *ntumbuluko* has more authority over believers than the gospel or Christian faith. Mrs. Massango told me that when she was ill, from December 2000 to March 2001, some church leaders came to her and said:

Your faith is useless for this, it will not help you, you have been bewitched... Your relatives have put rice and meat in your throat... Agree/allow us to call a diviner who can take out the rice and meat that is in your throat and you will be well. You know, prayers are an addition; first is *ntumbuluko*, then prayers. God is helped [by *ntumbuluko*].

(Massango 2001, interview)

The other pastors complained that in funerals and memorials, *ntumbuluko* is dominant. On such occasions *ntumbuluko* prayers for burial and *ntumbuluko* rituals for memorial, or reeds off, or widowhood, are more important than the Christian ones.

Nhanombe attributed this problem to:

- 1) cultural pluralism which brings in many new practices and is even represented in the pastoral demography of his church;
- 2) cultural relativism which erodes church discipline, creating blindness to sin;
- 3) the church's abandonment of its discipleship "classes" tradition, through which new converts learn the basics of Christian faith;
- 4) the lack of these discipleship classes, which leaves new believers open to the influences of spirit-type AICs, characterized by their use of magic spells to kill people;
- 5) the competition between denominations over members, especially between main-line churches and AICs.

All these things open doors for *ntumbuluko* to be dominant and to exercise absolute authority. For Machava, the Assemblies of God Deacon, the problem is in conversion. He says that conversion is not an easy experience. For many people, their life after conversion is not different to their life before conversion (Machava 2001, interview).

So, finally, why is *ntumbuluko* more authoritative than the gospel? Looking at what each informant said, we can say that there is a lack of understanding of the culture on the side of the Christian witnesses. This lack of cultural understanding is accompanied by a lack of discipling of new believers. As a result, true conversion does not generally take place and there is no spiritual growth in the church. People

merely join the church (*churchianity*). When these *churchians*<sup>100</sup>, whose world of *ntumbuluko* has not yet encountered the gospel, suffer pressure they just succumb. These pressures include those of the world of *ntumbuluko*, from the non-converted old *churchians* and *churchian* leaders, from the *magico* movements and churches, and from the general cultural and religious pluralism of our democratic society, with acute relativism and spiritual and moral degradation happening in the churches and amongst church personalities.

Furthermore, the problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel is complex. For instance, each of my informants, while complaining that other Christians are under the authority of *ntumbuluko*, are themselves also under the power of *ntumbuluko* in some areas of their life. It was because of *ntumbuluko* that Rev. Matsombe sanctioned the moral authority of his critique, indicated elsewhere. Rev. Mangwele said that one should be careful to observe *ntumbuluko* when one's wife has her period, otherwise one will die. He also warned against disregarding *ntumbuluko swiyila* of the ancient people or parents and those of the land (Mangwele 2001, interview). Machava, said:

*Ntumbuluko* ruled/governed our grandparents through *swiyila*. We must live in Christ, however, one must be careful no to kill oneself. Be careful when there is death in the family, one must watch out how one behaves [in accordance with *ntumbuluko*] so that we may live longer.

(Machava 2001, interview)

*Ntumbuluko* is dominant in the everyday life of the average Tsonga Christian. *Ntumbuluko* is dominant in birth, marriage, death, and other life events as well as activities such as agriculture, ecology and environmental conservation. The gospel is visible only in the church during services on Sundays and in midweek prayer meetings. The gospel is allowed to dominate life only inside the church compound and for a limited distance outside it.

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<sup>100</sup> "Churchianity" and "churchian(s)" are terms used by Prof. Carsen in his lectures in the Central Baptist Church, Pietermaritzburg from 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 1998. He lectured on Christian behaviour, right beliefs, false teachers and Christian leadership from the Pastoral Epistles. He used the term "Churchianity" to describe those who come to church without anything to do with Christ, only with the church, thus practicing "Churchianity" not Christianity. Such people, Prof. Carsen said, can better be called "churchians", because they have never yielded to the lordship of Christ. They are not converted. They are members of the church, not of the body of Christ, so they are not Christians, but "churchians".

Do the above-mentioned reasons fully account for this strong domination of *ntumbuluko* in Tsonga consciousness? The answer to this question comes from the experience and realization of an old missionary in the Tonga Mission (1560-1562). Between Easter and Pentecost of 1560, Goncalo da Silveira and Fernandes Andre prepared and baptized about four hundred people in Inhambane Province. It was a very easy job, and Da Silveira decided to leave Andre and go to Mwene Mutapa. For Da Silveira the job was done: 'the few abuses of polygamy, superstition and circumcision would soon be abolished' (Baur 1994:79), since they were not rooted in idolatry. But, after Da Silveira's departure to Mwene Mutapa, Andre started to study the language and the culture of the people. Soon he discovered that the superstitions of the people had their roots in a *deep belief* in the spirits of their ancestors and magical powers. He found this *deep belief* to be difficult to eradicate, and that his converts could not absorb his concepts of "soul", "heaven", and "hell" (Baur 1994:79-80). So we see that the other problem is the depth of Tsonga belief in *ntumbuluko*, or the depth of *ntumbuluko* itself.

We can say that the other reasons for *ntumbuluko*'s authority lies in itself and not only in what we do or fail to do. It resisted the Catholic penetration, it resisted the cultural penetration of Ngunes and Ndaus, it resisted the Marxist attack and destruction in our revolution and it is resisting the penetration of the gospel or Protestant and evangelical Christianity. This resistance and authority I suggest lies in:

- 1) the nature of *ntumbuluko* itself;
- 2) the structures of *ntumbuluko*;
- 3) the communication/transmission system of *ntumbuluko*;
- 4) its bearers and ministering agents and
- 5) the force/power of the spiritual powers operative in *ntumbuluko*.

The nature of *ntumbuluko* has been described by my informants as life itself. As life, it carries and controls all spheres of life, and life-guaranteeing or preserving activities. It thus regulates sexuality, reproduction and other activities in minute detail in a way never attempted in the application of the gospel among the Tsongas. It controls areas of life in which the gospel has never entered. Its basic structure is the family, and its sphere of control is the daily and private life of each household and individual in the

family. It is within the family structure that *ntumbuluko* is transmitted, observed under the scrutiny of each and every member of the family. The most trusted custodians of *ntumbuluko* are women, the mothers<sup>101</sup>, who pass it to their children while still young. But, to secure its continuity over centuries and changes, *ntumbuluko* also has the power to sustain itself. There are mysterious invisible powers that sanction the authority and power of *ntumbuluko* supernaturally, and these powers stand as the invisible police of *ntumbuluko*. They see and punish those who break *ntumbuluko* codes, as a deterrent for those who contemplate dishonouring *ntumbuluko*. This makes *ntumbuluko* more logical, practical, feared and obeyed than the gospel.

At this point we should ask: why can't the gospel also make inroads into Tsonga consciousness, and instill the power and authority of Jesus in the believers?

#### 5.6.2 Why does the gospel fail to penetrate Tsonga life?

The most negative answer to this question that I have so far found comes from an angry, frustrated missionary. When Da Silveira was executed by Mwene Mutapa on charges of witchcraft, and Andre was rescued at the point of death by starvation in Inhambane after being charged with disrespect, dishonour and desecration of the king, Fr. Monclaro was quoted as saying that: 'the Bantu could not become Christians...they were *too deep* [italics mine] in their pagan way of life and understood conversion only as a way of making friends with the Portuguese' (Baur 1994:82).

Among my informants, Machava (2001), Mangwele (2001), Filimoni (2001), Matsombe (2001), Dule (2001), Nhanombe (2001) and Massango (2001) in the Christian practitioner's category all complained that the gospel was failing to penetrate Tsonga life. Machava commented that 'conversion is hard for us... the conversion of some is similar to old *ntumbuluko*' (Machava 2001, interview).

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<sup>101</sup> I am reminded that the only Hebrew person Moses had in his life as he grew up was his mother. But from this simple woman he received the changing and lasting traditions of his people, which enabled him to resist Egyptian education and traditions.

Maybe we also need to hear what Loewen says about Western missionary Christianity and the South American and African cultures:

I have to confess that my experience with so-called animistic peoples in South America and Africa, and with western missionaries who are bringing the Gospel to them, has convinced me that the capacity to believe among animists is far greater than among missionaries who have been conditioned by secularism and materialism, and who today find it almost impossible to believe in a spirit world. I am still chagrined to remember the occasion when a fellow missionary and I were pushed out of a circle of Indian believers who were praying for the healing of a sick person. I will never forget their words: 'We're sorry, God's power cannot heal when there are unbelievers in the circle.'

Sad to say, western missionaries not only suffer from infection by this virus of unbelief, but they are also carriers of it. In the interests of fighting 'superstition,' they train national pastors to become similar disbelievers! (sic).

(Loewen 1980:117-18)

We begin to see that the reason why the gospel is failing to penetrate Tsonga life could be that Tsongas are *too deep* in their *ntumbuluko* way of life, and that Christian unbelievers (whose lives have not been penetrated by the gospel, but by secularism, materialism and enlightenment reductionism), try to present the gospel to them. What the missionaries praise as success and conversion, is when they succeed in making a person an unbeliever, and train him or her to become a stubborn unbelieving pastor. According to Johnson and Malony (1982:21) psychologically, conversion to Christian faith is a change from one faith to another. An unbeliever cannot change someone from one faith to another, but, as Loewen argues, from one faith to unbelief.

No wonder we find lack of culture learning, lack of discipleship, relativism and nominalism. It is because, at the heart of the gospel bearers, the witness of Jesus, there is a luxurious chair in which the virus of unbelief is cherished and seated. It keeps on spreading and infecting the church and its moral and spiritual character.

With such weakness, the gospel cannot be relevant to a people said to have deep belief in their superstitions, the ancestors and magic powers and later considered to be too deep in their pagan ways of life (Baur 1994:79-82). The unbelievers' gospel could not be taken to all areas of life under the domain of *ntumbuluko* and have any encounter with *ntumbuluko* because that "gospel" (like the one condemned by Paul in Gl 1:6-10) was far inferior and powerless in relation to *ntumbuluko*. That gospel

preached about a "jesus" "son" of a "god", a powerless European demon who could not withstand the powers of *ntumbuluko*. This gospel of unbelievers will never penetrate the Tsonga way of life. We need the gospel as presented in both the New and the Old Testaments and as defined by Loewen (1980:118) and by Paul when he says:

I have complete confidence in the gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews and also the Gentiles. For the gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself: it is through faith from beginning to end. As the scriptures say, 'The person who is put right with God through faith shall live'.

(Rom 1:16-17 GNB)

Only the gospel that is the power of God for salvation, embodied in the person, life and works of Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God, the Lord of lords and King of kings, crucified and victoriously glorified in his resurrection, can penetrate Tsonga life. This gospel is the only one that can engage the power of *ntumbuluko* and penetrate Tsonga life. It is with this, the gospel of Christ, that we can engage *ntumbuluko* and deal with *ntumbuluko*-rooted questions in our missiological and theological engagement, thus opening the door for the gospel to penetrate the deeper layers of Tsonga life and consciousness.

### 5.7 Conclusion

The gospel and culture debate is an old problem in the human and the divine relationship. No matter how good the contributions of several scholars such as Niebuhr and many others are, we still need to deal with the issue. The conceptual weakness and the "otherness" of the debate make it an urgent area to be looked at, with different approaches and assumptions.

The key to that is a deeper understanding of the challenge and the nature of *ntumbuluko* to the gospel, and the failure or weakness of the gospel as it is conceived and interpreted to the Tsongas. Only with these two basic understandings, can one endeavour to find a way forward. Such a project must involve a devoted commitment to the mission theology of the Church of Christ in Africa, with an unyielding willingness to take up the cross and follow Jesus in a life of witness and suffering.

We therefore accept this challenge and the invitation for deep theological and missiological reflection in Mozambique. This is the task of chapter five. The chapter initiates an interesting debate on Tsonga Christianity, which may come to be a vigorous and fruitful one.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6 A WAY FORWARD IN THE *NTUMBULUKO* AND THE GOSPEL CHALLENGE: A Theological Response from an Evangelical Perspective

#### 6.1 Introduction

In the fieldwork there were both negative and positive uses of the term *ntumbuluko* among my informants. We found that, in the Bible, *ntumbuluko* is used in both a negative and a positive sense. Since the term *ntumbuluko* is widely used in the new version of the Tsonga Bible, it became necessary to survey the use of *ntumbuluko* in the vernacular Bible in chapter four. From that survey we are going to apply the negative and positive use of *ntumbuluko* emerging from different uses of the term in the Bible.

#### 6.1.1 Different uses and interpretations of the term *ntumbuluko* in the Bible

This section will study three verses, two using *ntumbuluko* in a negative sense and one using it in a positive sense. The use of these verses will give us a biblical approach to the problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel relationship. This biblical approach will become the basis for our proposal of a way forward in this interaction and debate. We will start with negative uses of *ntumbuluko*.

##### 6.1.1.1 An example of the negative use of the term *Ntumbuluko* in the Bible

Ku anakanya swa *ntumbuluko* wa laha misaveni i rifu, kambe ku anakanya swa Moya i vutomi ni ku rhula. Loko mi hanya hi ku yingisa *ntumbuluko* wa n'wina, mi ta fa; kambe loko mi dlaya mikhuva leyo biha ya miri hi matimba ya Moya, mi ta hanya.

(Rm 8:6,13)

translation:

To think about earthly *ntumbuluko* things is death; but to think about the things of the Spirit is life and peace. If you live by listening/following your *ntumbuluko* of the earth/world, you will die, but if you kill bad habits of the body by the power of the Spirit, you will live.

Here *ntumbuluko* is death. This is a very different approach to what we find in the Tsonga consciousness. For Tsongas, *ntumbuluko* is life. In this verse *ntumbuluko* is accused of being the very thing it is perceived to prevent, i.e. death. I hope to discuss this contradiction with some of my informants in the future. However negative, there are two terms that open up other possibilities. The terms “earthly” and “your” *ntumbuluko* do suggest that there could be another *ntumbuluko* which is not ours by nature and which is not earthly. Machava spoke of ‘*ntumbuluko* of Christ’, ‘*ntumbuluko* of God’, and ‘Christ our *ntumbuluko*.’ These offer an alternative, positive use of the concept of *ntumbuluko*, a Christian conception and reinterpretation of *ntumbuluko* in the light of the gospel.

#### 6.1.1.2 An example of a positive use of the term *ntumbuluko* in the Bible

Hi yena [Yesu Kreste] loyi ku kwetsima ka Xikwembu ku tikombaka eka yena, kutani u tekelele leswi Xikwembu xi nga swona hi xiviri xa xona; naswona u tamele *ntumbuluko* hikwawo hi rito ra yeana ra matimba. Loko a hlantswile swidyoho swa vanhu, u tsamile evokweni ra xinene ra loyi anga ni vukulu hikwabyo, ehenhla matilweni.

(Heb 1:3)

Translation:

It is he who the holiness of God shows itself in him, and he has the likeness of what God is in person; also he holds/upholds all *ntumbuluko* with his word of power. After washing [away the] sins of the people, he sat down at the right hand of the one who has all the greatness, above in the heavens.

The translation of this text from Tsonga to English manifests some differences to various English Bibles. The most important difference for the purpose of this study is that portion where it says that Jesus is holding or upholding all *ntumbuluko* with his word of power. The KJV and NIV translate τα πάντα as “all things”. But The Living Bible (RSV) and the *A Boa Nova Para Toda a Gente* translate the same word as “all the universe”. The old Tsonga Bible version says “*swilo hikwaswo*” (all things); but *Mahungu la Manene* says “*ntumbuluko hikwawo*” (all *ntumbuluko*), which is quite different.

In this verse *ntumbuluko* is used positively. Christ is upholding or sustaining *ntumbuluko* with the word of his power. Here *ntumbuluko* is not presented as death,

as in Romans and Galatians. We can also see that all the negative uses of *ntumbuluko* are found in Romans and Galatians and are used with qualifiers such as “carnal”, “human”, “earthly”, and “worldly” *ntumbuluko*. When the term *ntumbuluko* is qualified this way it does mean sinful nature in the Bible. The use of qualifiers suggests that it is possible to use the term with qualifiers such as “spiritual”, “divine”, “heavenly” and “Christian” *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* can be used to mean authentic doctrines of Christian faith.

So, the term *ntumbuluko* can be used with qualifiers like “*ntumbuluko* of God”, or Christ himself can be called to be the *ntumbuluko* in human form, which is prior to Tsonga *ntumbuluko* or to any other human *ntumbuluko*, as Bediako K (2001:11) argues when he says:

The apostles struggled with the Sanhedrin and the synagogue over the interpretation of Israelite tradition. The Christian interpretation was always at variance with that of the synagogue rulers. Our task is to take our traditions and interpret them in the light of Scripture, as the *Wulomɔ* and the *Okomfo* and the *obosomfo* and the *tangwam* priests claim they are the custodians of tradition, Christians may also claim that they too are custodians of the real tradition, because the gospel is prior to tradition. That was the way the early church argued. For instance, the Greeks claimed that the Christians were recent, while Christians insisted that Moses, their ancestor, came before Plato and that, therefore, they were ancient. Thus their comparatively late appearance on the scene did not make them a novelty because they had been there from the beginning. That is the kind of understanding we need to have as Christians in order to properly interpret African traditions. We need to learn our tradition although we have not been taught them. Origen from Alexandria discovered, in his engagement with Hebrew-speaking Jews, that he could not interact with them. He therefore learnt the Hebrew language in order to be able to engage in discussions with them. If we are going to deal with festivals and rituals we must learn our tradition. It becomes a Christian duty by the Holy Spirit so that we can claim that tradition for Jesus.

Think of Jeremiah as a prophet among prophets in his day. The majority of the prophets were against Jeremiah, so Jeremiah complained to God, asking why he had called him to this ministry. There were all kinds of professional prophets and chaplains. The question was, who held the truth? There was, therefore, a struggle for the tradition.

(Bediako K 2001:11)

If one speaks of *ntumbuluko* one has touched the heart and the centre of confidence of the Tsonga person’s consciousness. Therefore it becomes important to learn about *ntumbuluko*, to claim it for Christ, to be custodians of it and to reinterpret it from Scripture. With Christ becoming the incarnate *Ntumbuluko*, we find a new idiom to speak of the mystery and relevance of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The new

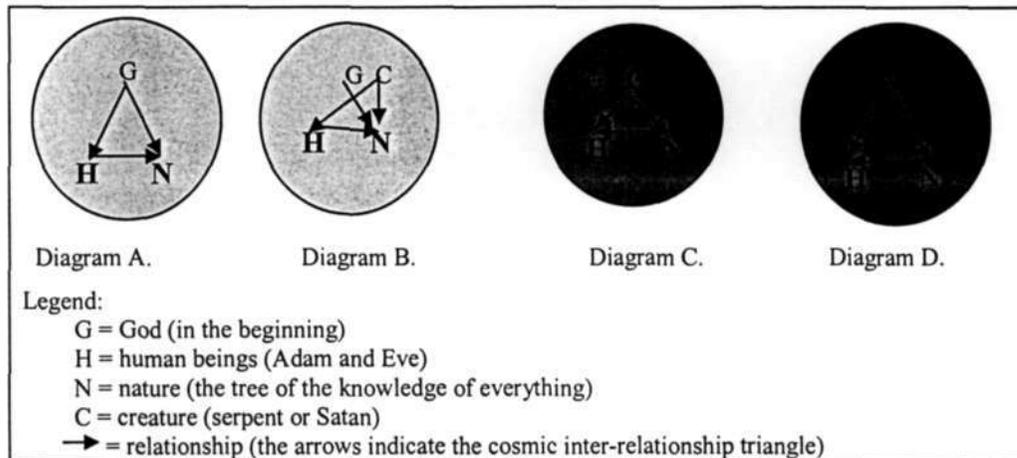
version of the Tsonga Bible offers a new opportunity to speak very deeply into Tsonga culture, more than was possible prior to the 1989 *Mahungu la Manene* edition.

## 6.2 The problem of The relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel

This is the most important question of this study. I was motivated to do this research because I experienced an unhealthy relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel in my own life, in my family, in my local church and in my denomination. In my research, I found that there were many other Christians who also see or experience this unhealthy relationship. I found that it was also a problem across several denominations. I investigated the concept of *ntumbuluko* and came up with many ideas and meanings which try to translate the concept and to give an idea of what kind of thing this *ntumbuluko* is. All these were strategies, which lead us to the fundamental question. The question is: what is the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel now? And what should the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel be? Thus, the question is relational.

From our study we can say that currently *ntumbuluko* is dominant in this relationship and that the gospel is subordinate to *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* is of prime importance, whilst God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have secondary place in serious matters of life. To address this relational problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, which is the fundamental problem in the biblical divine revelation, I will use some diagrams to illustrate human origins and history in Genesis 1:1-3.

**The beginning, the appearance of powers and the transfer of confidence (trust)  
diagrams**



**Figure 2**

Diagram A represents the beginning, called *ntumbuluko* or *entumbulukweni*, *aku [n]tumbulukeni* and *aku [n]tumbuluxiweni*. In this diagram we see the cosmic relational triangle, with God at its highest point. God relates to human beings and to nature, humans relate to nature as the divine agents of the care and preservation of nature and the environment (Gn 1:27-28) as synonymous of their worship of and obedience to God (Gn 2:15) in gratitude to the divine grace and providence (Gn 2:7,5-24). As described in Genesis, God was the only power known in the creation and in the everyday life in the beginning. Humans, plants, animals, birds, marine life and reptiles live in harmony and *shalom* before God.

Against this harmonious cosmic relationship between God and his creatures and nature, as if from nowhere, another power appeared in Eden. Diagram B presents us with a creature that intercepts the divine cosmic relational arrows and creates another relational triangle with the creature at its highest point. This is the temptation in Eden. As a result of this interception, N (nature) becomes an object of manipulation, H (humans) succumbed to the temptation and C (the creature) established itself at the highest point of the alternative cosmic relational triangle. God became marginal, in the background and peripheral in the cosmic order of things, as diagram C illustrates. In diagram D God has been completely erased from cosmological theoretical thinking. The creature has claimed authority and dominion in the cosmos. If we observe the

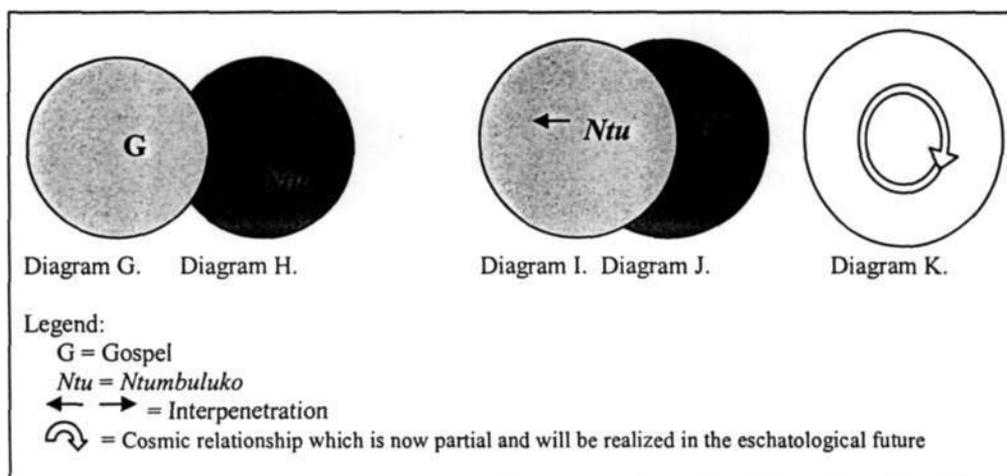
relational arrows we will find that arrow C and arrow N converge in H. Humans no longer exercise dominion over nature but nature exercises dominion over them, through the manipulation of spiritual powers. Humans become slaves of their environment and of nature. It is from that form of relationship that humans become destructive towards their environment, thus causing the ecological crisis we have today.

It is under such a situation that world civilizations and religions developed. With these developments came the theoretical constructs of each and every human group and micro cosmos of *reshit*, *arche*, *ntumbuluko*, etc. which were created in each and every human society. Gods and ancestors play an important role in such systems or cosmologies and require profound encounters with the divine revelation and the divine incarnation cosmology for the gospel to make a difference.

The divinely-given authority over nature is lost and humans are slaves of their environment, they are doomed to fear, obey and worship anything that manifests supernatural power and authority. It is in this situation that the *ntumbuluko* concept developed in Tsonga life and consciousness.



### Interpenetration Theory diagrams



**Figure 4**

In Figure 4 we see the two diagrams (G and H) starting to merge. This illustrates the revelation and divine incarnation in the Tsonga consciousness. When the eternal Word of God became flesh, he entered into the human world and consciousness. This penetration initiative by the divine leads to what I will call an “interpenetration theory” which is illustrated by diagrams J and I. With this, I want to describe the following phenomenon: with the proclamation of the gospel, or evangelism, the gospel penetrates the world of *ntumbuluko*. But this is not a one-way process. As much as the gospel penetrates the world of *ntumbuluko*, *ntumbuluko* also penetrates the gospel and the divine world. Tsonga people accept the gospel and they, with their *ntumbuluko*, penetrate the divine mysteries. This is an “interpenetration process,” where not only does the gospel influence *ntumbuluko*, but also the gospel is influenced by *ntumbuluko*. In this way a new *micro cosmos* is produced, the Tsonga Christian *cosmos*.

As the gospel is proclaimed and many more Tsonga people come to the Lord, the circle progressively moves deeper into the Tsonga *cosmos*. At the same time, Tsonga men and women grow deeper in their understanding of the gospel, thus moving the circle of *ntumbuluko* deeper into the divine *cosmos*. In the process, the *micro cosmos* eventually becomes a *macro cosmos*, as illustrated in diagram K. However, the experience of the *macro cosmos*, both in the depths of their understanding and in their

experience of communion with God, is partial. Even if all the Tsongas could be converted and each one of us could find good theological teachers and have good books to guide us in our devotional study of the word of God, our experience would still be partial. It is in the eschatological realization that we ought to experience the *macro cosmos*.

The community that is in the intermediate *micro cosmos* waits for the eschatological realization when the two worlds will totally merge into that one *macro cosmos* under the power of God, as in the beginning. In Tsonga language this eschatological realization is the recovery and restoration of the true *ntumbuluko*, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, of the I am who I am ("I am who I was", "I am who I will become"). It is from these diagrams that we must find and suggest a guideline to the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel.

In Tsonga, *ntumbuluko* is above everything. It is above the realm of religion and gods. Because of that, the natural tendency is to submit God, Christ, the gospel and Christian faith to *ntumbuluko*. I think that the solution lies not just in putting God above *ntumbuluko*. We are required to go a step further. God must be presented and understood as the authentic and the eternal *Ntumbuluko*, incarnate in the person, life and work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. If God and his Christ are perceived and presented as the true *Ntumbuluko* in Tsonga Christianity, that will change the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel profoundly. The gospel will change from the level of civilization to the levels of:

- 1) life
- 2) vitality
- 3) human essence and
- 4) identity.

It sounds easy to say, but to differentiate between the counterfeit and the true *ntumbuluko* is a much harder theological and missiological exercise. Meanings and associations of words with their concepts do not die easily, but this way we can contribute toward developing a contextual Tsonga idiom which, if well apprehend, can potentially give deeper understanding of Christianity in the Tsonga context.

### 6.3 Implications for Pastoral and Intercultural Ministries

What we have been discussing in this study has profound pastoral and ministerial implications, for both local pastors and foreign missionaries. For lack of space I will, in summary form, speak of the implications for conversion, discipleship and ministerial or theological training. The nature of the theological education provided produces the kind of pastors and missionaries (and even unbelievers, perhaps). The kind of pastors and missionaries produce the kind of Christians, the kind of Christians make up the kind of churches, the kind of churches set up the kind of theological education programmes; and so the cycle continues.

The following diagrams try to present a Tsonga person, a “diving” theory, and the work of God in a person resulting in repentance and conversion. Then the final diagram tries to represent the kind of Tsonga Christian that one should aim to develop from a convert.

#### A Typical Tsonga Traditionalist cosmos vision diagram

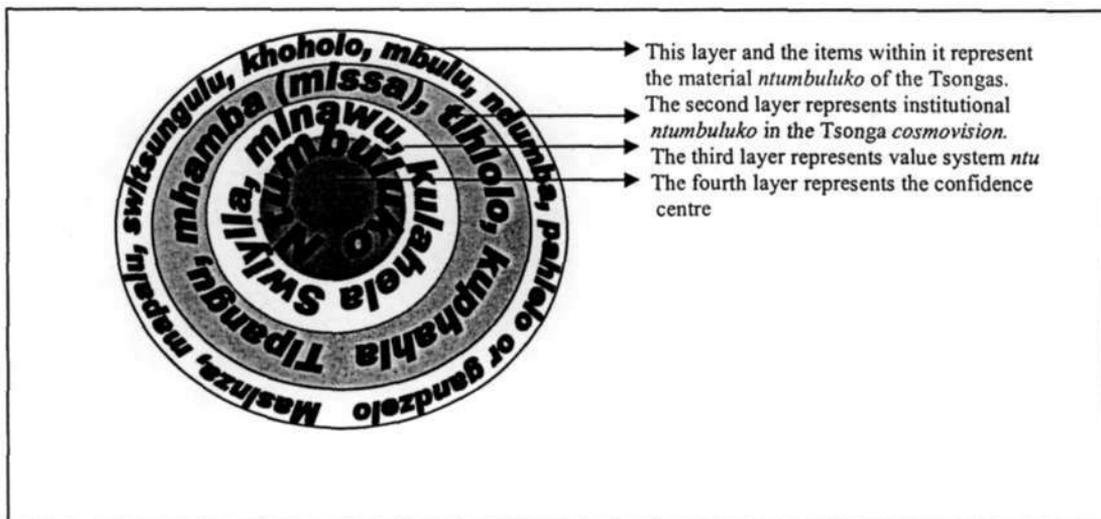


Figure 5

When we present the gospel to a Tsonga person we must be conscious of the four basic layers of Tsonga life and consciousness. The Christian witness must know what constitutes each of these four layers. The gospel must be presented so as to encounter with the central layer, which represents the centre of confidence and life. In that encounter, repentance must start from the centre, *ntu*, relating to personal sin. It then advances outwards to the next layer representing family sins, then to the next representing clan sins and finally to the outer layer, representing the communal or societal sins. After this level of conversion the gospel must be taken through the process of discipleship to each and every layer and to each and every area of life within each layer. To do that, we have no choice but to make it our theological and missiological or pastoral duty to study *ntumbuluko*. We must be prepared, among other things, to penetrate to its excessively detailed discourse on sex and sexuality. In this way conversion can involve a change of worldview.

For this purpose we need to propose and develop another theory or model. The "interpenetration" theory is a descriptive revelation, incarnation and human response to the divine initiative and grace. We need to find a theory for the Christian witness. I wish to propose what I will call it the "diving"<sup>102</sup> theory, in which the witness "dives" deeply into the culture of the person being witnessed to.

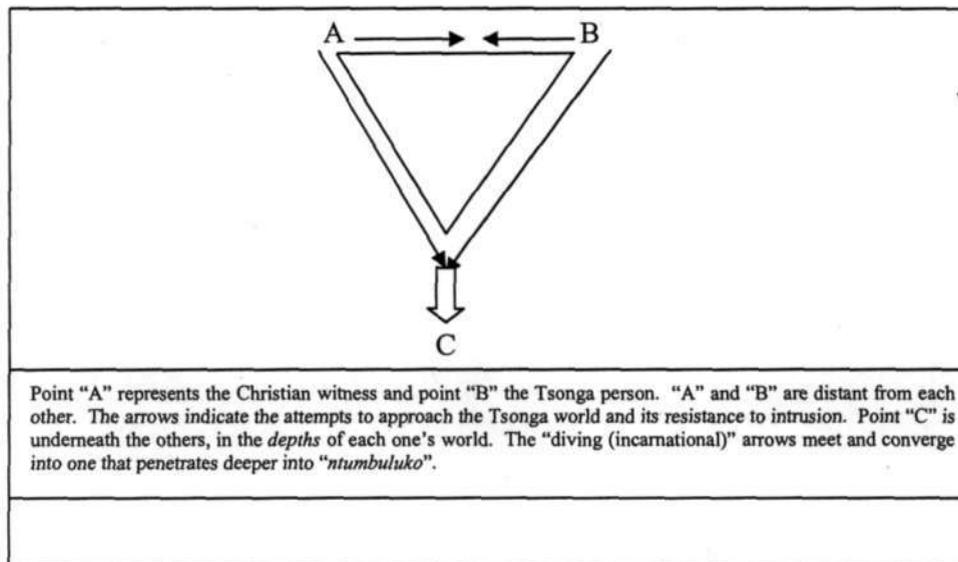
Each Christian witness finds him/herself on the other side of the culture barrier. This culture barrier does not allow easy sharing of the gospel. If we agree with Berger, each person has his/her world ("here" and "now") and the other's "here" is one's own "there". This, then, means that the problem that the Christian witness has does not depend on whether he/she is a foreigner or not. We do not know and cannot penetrate the depths of the "other's" world, unless the "other" takes us in and translates and interprets it for us. So, how do we motivate the "other" to take us into his/her own

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<sup>102</sup> The verb "to dive" indicates many things, according to English dictionaries. Some of the best-known uses today are sky diving and deep sea diving. The 1942 Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. defines to dive as: 'Plunge precipitately below surface of water or from higher to lower level, make searching inquiry into secrets or records or person's heart'. What fascinated me is that, with sea diving, one sees wonders of sea populations and flora which one never sees from above the surface of the water. One must get out of the ship or boat in order to see that. Likewise, the Christian witness must get out of the Christian or missionary "ship" or "boat" and dive into the culture, life and hearts of the people s/he is witnessing to.

world or life story? The answer is the “diving” theory. Let us illustrate this diagrammatically.

**“Incarnational (diving)” theory diagram**



**Figure 7**

In this diagram, we see that, on the surface, the witness and the Tsonga person are separated from each other and the Tsonga resists the attempts to invade his/her Tsonga world. But, when they both dive or incarnate into the depths of their humanness, they meet each other, recognize each other and belong to each other. At that level they can relate and communicate.

The way to achieve this is for the Christian witness first to invite the “other” to dive or incarnate into the witness’s own depths. This is done by inviting the other into one’s own world, by explaining what the gospel means in that world and what kind of struggles that cultural and personal world has with the gospel. It is in this sharing of the witness’ world, as well as the significance of the gospel and the struggles of that world with the gospel, that the Tsonga will find his/her common humanity with the witness and find *a priori* to his/her own encounter, struggle with and understanding of the gospel. From this invitation the Tsonga person will gain the confidence and trust

needed in order to invite the Christian witness into his/her world. The corresponding world of the Christian witness will leave the Tsonga relaxed, without fear of rejection or of being despised. This is the kind of honesty that we need in the business of witnessing to the Tsonga people.

This is what can meet the challenges of *ntumbuluko*, not just a set of rules based on a corresponding theoretical construct, usually with traditions as its centre of confidence. Such a gospel is upheld by physical and human structures, institutions and rituals that have long since lost the power of the saving gospel of Christ. Such a gospel cannot change one's worldview, as I propose and shall illustrate in my last diagram.

## Repentance and Conversion as paradigm shift diagrams

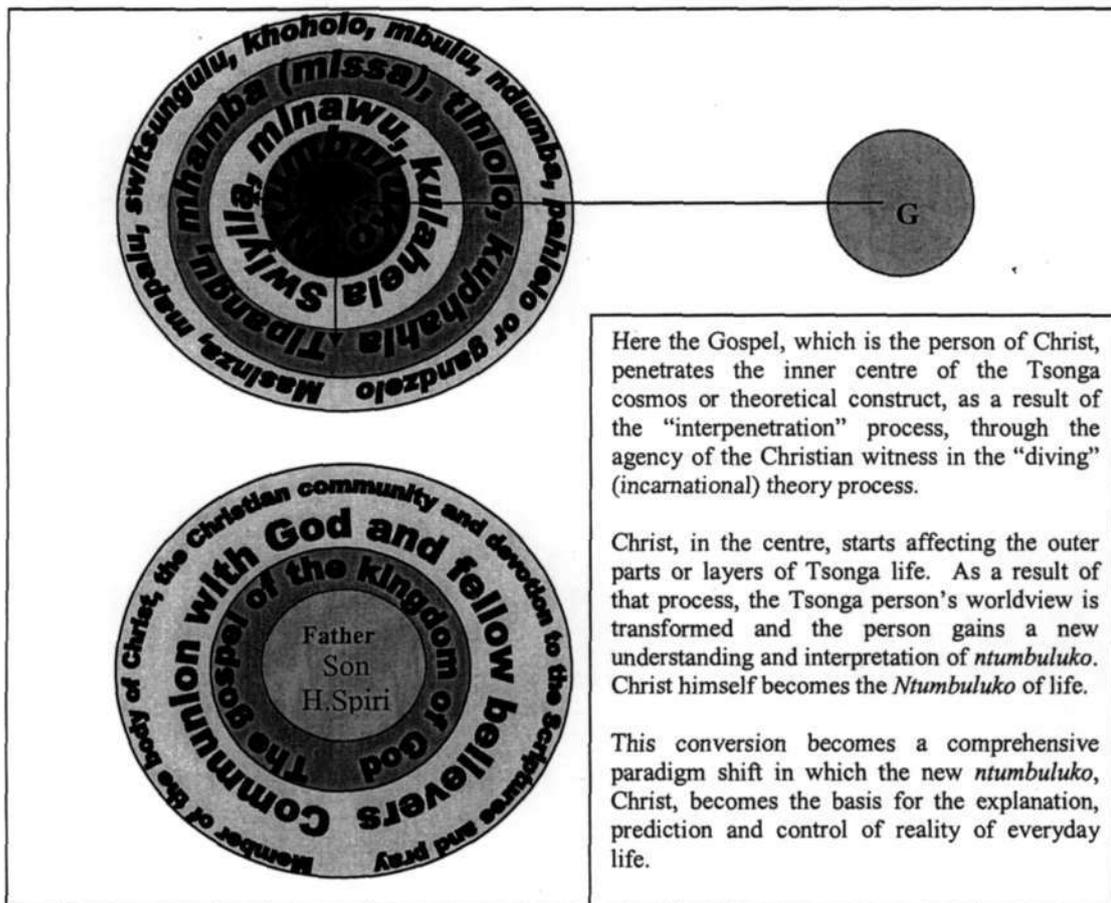


Figure 7

But this kind of transformation in the Tsonga people will require a serious commitment on the part of the Christian witness. Shortcuts will not help. We need to study and reflect theologically on our cultures and also to learn how to open up people's worlds by inviting them into ours. This will provide us with a "diving (incarnational)" experience and we will be afforded the opportunity of knowing the most protected and undisclosed compartments of life in each culture and of penetrating them with the gospel of Christ.

With less knowledge of such life compartments, and without those areas of life encountering the gospel, we must expect little if any impact of the gospel on the lives of the Tsongas. One of the important aspects of the "diving (incarnational)" theory is that, if one has no experience of the gospel, one cannot be useful in the "diving

(incarnation)” process, and that virtually disqualifies one from being called a witness. One can only witness to one’s own experience.

This view of conversion tries to take further the known implications of conversion such as “radical displacement of other gods;” “ethical transformation;” or other ‘deeds consistent with repentance’ (Wright 2004:19); “personal decision;” “socialization;” and “liturgical acts” like baptism (Peace 2004). But it is to take a revolutionary step, like the conversion and baptism of John, which required Jews and Gentiles to repent and be baptized in the same manner (Walls 2004:4). This is the kind of conversion proposed in the diagram, which needs to take place even in those who frequent churches. Such a conversion, in Walls’ language causes “disruption and change” which makes possible the use of *ntumbuluko* in the light of the gospel in the same way that *Kyrios* (Walls 2004:4) was used in relation to Jesus in the New Testament. According to Walls:

Christian conversion as demonstrated in the New Testament is not about substituting something new for something old...Nor is conversion a case of adding something new to what is already there, a new set of beliefs and values to supplement and refine those already in place. Conversion requires something much more radical. It is less about content than about *direction*. It involves turning the whole personality with its social, cultural, and religious inheritance toward Christ, opening it up to him. It is about turning *what is already there* [Walls’ italics].

(Walls 2004:6)

Therefore, the above proposal about conversion attempts to mediate this much more radical change of direction in the consciousness and cosmological world of the Tsonga society. It attempts to mediate a profound turning of what is in *ntumbuluko* to Christ, if not turning *ntumbuluko* itself to Christ, so that Christ is acknowledged as an incarnation of *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga context. So that only the *ntumbuluko* which is not in conflict with the gospel is accepted as the authentic *ntumbuluko* to be promoted; while the other form of *ntumbuluko* is radically left behind as one changes direction by turning to Christ.

#### 6.4 Final remarks

The definitions of *ntumbuluko* given by the respondents above included the term “beginning”, plus other terms that are also basic in the definition of *reshit* and *arche*. It was interesting for me to start looking at the Gospel of John from a new perspective, paying more attention to *arche* rather than to *logos*, as theologians have traditionally done. Putting Gn 1:1 and Jn 1:1 side by side is like starting a new way of reading, understanding and translating those verses, a new way that has the potential to influence one’s reading and understanding of similar verses in the Bible.

*Reshit* and *arche* have not been studied more than *bara* or *logos*. But my research on *ntumbuluko* has uncovered their eternal significance for the engagement between the gospel and culture in Mozambique at the highest level of classical biblical studies. They become an example of the translation of the revelation of the Father, the translation of the eternal mysteries and the incarnation of the Son in Hebrew and Greek cultures in the Scriptures, which becomes the model for all cultural translations of the divine revelation and the diviner incarnation.

This is a process that requires the profound understanding and genius of the Moseses (the liberator and legislator of slaves into a nation), the Pauls (‘well-versed both in Rabbinic Judaism and in all aspects of Hellenism’ [Bediako 1992:240]) and the Johns (his interpretation and translation of the gospel into Greek thought [*logos* and *arche* concepts]) of today in Mozambique. If they are not there, perhaps we need to facilitate their emergence. *Ntumbuluko* remains a power that is independent from, if not above, God and his Christ in the Tsonga consciousness. It is this power that causes distortions in the consciousness and apprehension of the Christian faith for many Tsonga believers. This then becomes a challenge to the Mozambican church, to produce their Pauls (genius theologians), who will free their people from ignorance of the enslaving power of *ntumbuluko*, to enter the liberating power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the one who himself is the *Ntumbuluko* in person. We are called to engage *ntumbuluko* at deeper theological and missiological levels.

The challenge of *ntumbuluko* to the gospel is a serious one. *Ntumbuluko* has penetrated all spheres of Tsonga life deeply. It requires of us to reflect deeply, theologically and missiologically, in areas of life that are not normally areas of theological inquiry elsewhere. If the gospel is to have a future among the Tsongas it must stand up and walk into new, unknown and unconquered territories. This penetration into the deep forest of *ntumbuluko*, and the claiming of that forest for Christ, can make the gospel the way of life among the Tsongas.

The issue of relationship, in my opinion, is a complex one, as was indicated in my overview of the debate on the gospel and culture. However, I think that the interpenetration theory can give us another perspective of that relationship. It is in this process of interpenetration that *ntumbuluko* becomes Christ, and Christ becomes the eternal incarnate *Ntumbuluko* in person. This theory is in line with Johannine theological and missiological methods. The theory seems appropriate and profound because it tries to solve the problem in a way that minimizes dualism. Trying to stop *ntumbuluko* through laws creates dualism. But, since *ntumbuluko* is life and the gospel is also life, in the interpenetration process the two aspects of life meet. The two become one Tsonga life in Christ. This coming together of the aspect of life should be what we strive for in our spiritual pilgrimage and Christian witness.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7 CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Summary of the research problem

From the personal spiritual pilgrimage and experience of the author, as indicated in chapter one, the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel is undoubtedly problematic. This research was motivated by this existential experience and missiological zeal. The research was based on the assumption that the author's experience of the relational problem between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel may not be an isolated case but an indicator of a much wider problem in Tsonga Christianity in general. This is because all Tsonga Christians, in their different denominations, are drawn from the same areas, families and communities and live under the same social conditions and structure, thus facing the same problems, challenges and crises.

With the above assumption, the research also assumed that the general relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel among the Tsongas is not satisfactory. This relationship creates many tensions and conflicts in the Protestant churches, especially those with an evangelical orientation, some ending in expulsions and breakaways from some denominations. *Ntumbuluko* has not only become very dominant in public life in post-Marxist Mozambique, but is also becoming increasingly dominant in the lives, thinking, and attitudes of many Christians there. So, in this relationship, the gospel is subjected and subordinated to *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko* undermines and challenges the significance and importance of the Christian faith, the authority of the gospel, of conversion and allegiance to Christ. I therefore concluded that this kind of relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel is unhealthy and unacceptable; I felt that there is a need for a theological response to the issues. In saying that, we are not losing sight of the positive aspects of *ntumbuluko*, which we see even in the Bible, but the *ntumbuluko* we are concerned with here is comparable to what Clement branded or called "custom."

Now, the question was: what should that response be? This was the basic research question or problem. To answer this question, the research had to find and present evidence pointing to the reality of the problem raised by the research.

## 6.2 Summary of the findings of the research

To answer the research question, the research had to answer four questions:

- 1) what is *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga understanding and thought?
- 2) are there any concepts or approaches that can help us unpack and broadly explain Tsonga "*ntumbuluko*"?
- 3) how does "*ntumbuluko*" relate to the "gospel"?
- 4) what challenges does *ntumbuluko* pose to the Christian faith?; and, finally,
- 5) from an evangelical perspective, what should the theological and missiological response be to the challenge of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel?

To answer the first question some in-depth research was undertaken. The research, as presented in chapter two, investigated (1) the traditionalists; (2) academics; (3) artists; (4) Christian practitioners; and (5) Bible translators. In these five sectors of Tsonga society in southern Mozambique we found many definitions and descriptions of *ntumbuluko*. To name just a few, we found that *ntumbuluko* is:

- 1) the beginning
- 2) the foundation
- 3) cornerstone
- 4) pot
- 5) law
- 6) principle
- 7) invisible power
- 8) life (life-giver, life-protector, life care-taker)
- 9) cultural identity
- 10) darkness
- 11) sin
- 12) cosmos
- 13) nature (and natural environment in general)

- 14) human nature
- 15) naturalness
- 16) ethos or ethical foundation
- 17) centre of gravity of life
- 18) explanation and interpretation of reality
- 19) custom
- 20) creation or creating power
- 21) natural order of things, etc.

The rituals relating to everyday life (life cycle, life events like birth, marriage and death, and life activities like agriculture, sexuality and religious ceremonies) are all considered, by some of my informants, as *ntumbuluko*, or of *ntumbuluko*, and some others call them the laws of *ntumbuluko*. These laws are, admittedly, very influential in the life of the average Tsonga Christian in southern Mozambique.

Chapter three of the research tried to understand and explain *ntumbuluko* from other theoretical approaches. From the ontological study of “being”, in Placide Tempels’ and Alexis Kagame’s philosophical studies of Bantu philosophy, I found that the word *ntumbuluko* has the prefix *ntu*, which can be used to understand *ntumbuluko*. From this philosophical perspective, one could interpret *ntumbuluko* as a vital force (life force). I also tried to understand *ntumbuluko* from Berger’s (1966) phenomenological theory of the “theoretical” symbolic “construct” of reality, operating by giving guidance in and an understanding of every-day life and experience. We also used Horton’s (1975, 1993) intellectualist theory of “explaining, predicting and controlling reality,” which he believes is central to the understanding of African religious thought. One of our informants considered *ntumbuluko* to be the ‘explanation and interpretation of reality’ (Ngomane 2003, interview), thus we suggest that *ntumbuluko* can also be interpreted as the understanding, explanation, prediction and control of reality as it is known and experienced by the Tsongas in their context. Using Turner (1977) and Kraft (1979) we also suggest that *ntumbuluko* can be understood in terms of a “primal worldview” (Turner 1977) and “the worldview of the culture” (Kraft 1979). These interpretations, based on approaches developed by Horton, Berger, Turner and Kraft, helped me gain a perspective on the kind of theoretical encounter and engagement between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, Tsonga and missionary and *Mutchapi* and enlightenment.

Chapter three takes on *ntumbuluko* and tries to apply various theological approaches to understand, interpret and suggest its relationship with the gospel. A very detailed study of the history of the use of the term *ntumbuluko* in the history of the translation of the Bible into Tsonga was undertaken. In the first translation *ntumbuluko* was only used in its verb form in relation to creations and in its adverbial mode in relation to the beginning in the first verse of Genesis ("In the beginning God created...") (1894 and 1907 portion and OT version). It was first used in its substantive form in the New Testament to translate the Greek word *phusis* (nature) in 1 Co 11:14 (1929 version). From this version to the latest (1989) version, the use of *ntumbuluko* has evolved and it is used at least 36 times in this version with the following meanings:

- 1) biological birth (natural birth)
- 2) heterosexuality (natural relations), as opposed to homosexuality
- 3) human nature, as opposed to spiritual nature
- 4) sinful nature
- 5) custom and natural law
- 6) all things, or cosmos
- 7) humanity
- 8) instinct, and
- 9) lust
- 10) wisdom and philosophy.

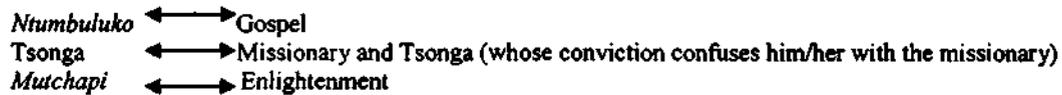
With these meanings we assessed *ntumbuluko* in relation to the theological debate on the law and the gospel, using the arguments of Augustine, Luther and Calvin as a classic *priori* in the debate. The findings here point to a more complex situation, in which *ntumbuluko* can either be viewed as a preparation for the gospel or as a rival to it. But using the *missio Dei* concept we find a hypothesis of the divine activity in *ntumbuluko*, which validates the *praeparatio evangelica* approach historically associated with Justin and Clement. But the complex and ambiguous nature of *ntumbuluko* makes it necessary not to dismiss the radical discontinuity of Tatian and Tertullian. These two views have a following in the persons of John Mbiti and Byang Kato in 20<sup>th</sup> century Africa.

We also discussed *ntumbuluko* in terms of *arche* and *reshit*, which is related to the first use of *ntumbuluko* in the Old Testament. This use is in connection with the

beginning and creation. Commentators argue that *reshit* (the Greek *arche*) is used in the Bible as a corrective critique against cultural cosmological and metaphysical concepts of the origins and the power that caused the beginning. We suggest that *ntumbuluko* can also be used in that sense in the Bible, to place God and Christian faith above the culturally conceived natural order of things. Since the concept of *arche* is closely associated with the concept of principalities and powers, we also used theological debate on principalities and powers to interpret *ntumbuluko* as a form of cultural manifestation of principalities and powers. Among many views on principalities and powers, some view them as social and political structures (sometimes oppressive), others view principalities and powers as spiritual beings appointed by God to direct affairs of nations, peoples and culture which are now perverted and are leading those under their care astray. But they will be saved in the end times. However, there are those that see in principalities and powers the demonic rebellious spirits under Satan which operate in social, political and religious structures to carry out their evil mission. In this view, humans need to be liberated from their bondage and freed from their manipulation; principalities and powers will be annihilated in the end times.

Finally, we come to discuss the biblical use of the term *ntumbuluko* to translate the Pauline theology of "the flesh" (*kata sarka*). According to Wink (1992) this is a "dominated existence" in which God and principalities and powers struggle to be embodied. Young (2000) considers *sarx* to be indicating a sinful principle operating in humanity. *Sarx* is something in which evil is dynamically at work in humanity. In the light of these arguments, we see that in this particular sense (see Rom 8:6,13) *ntumbuluko* indicates a sinful principle operating in Tsonga society, and we can here define *ntumbuluko* as something in which evil is dynamically at work among the Tsongas in general. However, one needs to remember that this is not the only meaning of *ntumbuluko* in the Bible.

On the question of the challenges or problems in the encounter between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, I found outcry, accusations, blaming, lamentations and despair. But there are others for whom *ntumbuluko* is their basic worldview and self-understanding. For such people *ntumbuluko* is an interpretative tool for their existence. I shall illustrate my findings by putting in parallel the following:



*Ntumbuluko*, as a “life force” or “worldview,” does not relate well to the gospel because they both compete for the submission, obedience and loyalty of the Tsonga people in southern Mozambique. Tsongas in the church who are under *ntumbuluko* do not relate well either to the missionaries or to other Tsongas who are not under *ntumbuluko*, whose Christian convictions confuse them with missionaries in their critical assessment of *ntumbuluko*. Their conflict originates from *ntumbuluko*’s conflict with the gospel. Tsongas under *ntumbuluko* suffer the influence of *Mutchapi* in their theoretical construct of reality, especially in relation to the spiritual realm. On the other hand, the missionaries and those Tsongas under the “spell” of the missionaries also experience the influence of enlightenment in their construct of reality, especially in relation to the spirit realm and their apprehension of the Christian faith.

The relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel, as found by this research, is not just theologically unacceptable and missiologically incorrect, but is also socially, communally and denominationally explosive. We certainly found that the evidence makes the research question appropriate, crucial and timeous. If the answer to the question proposed in this research becomes acceptable, it could be an overdue contribution desperately needed in Tsonga Christianity of southern Mozambique, as our findings have revealed.

Chapters five and six take on the challenge. Chapter five starts by giving an overview of the gospel and culture debate, with a focused literature review on the theme. After that, it summarises Niebuhr’s typologies of Christian responses to the problem of the gospel and culture relationship. The summary is then followed by an attempt to use the Niebuhrian typologies to respond to the challenge of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. We conclude by acknowledging that the relationship between the gospel and culture is an age-old problem that can never reach a definitive solution. Each generation has to wrestle with the same issues over and over again. Any solution achieved is relative to a given generation, culture, theological orientation and denomination. However, we

recommend a response which is driven by a feeling which calls for another form of interaction between *ntumbuluko* and the Christian faith, in which the gospel transforms *ntumbuluko* for the glory of God. Chapter five ends with a critical assessment of the contemporary gospel and culture debate. And chapter six suggests a way forward in the *ntumbuluko* and the gospel challenge. This way forward proposes the use of vernacular Bibles in responding to the challenge. Theology needs to be both aware of and informed by the vernacular, if not grounded thereon, in order to answer deep-rooted issues concerning *ntumbuluko* in the Tsonga context of Mozambique.

### 6.3 Concluding remarks

This research was both difficult and rewarding for me as a person, as an academic theologian and also as a Christian minister. It was difficult because I had no experience of field research. So I had to learn how to research issues concerning the gospel and culture, as well as the applied research methods. It took me time to transcribe the interviews manually and to use them, struggling all the while to find acceptable words to translate complex ideas and concepts from the Tsonga language into English, with the use of a multitude of dictionaries.

But this hardship rewarded me. In the process I acquired skills<sup>103</sup> that will help me throughout my life in researching gospel and culture issues where there are no published sources. I have also accumulated a wealth of material, in the form of transcribed interviews, which have become major information sources. Above everything, I learned about my own culture. It was shocking to realize how little I had known about my own culture and about myself before this research. I had the opportunity to learn many things about my culture. I felt so humbled and foolish when I looked back upon my pastoral ministry and teaching. Although myself a Tsonga, I did not know their questions. For example, those questions that may be asked when someone dies. I did not speak their "language", and they did not hear my "language". I hardly spoke to their hearts! So, I decided to record in detail everything about *ntumbuluko* and I was deeply challenged. Although not everything

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<sup>103</sup> I acquired skills in listening, recording and transcribing non literary sources of information and use them as authoritative and primary sources of academic knowledge scientifically valid.

could be included in this text, one can still read the original transcripts in the Appendices in Tsonga. It must also be noted that this is not the first study on Tsonga as we indicated in the introduction, Junod (1912, 1913) did a more detailed study of Tsonga people than this present. The importance of this study in my person is the fact that it was done also in my home area (Save region) and touched own background intimately.

This research has deeply affected and changed me. It changed my perception of *ntumbuluko*, of culture, of myself, and of my surroundings. It helped me to become both truly Tsonga and truly Christian. For the first time I discovered that *ntumbuluko* is more logical and demonstrable than the gospel or Christian faith. With Paul (I Co 1:18,21,23,25) I started to see that what I believe, preach and teach is not as self-evident (obvious) or self-explanatory (logical and rational) as I had assumed, but is foolishness and scandal to the Tsongas, who do not believe, or who find little to believe. *Ntumbuluko* has all the epistemological grades, systems and methods of what can be known, and of how and why it should be known.

The findings of this research are not the be-all and end-all of what can be said about *ntumbuluko* and its relationship with the gospel among the Tsongas of Mozambique. It is just the start of a long-awaited debate and discourse. I hope it will raise several issues of research interest and will stimulate more research into the gospel and culture in Mozambique.

In my opinion there are six issues raised in this research that need further research:

- 1) *ntumbuluko*'s invisible power
- 2) *ntumbuluko* laws and rituals (*swi yila*)
- 3) *Mutchapi* (witch "eradication" movement and medicine)
- 4) *ku pfuka* (resurrection for vengeance)
- 5) spirit wives or slave girls (*tihloko* and *vanyakwave*) and
- 6) the magic churches.

Another issue needing further research is the question of gender in *ntumbuluko*. It has not been addressed in this thesis, but I have published a separate article dedicated to the study of the impact of *ntumbuluko* on gender in the Tsonga context. The article

"*Ntumbuluko*, theology, and issues of gender in the Tsonga worldview: towards an African woman's theology of liberation in Mozambique", *Scriptura* 86: 180-189 (2004), is a start towards taking the *ntumbuluko* and gender issues further.

The above *ntumbuluko* issues profoundly impact the daily life and behaviour of many Christians in one way or another, as well as all forms of the church's ministry such as evangelism/church planting, discipleship, pastoral care/counselling and development works. We have no choice but to face them, otherwise we will succumb to the invisible power of *ntumbuluko*, applying a "Christianized", civilized and simplified version of the traditional sacrifices<sup>104</sup> in compliance with *ntumbuluko*.

However, the suggested approach to the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel should allow debates to open up in Tsonga Christianity in Mozambique, which may help the church prepare strategies to deal with the explosive problem of *ntumbuluko* and the gospel. Tsonga Christianity in Mozambique is faced with an *ntumbuluko* "revolution", driven by the same forces which drove the Marxist revolution, and which could cause some church leaders in the IUB to reject their faith before their congregations and to set their worshipping houses on fire so as to prove that there is no God. One such leader has now returned to the church and is a pastor.

Mozambican evangelical theologians and missiologists need to discuss and develop models of the relationship between *ntumbuluko* and the gospel which take into account the five approaches presented by Niebuhr (1951). We need a radical but missiologically sensitive approach, not a dogmatic one. The Bible is the supreme example of such an approach, since we can see in it all five different approaches. That missiologically sensitive approach must take seriously the issue of the invisible powers if the gospel is to have an impact and future among the Tsongas of Mozambique.

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<sup>104</sup> Development projects, as Khosa indicates in the interview, are inaugurated with a traditional sacrifice.

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**8 APPENDICES****8.1 Appendix I*****NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL*****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview**

Date: 12 April 2001

Place: Orange Farm Ext. 2

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga

Conf/access: Open

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)

**Interviewee**

Name: Chilombani Jossayi Ndzukule

Gender: Male

Date of birth: 19 January 1941

Place of birth: Phandzila (Save region)

Residence: Chivulamasava, Gundani

Religious convictions: AIC of Modise

Position in the religious group: Member

Profession and occupation: immigrant worker in South Africa (now unemployed)

Category: Traditionalist

Address: 6505 Orange Farm

Tape identification: Tape 2 A-B

NDZUKULE, C J

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL  
INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

AC- A ntumbuluko i xini ke?

JN- Aka nhloko ya kona ya mhaka ya ku a ntumbuluko i xini, a ka *side* ya mina, loko nivile kolaha misaveni, ...a ntumbuluko hi xona a xilo xinga xi kulu ka swilo hikwaswo hansi ka misava, a ka munhu; mani na mani... Hita hi laha loko nitaku a ntumbuluko ixilo xa xikulu laha misaveni.

Nito loko ni sungula ku tlhariha, mina, ku sukela hi 1951, ku ta fika namutlha leswi kunga 2001, ni swi vona kahle aku lava vanga landzelaka ntumbuluko va na wu tomi. Hiku ntumbuluko wu rwele 'swa yila,' wu rwele kufa, wu rwele ku hanya. Wu rwele a muti wa mina lowu ni hanyaka na wona (nsati wa le Joni), kumbe mamani loyi ninga teka (nsati wa xitekwa wa le kaya), kumbe n'wana wa mina i ntumbuluko [unga hi rwala]. A ntumbuluko ilithangu leli li biyaka muti. Loko n'wananga o huma a naweni wa ntumbuluko, a xikona a nga ta xi endla, a nsati wa mina loko a huma naweni wa ntumbuluko a xikona a nga ta xi endla, kumbe hi mina nuna wa kona ni tshika leswi venge te, Xidindi, leswi se unga wa hombe, hanya hi ntumbuluko, u tchava 'swa yila;' [yinga] tlhata ya kona ya ntumbuluko. 'Swa yila' a suka ka ntumbuluko.

Ntumbuluko wa fana na xidyoho xa mavelekelo, hi tivaka leswaku loku u kula u fanele ku teka. Xidyoho lexo a nina nandzu<sup>105</sup> ka xona loko ni teka a nsati wa kona. Kambe loko ni gangisa a nhanyana nje ni etlela na yena mu vona hi nyimba a ni onhi? Ni humile a naweni wa ntumbuluko. Ni tshikile ntumbuluko, a ni tchavanga 'swa yila,' ni dilizile a muthangala wa wutomi la mina hikwalo, wa *family* ya mina ya ka

<sup>105</sup> My interviewee considers sex as a sin, but a sin that is the duty of humans. No one is to be excused from it. If one marries properly is not guilt of that sin of sex. From this belief he then equates *ntumbuluko* to the sin of sex to imply that whenever one does something for or of *ntumbuluko* or in obedience of it, though the act might appear sinful, he/she is not commit a sin. Is just fulfilling the human duty (which is natural or divinely created and ordained as sex and marriage is). Sin is to be re-defined as what contradict *ntumbuluko* and when Tsongas act in obedience to *ntumbuluko* they never feel guilt and shame of whatever they do.

Ndzukule. A va nga ta rivala na vana va mina aku vaku, kokwani wa wena waha tsamile a endla swo karhi. Hiku swa yini? swa ntumbuluko...[hambi] unga fa, a swi heli a ka nyimba leyi ya n'wina. Ntumbuluko inawu lowu wu kulaka hi wona laha kaya. [Loko vaku] u nga dyi lexi xa yila...ani va vutisi *why* hinga tsiveli a tsondzo laha kaya? Hiku, intumbuluko waka Ndzukule, kumbe wa tiko legi ninga aka ka lona.

Leswi aswi lavi hi swi sola, hiku swi tira aka ka Xitlhangu, *no*, hi ku ni yakile laha tikweni laka Xitlhangu; kula kuza ni endla leswi. Va swi kuma kwihi? I ntumbuluko wa Xipalo, hikusa, a muti wakwe lowu, akuza u nga hlakalangi, ku ni ntumbuluko lowu anga hanya hi wona. Lowu anga wu nyikiwa tolo va n'wani va wu papalatile, se Xikwembu xi va khatisa<sup>106</sup>.

Loko a wu ngahi ntumbuluko, hi 1957 inge ni xurisile a va nhanyana hambu va nharhu, va nga ta a mabangeni. Kambi mamani a vulile aku hinga xurisi nyimba na hinga lovolangi (bava a ari xibalweni) – aku, lowu intumbuluko wa hina vaka Ndzukule, loko wo ala sweswo, uta fa wa hi xitsananani. Hiku landza a ntumbuluko, a vaku 'u ta pswa'<sup>107</sup> wena mufana ndziwena, u nga huhi na va nhanyana.'

Hi ntumbuluko ku laveka u hi na 21 *years*, u thomba; loko se u thombile, u sungula a pfuka waka 25 *years*, hi kona vaku vonaka aku a mufana luyani a kuliile. Loko a nhanyana a veleka a hi na 15 *years* anga na ndlela ya ku huma n'wana.

AC- Xini xi wumbaka a ntumbuluko ke?

JN- A ntumbuluko u akiwa hi nawu lowu u nga vekiwa le ka vanhu. Loko Xikwembu xi endlile a munhu, xi mu nyikile a mungana, [n]a ma tsamele ya kwe, ku nga ku mu nyika a mungana wo tsama naye; kwala ka mungana yaloyi, se xi mu

<sup>106</sup> A muti loko unga hlakali hiku a n'winyi wa wona a na ntumbuluko lowu a hanyaka hi wona wo karhi. A mi miti leyi yi hlakalaka hi leyi a venyi va yona va nga papalata a ntumbuluko se a Xikwembu xi va khatisa. A Xikwembu xi voniwa na xi nyika ntumbuluko a ka munhu na munhu, kuya hi li xaka kumbe xibongo na tiko na lihlovo. Na swona hi xona mu voneleli wa ntumbuluko na mu khatisi wa va lahli va ntumbuluko.

<sup>107</sup> A HIV AIDS ali kupswa. A li a ti n'anga ti nga lapha AIDS. Ali, Nkosi Johnson vo ala naye va lungu, [loko] va mu kombela ka zulu na Matchangana *for three weeks*, a ta hanya. Sweswi ni tsalaka Nkosi se a file, kambe a karti ni nga maha a interview a a ha hanya. Nkosi i xi hlengi xi nga pswaliwa na HIV, se xi etlele rini na wa nsati kasi a ku xi pswa ke?

vekela nawu lowu a faneleke ku hanya hi wona<sup>108</sup>. Laha ka nawu lowu, hi kona ku nga na gula la kona, la ku, loyi a to phazama a ntumbuluko lowu ni nga ku nyika ni ku tsama u endlisa leswi, u endla leswi; kambi leswi u nga swi tchitchi, loko wo tchitcha leswi u onhile. Lelo i rito linga vula leswo; he yena matchingelani<sup>109</sup> wa kona a gadileko ntumbuluko. A ku na munhu a ku gadileko. Vaku nyika rito u tsama na lona wena, uli hlayisa wena....

**AC-** Swini mu swi tivaka swa ntumbuluko swi mahiwaka a ku feni ke?

**JN-** A ku feni ka munhu, ku na tindlela to hambana hambana, hi kota ya swi tikwa tikwana leswi nga tala. Na ma fela ma hambene, ku na ti xaka xaka to tala; wa swi kota ku fa hi mukhuhlwani, hi ku ti boha, ku fela matini, ku tchopiwa, ku vabya, swi tele, tele. Hi ku tala lo ka swona, loko afa munhu le ka hina Hlengweni; kumbe a na nyoka, tchinga tchumu lexi nga ndzeni kakwe xi mu hluphaka, a swi koteki a ku aya lahliwa ku hi hava le xinga vuliwa hi ntumbuluko wa ka n'wina laha ka ndzawu leyi.

Ku fanele ku tekiwa a tandza, na lidaka, na libuku, swi hlanganisiwa liya vekiwa tinhlokweni takwe; lin'wani li hangalaseleliwa laha a nga ta vekiwa kona. Ndzaku ka leswo, a thitha la kona a li seleteliwi, kasi ku a moya wakwe (lowu u ba) wu hangalaka. Hikuva loko u pfaleliwa, u ta ya ka va n'wani. A tolo wa kona, a va kokwani va hina loko va wu landza a ntumbuluko wa vona, hambu pfula a yi na hi ku landza a ntumbuluko; pela pela a pfula a yina. Lava vanga nisa pfula hi lava va nga fambelene na ndlela ya ntumbuluko kahle.

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<sup>108</sup> *Ntumbuluko* is the law given to humans. This law is given to regulate human relationship because of the impurity of the woman. It regulates man's relationship with her in a protective manner for the man to remain pure, healthy and enjoy longevity.

<sup>109</sup> This is a very key to *ntumbuluko*. No one will police you only the word they gave to you. But if you think no one sees me, and violate *ntumbuluko*, it catches you. The punishment is immediate and that is why they respect it more than anything else. From this point one sees that *ntumbuluko* is a spiritual power, power that governs people for the fear of death (Heb 2:14-15). That is why people do not respect the will of God for there seems to be no policing, one can commit any sin and pray, preach, serve communion, yet nothing seems to happen. The grace of God is foolishness and weakness of God for the Tsonga (1 Co 1:18,21,23,25; 2:14; 3:19).

Hikuva va kombela a pfula<sup>110</sup> ka Xikwembu, a Xikwembu a xi va nyika. Kambe swi yile swa fika swi phazameka a phambeni ka masiku. Loko mu siyetela a munhu wo tano, a pfula a yi nga ta na hi nntiyiso. Se ku ta endla leswaku, hi ndzaku ka lembe muta muta vuvula, mu teka a marambu ya yena mu hisa. Loko swihi swona swi nga khomile swi ta endleka (yi tana).

Kumbe nhanyana kumbe wa nsati, kumbe nsati wa munhu, a kuma nyimba; loko a nyimba leyo o teka aya yi tchelela a hi yetche swi onhekile. Ku laveka a vula, mapswatsi ma tsinela ku suhani [this serve to control and maintain position of power. That is why these things are not taught to anyone. Knowledge is power] vata endla a nawu wa ntumbuluko. Hi ku nawu wa ntumbuluko wo pfala 'swa yila' va na wona a ma vokweni ya vona; va nyikiwi hi Xikwembu. Ava kokwani lavaya vanga kaya, va ta endla a nawo lowu vanga na wona a mavokweni vanga wu nyikiwa tolo wa siku hi xikwembu xa vona Khubyanyani wa vona.

Aka nyimba leyi, loko, vanhu va tsuka vaku, n'wa ximani a humesile nyimba, vata vula vaku, no, no,no. A hi hi kona hina, hi hina hi nga veka a n'wana wa kona; hi endlile swo karhi na swo karhi na swo karhi [the importance of witnesses].

Leswi va endlaka, lidaka laleli, na mbita, hiku a vekiwa lomu mbiteni, yi boxiwa laha hehla a ku a moya lowu u huma.

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<sup>110</sup> Rain making in Africa is a big debate. My interviewee believes that rain-maker are those who followed *ntumbuluko* carefully in their lives and now that they are dead, God hears them when they ask him for rain. This is conditioned that the living for whom the dead intercede remain obedient to *ntumbuluko*. If there is a violation, a correction is to be made ritually (including the digging out of the bones and burning them down). At a time my father believed God was the one giving rain in response of the ritual to Muleyani and he was favorable. He and his church participated on it. This is the idea of many African theologians such as Idowu, Mbiti and Bediako. This results from weak observation of the circumstances, the misreading of the Scriptures and misconception of the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. (1) the rituals are done in the rain season when rain is expected or if it delays, they never do that anytime. The Bible shows clearly that Satan can perform miracles. In Rev 13:13 the devil can cause fire to fall down from heaven in public. Now tell me, what is more difficulty, to cause rain to fall down from heaven in a rain season, which would anywhere fall, and to cause fire to fall from heaven, which would never anywhere fall? Some advocates of Calvinist doctrine of the Sovereignty of God are blind to the fact that there are Satanic miracles that suggest mastering of the nature; and so, they go on attributing them to God because he is Sovereign. But the Bible does not do that, does it ignore or obscure the Sovereignty of God?

AC- Mu nga tlhamusela hixin'we na xin'we leswi va lahlisaka swona ke? (this questions was not answered, he got lost and said many other things; to avoid offending, I did not press him to answer).

JN- Ok, a ma pswatsi va tirisa leswi. A ntumbuluko imbita ya kona. A nawu wa wu tomi la munhu hi kwalo wunga yaka kona; a ntumbuluko i fawundexeni (*foundation*), i fawundexeni ya yindlu. A nawu wun'wani ni wun'wani wuta a hehla ka fawundexeni leyi. A xitina xin'wani ni xin'wani xi vekiwa a hehla ka fawundexeni leyi. U nga xiveka xihhi have a fawundexeni? Loko a pfula yi tana xi tawa. Hi xona a ribye lakona la ku tiya hikuva; xona xi khomile xihhi xoxe. A mutini wa n'wina xi khomile, a mutini wa mina xi khomile, a mutini wa mun'wani xi khomile. Se hikona ku to huma mu nawu hikwayo leyi na yi huma laha ka fawundexeni leyi. Yi nga ntumbuluko. Loko mutwa a munhu a vula leswi, a ntumbuluko wa hina a wu vuli leswaku a wa nsati a kumeka ali na rito loko mina ni ka ni vulavula. Laha a vula a mhaka leyi yinga endleka a ka va kokwani va va kokwani va yena; a hi ti mhaka ta nyamutlha leto.

A hi ngeni ka leyi. Loko a karhi wo veleka wu fika, lahaya va langutele a swo tala swa ntumbuluko. A ma pswatsi lawa, ku have a kholitchi (*college*) vanga ngena ka yona...kambe, hi hina lava, a hi na xikratchi (*scratch*), a ku na ku va ku, a nyini wa mina a endlisile swo karhi se a nhloko yi bovomela – hi lungile. Lava vanga na madiploma va tiraka va hola; a mu ti voni a ti misiteki (*mistake*) ti humelelaka hikwawo masiku? Va tirela a tchayile, kambe lava va tirelaka a ntumbuluko a va na tchayile.....

Loko a huma aya wa, va vutisa vaku, himani a to muteka, laha va vutisa aku, himani a to pfumela a nawu wa ku a xikavana xiza xiwa ange se ngena ndlini. Hiku ku na swi yila. Loko a nsati wa mina o amukela a n'wana wa n'wina, ku laveka na mina ni khiya swi pfalo, loko no ngena ndlini, a nga ta hanya, *never!* Ufile a n'wana loye, a dlewe hi mu amukeli. I nandzu wa mina, ni tlulile a nawo lowu u nga vekiwa leswaku hina Matchangana hi ta hanya kahle [death of a an infant can be blamed to the mu amukeli].

Se kuta huma loyi a titwaka a ku, mina nita mu amukela. Loko anga humeleli, vo muqonda; wena hahani wa kona amukela n'wana. A va qondi nje. Se a mutlakula, a mu yinga a mutlakula lomu ka nguvo kumbe thawula. Se va endla a mejamete ya kava, a mejamete ya kona iya wununa la wena. Se loko va boha seno na seno, va tsema xikavani hi xisingwana. A xi singwana lexi a xi tchukumetiwi, xi nyimela a siku la ku wa ka xikavani.

Se a muyinga a muhlambisa. Se va vutisa a ka yena vaku xini? Se a vula aku inhanyana, kumbe ijaha. Se vaba mu kulungwani. Loko ahi mufana a va bi kulungwani, vo to, a ti pfunile jaha gakwe. Kambe loko ahi nhanyana u tatwa vaku ulululuuu. A wa nsati vali ti homu ti vuyaka; kambe a wa nuna anga vuyisi tchumu. Aka wa nuna va taku a mati ma fikile lawa hinga ma rindzele [this seems to welcome future expected daughters-in-laws and therefore appropriate for boys].

AC- Mu lahlisa ku yini a vanana. Mapswatsi ma lahlaka ke?

JN- Swi hambene, ku na misikhariyeji (*miscarriage*) na n'wana tsongo. Loko oza a tchuliwa a vito, hambu ova na viki, wa lahla wena mupswali. Neti a peleliwa hi dyambu, wa n'wina, ma lahla. Loyi anga wa mapswatsi hi loyi wo ta a karele a fela kwalaho, kumbe a huma a file, na kwirhi. A kwirhi hambu wena nuna wa kona ava lavi u li khumba, handle ka wu siwana.

Loko swi nga hi leswo, awu fanele ku u li thitha hiku ku na swo yila u faneleke ku unga swi voni laha. Hikuva anga patsiwi n'wana na yindlu yakwe swa yila [a yindlu igulu]. Manje, loko mo mu lahla muhi va mbiri na nsati munga ta mu patsa? Mu ta patsa; manje mu taya mu ya muvuvula. Va lahliwa ku hambana, yena na gulu – ku fana na loko a wa nsati a fa na nyimba, a nga lahliwi na n'wana<sup>111</sup> wakwe.

Se va teka a lihiso la khale kumbi mbita, se va teka a dodhi hi kwalo leli a nga humesa (ngati ni mati) va tchela lomuya. A ngati leyi hi lona wu tomi leli a n'wana loyi linga mu hanyisa. Se va rwala mbita vava fika va cela va mbonya mbita leyo. Se va boxa

<sup>111</sup> Loko a wa nsati afa na nyimba, va mu veka a sireni, se u ngena wena nuna wa kona u mu dawula a kwirhi hi mukwana se u humesa a n'wana a lahliwa xiyena. Na loko a kukumukile a kwirhi va maha sweswo. A Kameruni va maha sweswo na vona, kambe ahi nuna a dawulaka a nsati, ku na va kulukumba va mahaka leswo.

le hehla ka yona. Wena bava wa kona a wu kona, kambe mamani wa kona a kona. Se va ku pimela masiku.

U fanele ku heta kumbe ku fanele ku hundza a makhati mambiri na a hlamba. Loko o hlamba kan'we u tlangana nayena u onhile.

AC- Loko munhu afa a moya wakwe wuya kwihi ke?

JN- Ka ntumbuluko ku na ndlela yin'we. Loko munhu afa anga fangi u yo *etlela*, u yile ka va kokwani vaya mu rhuma; a yile aya hi lungiselela wutsamu laha na minavo ni to ya kona mundzuku. Loyi a ta va khumbuza lava va nga famba khale hi ta wu tomi la hina, hiku se va rivele va Xilombani na va Xibejabejani –lahaya vo tchava a ku ma ha va rungula<sup>112</sup> [in Ghana they give money for river crossing fare].

Kambe loko se va phahla va sungula hi loyi anga fa sweswi (hikuva hi yena anga na *report* ya wu tomi la vona). A tsama khihi? Le tilweni ka n'wina a va ku tivi, va li a vuya laha kaya a ta tsama laha kaya, ave *basiboyi* (murangeli) wa laha kaya, ahi dyisa laha kaya, ahi nyika timhuti laha kaya, a hi pfunisa mavele laha kaya, na ku hi ta mu rhuma. Loko muni kolota ni ta sungula a ku, vaka Xilotani va tekile nsati wa mina na n'wana wa mina; kasi Xilombani na Mahovetani a va tirhi? Leswo ni na mu ehleketo yaku no va rhuma a ku va landza n'wana wa mina (naswona va phahla va rhuma)<sup>113</sup>.

**Leswi iswikwembu swa hina leswi hi swi tsembileko.**

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<sup>112</sup> In the conception of the dead or the ancestors there are three stages. (1)The maturity of the ancestor, when he or she can not be found and talk through mediums, cannot avenge, cannot protect and cannot be taken home (6 months to two years). The mature ancestor, he/she can avenge, protect and be brought home. Can now be found through divination (6 months to 60 years?). The aging of the ancestor, this happens when the ancestor is no longer being found in divination and is no longer avenging. So far, it applies to those who did not eat mutchapi among the Tsongas. These three stages represent birth, childhood, adulthood and maturity; and the aging and decay of an ancestor.

<sup>113</sup> In Tsonga culture each family has spirits (ancestors) on their service. Everyone has ancestors and can send them to attack anyone or any family on their behalf; one is to be careful how to relate with one another. We see once again that the Tsonga gods are dead humans, never impersonal spirits or powers. This family spirits are the guardians and final authorities of their respective families.

**AC-** Loko munhu a phahla a phahla yini ke? A phahla a vafi?

**JN-** No, no, no,...., ahi ku hlanganisela, ani lavi ku vulavula hi swinyamukwaxani, kumbe yini – ni ta vulavula hi ntumbuluko wa ka Ndzukule, loko ni phahla, kumbe hi phahla, ani vitana va ka Ndzukule. Mahovetani, Xilombani na nsati N’wa-Xongani. Ni vitana vona aku va tsinela ku subani na mina, hi vona xikwembu xa mina. Loko lava ni hi na vona, hambu wo lava ku ni loya awu nge ni loyi loko ni hi na vona . loko ni phahla, ni vulavula na vona, ni vanyika a ku va busa a xikhafu lexi. Ni tchela fole ni teka mhamba ya kona kumbe ibyala la yini, kumbe la xifaki, kumbe la mahleko; indlela ya ku ni va vitana kasi ni ta bula navo leswi nga xifuvuni xa mina naku se ni ta va rhuma lomu ni lavaka kona. Kumbe ni lava ku phasa tinhongo, kumbe niya na byala mavele. Kumbe nikhesa leswi se va nga ni tirela – se ni ku ahi buseni.

A swi nga endleke laha ka hina aku niya niya tsova xifaki ni woxa kumbe kheva na ni nge se phahla, a swinga endleke. Bava a a hi na xinyamukwaxani, kambe a a nga phahli xona; no, no, no. Lowo intumbuluko – va phahla ka swikembu swa vona a ku swi ya byela Khubyanyani loyi va kalaka vanga mu tivi ku hi mani. Vaya byela Khubyanyani na nsati N’wa-Xikhuvanyani leswi vanga swi amukela. A swikwembu leswi ti messenja (*messengers*) ta vona to yisa mahungu ka Khubyanyani.

Kumbe ku bonga, ku kwata, ku tekiwa ka n’wana, aswi endli leswaku a n’wana a tekiwa hinga phahlangi, na Khubyanyani anga swi tivangi [Khubyanyani mythology seems to be more known to Tsonga -Xitswa group. The Tsonga-Shangaan and Tsonga-Ronga cultures do not have it or it is forgotten according to my Shangaan and Ronga informants. But the this informant lives in an area where Vatswa and Vashangaan are mixed].

**AC-** Hi mani Khubyanyani na N’wa-Xikuvanyani?

**JN-** Khubyanyani na N’wa-Xikuvanyani, a masungulweni ya ntumbuluko wa hina vanhu, ntumbuluko wa hina vanhu va ntima hikwenu – muzulu, muSotho, muxosa, hikwerhu hi vulavula hi munhu un’we; hi na Khubyanyani na N’wa-Xikuvani. Khubyanyani hi yena loko Xikwembu xi mu mahile, xinga ku pswalanani mu tala; mu

tata misava, mu fuma swi harhi, mi swidya [this sounds like Genesis and not part of the mythology].

AC- A ka ntumuluko loko a munhu a suka masangweni anga phahla ke?

JN- Loko u ya tirweni wo tirela swikwembu swa ka n'wina kumbe ku phahleni, kumbe qineni, kumbe ku byaleni, kumbe ku hlahleni ka wu tchema, kumbe lipfumba lo karhi, ku fanele ku ni ti tsona. Ninga ngeni ma sangweni, ni khiya xipfalo, hi ku swa yila aku u ya ngena u khizama u teka mhamba u phahla; a wu fa.

Kambe sweswi aswi mahi, hikuva va yi onhile va fambile va kamba va endlela aku loko va rhuma mukwembu liya yita yi ta mu vabyisa, kuve leya khale a yinga mahi swona. A yi nga vabyisi munhu. Akova moya nje u nga ti tsamele nje. Loko vawu vitana a venyi va wona a wu ta wuta vulavula na vona. A ti thakeni a va wu rhuma a ku wuya khoma nhongo u ta fika u yi phansisa. Se ni wu nyika xivindzi. Kasi ku ni ta maha leswo, ni fanele ku ti tsona, se na mixo ni ya nyikela. Loko ni onhile ni fanele ku rhuma a n'wana wa mina wa mufana wa tsongo; ni ku ximanamani, teka leswi wa veka lahaya phahlelweni. A niyi lahaya<sup>114</sup>.

AC- Loko a nsati a veleka mu hanyisa ku yini ke?

JN- Loko nsati wa mina a kuma xihlangi, mina na yena hi hambane; swi kombela a ku za a nsati loyi wa mina aya xi khatini xakwe. A xikhati xakwe xa teka *two years* – a saseka u mu navela, se ku laveka u hambana na yena [cultural cause of emigration].

Kambe, laha phakati, va nyikile a karhi wa ku koma, wa *1 year and couples of months* kasi ku u mu tiva. Loko u nga mu tivi an'wana loyi, *sure, sure*, anga na ndqondo. Xi tave tchilo nje, hambani loko uxi byela xinga engisi. A nga na mhaka na wena hikuva a nga na *knock* – a mu mu vuyisangi a ka n'wina. A xi onho xa ma velekelo ova naxo

<sup>114</sup> He is describing the Before Mutchapi (BM) kind of spirit manifestation. He does not indicate how the changes took place. Mutchapi came before he was born and he grew up before those who ate Mutchapi died. He attributed ku kamba to this change. Sex abstaining is confused with fasting. In the AIC fasting is sex purity. We also find that gods are informed everything that takes place and that any activity requires abstinence from sex.

ndzeni, aku na laha xinga ta hi kona [he/she should become sex active as continuity of the sex the parents performed before the child].

Tshika nsati aya karhini na n'wana se na a famba, kasi se u ta mu tiva – mu maha kan'we tsena. Loko wo hlangana naye kambiri kumbe ange seya karhini wakwe, a nyimba yi sele. Loko woya kan'we, a yi sale. Loko o pfuka a hlambile munenge a nsati wa mina, mamani ata mu holovisa; a n'wana loyi u lava ku mu endla yini ke? [implying that she is killing the child].

AC- Swini swi mahekaka a ku tiveni ka n'wana ke?

JN- A ku tiveni ka n'wana a ku na mhamba. Tcho sungula hi lexi, loko a kula a lumuka u nga hi kona se u mu kuma a tlharihile, a waha mukoti a ku mu vuyisa ka wena. se mulwa a mhaka ya ku mu ta kota ku tlhangana na yena. Se a ndqondo ya ku munyika hi mhamba a yi fani ni ya ku mu nyika hi ntumbuluko. Loko oza a ku 7 years, kumbe muyo holova, kumbe u yo kholwa, se mu nga ha koti ku mu veka laha, a nga ha lungi, a onhekile. A mhamba yi to endla ku anga vabyi, kambe ndqondo a nga ta yi kuma (he gave an example that a child cannot pass exam by using charms or magic).

Loko uhi kona, lito pela ni madyambu, se u mu byela, masiku ma fikile. A n'wana a nga ka ahi phazamisa. Se wenavu u tchava va Juwawu aku vanga kala vaku tivela a n'wana na swona, ku laveka loko ku mahiwa tchumu, kumbe muphahlo laha kaya a ta ve *included*. Hi tlhangana hina na yena hive tchilo tchin'we laha kaya. Loko swi nga mahangi leswo wena bava wa kona anga ku tivi, a tiva a nyine tse...Se ku laveka ku byela a nyine wa kona aya byela a pswatsi loyi anga amukela. A ku, bava lwiyani e hi lava ku tiva n'wana. Va teka xigodo lexi vanga gisa mamani loyi, ku ni mhamba leyi va nga mu nyika a dya a harhi ndlini, se va mu swekela a dya se a vuya le ka wena (no ku hlevela<sup>115</sup>).

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<sup>115</sup> It means that he is telling me secret that he is not allowed to tell anyone. A xigodo xa laha ndleleni a ga loko a pswaliwa, loko a kula, loko a pswala na loko a la ku tiva n'wana (4 circles of life).

Se mu teka n'wana a ta mubedwini. Mu tlanga mu heta, a n'wana loyi mu na yena kwala – se xi ku tiva aku hi bava loyi – a xa ha rile loko u xi teka. Mu nga endli a n'wana a hi lahaya – mu onhile – loko mo endla a hi lahaya, u ta vona hi nyine wa kona a ku ya aya khoma n'wana ahari na tchaka la wena, axi tlakula, a xi tiyisa a ku xi nga tchavi. Se a teka a mati lawa manga lomu ka xikhuwana lexiya xa xirotha a xi hlambisa.

AC- A mhama leyi a gaka na ahi ndwini yi tsamisile ku yini? Yi mahisiwa ku yini ke?

JN- Mhamba leyi yi rangela a ku a kota ku famba a tlula tindlela. A ka 7 days a fanela ku huma ndlini. Kambe, a n'wana anga fanele ku famba a tlula tindlela leti va xidindi va fambaka ka tona na va suka ka va nsati va vona kumbe ti nyazine ta vona, vata fika va tlula yenavo a tlula.

A moya lowuya wa xi onho xa mabelekelo a n'wana luya anga makatleni wa mu hapeta. Kumbe hi pfuxelana, kumbe vona vanhu va xi nsati va n'wani va na mona. A fika a nsati wa mina axi tlakula; hi nga ni nyikani ni muvona, a hi ku saseka, a kota ximanimani; kuve a huma ndlini. Loko aza amu khoma, kuve anga dyangi a murhi lowu (mativa hi kwato) – a murhi lowu wa khale na swona akhale a ku hi na ndzawani yo huma Venda wu kalanga, yinga dyiwa hi va hlezani. A ndzawani leyi ya linsima, ayahari kona. Ayi hunguta a masema ya wu n'wanana, ya mafi, naku yi pfalela a mu moya ya tchaka a ku yinga mu ngeni.

Axi rotha indlela yaku komba a ku a mamani loyi u tekaka hi mukambe njani, naku a landzile a nawu wa va veleki na wa mu rileli – loko a khombile, a yile a ka pswatsi aya mu rilela, lomu anga gisiwa kona a mhamba ya mativa zotlhe; a mhamba leyi yina

ku fa a phakati ka yona. Loko wena mufana unga yi endli kwatsi, a bava wa nhanyana wa fa, a mhani wa nhanyana wa fa; lava va wenavo va fa, kumbe ku vabya hi muhlana<sup>116</sup>.

A xirotha xi komba leswaku a mutchado wa n'wina a muzangi mu wu phazamisa a ndleleni, muwu mahile kahle [if there is no xirotha, they think you have pre-marital sex] hiku , loko mo tlangana a kwatini, va pswali va ta fa, kumbe va vabya hi muhlana. Loko xi rotha xi nge se maheka, anga etleli na wena, hikuva kunga vabya vanhu va mune hokolaho ka wena. a tumbi ayi vumeli hambu loko a jaha lo swi lava. Leyi hi yona mhaka ya hombe a ka mutchado wa Xitchangana.

Loko a xirotha xi ta, ku na mhamba yi taka yihi ka humba (a ni yi tivi yi tiviwa hi swi koxana) – se va vitana a hahani wa wena kumbe kokwani, na va yena vava kambela a nhanyana loyi a siku leli va heleketaka a nhanyana loyi – va vona aku wa hari *sealed* – loko u hi na jakatsa a va ku vitani – se va vona aku ange se etlela na wa nuna. Se va lava a tluka va boxa a mbovo, yikulu, kumbe yi tsongo, se va byela nuna; munhu ati khomile, amukela n'wananga. Loko a etlele na munhu, va ta lava ku tiva aku hi mani – loko a hi wena, u fanele ku hlawula. A mu rileli ale khombyeni, a ta vabya hi khohlolo. Se, loko a lungile, a hahani wa wena a ta ba kulungwani, loko a miyela, a mamani wa wena a tsaka aku n'wananga a ta pfula a bokiso la kahle – se na yena aba kulungwani, eleleleeee....

Man'wani matiko ya Xitsonga va ta ta va ta vona laha munga etlela kona (ngati), kun'wani loko va heta leswi, vo mu nyika a mbita yo ku hlambisa hi yona, kambe a mhamba yinga lomu, ani yi tivi. A mati lawa u hlapswiwaka hi wona loko mu heta a swa masangu, hambu ku kutchungisiwa hiwona u nga tsuka u kutchungisiwa hi wona.

AC- A yihi kona a ndlela yo kamba va va nuna ke?

JN- A ya va va nuna ayi kona.

<sup>116</sup> Before coming to my point I want to say that the previous paragraph one could see ndzawani as perfume, however, it has powers to protect the child against evil spirits. Now back to the point. He points out that the death or disease related to lack of observing rituals in marriage are caused by the use of *xigodo xa laha ndleleni* or *mativa zolthe* also called *damba ziyila*. It gives clue that all the rituals that are said to protect; de facto they are the one bringing the problems. If none of the rituals are done, one suffers nothing even if is non Christian or non delivered Christian.

**AC-** Mu phinda phinda a rito le ringe 'xi onho xa mavelekelo' mu lava ku vula yini hi rito leli ke?

**JN-** Xi onho xa mavelekelo ixi onho lexi xinga hi vangela ku fa. I nandzu wa Eva na Nyoka. Waku hlangana, waku a Nyoka yi hembela Eva, Eva a pfumela, loko Adamu a vuya a mu byela va dya a murhi, va tlhela va ti hlongola hi votche vaya tsama a handle ka muti....

Ku ni xi onho xa mavelekelo ku tekeni – u nga ha endla swilo hikwaswo u saseka, kambe leswi ninga pswaliwa hi munhu wa xi nsati a ni basanga - ... *never, never*...hiku bava u hlangene na mhani a lovolile a tlela a hlamba xirotha, kambe a nandzu lowu wu kona. Kasi ku heta a nandzu lowu ku laku ni amukela a moya wo Kwetsima.

**AC-** A xi dyoho xa mavelekelo hi leswinge iku hlangana ka wa nuna na wa nsati ke?

**JN-** *Yebo*-ene a xi heli – hinga ti kanganhisi, axi heli; aswina mhaka na ku u tchadile, aswina mhaka na ku u te yini...xikona hi ku hlangana na wa nsati. Xi onho lexi xi kona le ka mani na mani. Hi xona xinga hi vangela kufa. Loko onge a ku tlanganiwangi ka vanhu lava va mbiri (Adamu na Eva) ahi nga ta fa hikuva Xikwembu swi kona xinga swi pulanisile. Se hi ranga hina hi onha, *that is why* ku kumeka a rito nyamutlha va ku xirotha – *that is why* va ku mukambeni a nhanyana aku a lungile ke.....A xi onho lexi xikona hambani va ku a lungile.

**AC-** Leswi swi vula aku a xi dyoho xa Adamu na Eva ku ve ku hlangana ke?

**JN-** Futi ahi ku huha, ahi ku huha – hi nga ha famba hi lava lava hikwako lomu, a tchumu lowu unga onha misava na lwesi u to ka unga heli hi walowu. Xikwembu a xaha aka a rito kasi ku ri endla...(ari Enoch a vuyile a hi Johani kasi a ta fa).

**AC-** Loko a Ivangeli yi ngenile aka vanhu va ntumbuluko, ku humelela yini ke?

JN- ....Loko a ntumbuluko u fikile ka hina u aka a makhokholo, na ti yindlu leti kulu na wu hi wona fawundexeni, aku demolixa ka yona aswi izi (*easy*), swa tika, swi teka malembe. Loko se a rito liku qondile, aku tlakusa ka voko swi tsananani, kambe swi lehile ngopfu – swa phutsukela hikwaswo ku sala tchumu un'we. Lexi dlayaka a swilo leswi iku pfumela. U swi tiva leswaku a hanyo leyi yinga hi ya va kokwani khale, ahi yona, a va hanya a mapindzeni ya nala nyawupswaka, a hosi ya kona. Ni vulavula hi mina, a ku na loyi anga ni tlula hi ku phahla. A ni hi na sindza na nguvo yo basa ni nga nyikiwa loko ni tchuliwa Xilombani. Loko lo lahleka a sindza leli ayihi hoyi hoyi ya yi kulu laha mutini. Swi akile ka mina na loko nita joni, nita na swona....a sindza a ni nga li lavi, vaku *no*. Veka ti hlokweni u ve mu qamelo wa ndoda – kambe loko ku fikile a karhi ni swi kotile a ku ni swi nyikela ka n'winyi wa swona kasi ku nita sala na ndlela leyi ya yin'we. Nini malembe na ni tchukumetile a swilo hikwaswo leswi kambe ani so pandziwa hi nhloko, hayikhona....kambe ni tchukumetile a ti nguvo ta kwe, a swi tsungulu swa mina, na wu mina ga mina hikwago, na wu fevi na wu dakwa[but he is living with a girl friend and still wants his family gods that his wife gave them over to the church and the church destroyed them by fire].

Leswi swinga kona ka hina va tima ahi tchumu loko u pfumela. Hikwaswo swa hangalaka hiku tchopeta ka tihlo. A noyi anga ku loyi loko uyo pfumela hi nntiyiso – a noyi a ku loya hiku ku kuma u hi na xi bandana. Hiku pfumela a Xikwembu xi na wena kama wu n'wani na wu n'wani....kambe Xikwembu a xi lavi ku pfuniwa hi munhu hi kuya a n'angeni.

## 8.2 Appendix II

### **NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

#### INTERVIEW RECORD

##### Interview

Date: April 2001

Place: Benfica, Maputo

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga (Shangaan [mixed with Xitswa and Nda])

Conf/access: Open

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)

##### Interviewee

Name: Makhawukani Bosopa Mathepswa

Gender: Female

Date of birth: between late 1930s

Place of birth: Gundani

Residence: Benfica, Maputo

Religious convictions: A mix of traditional beliefs and Sabbath AIC

Position in the religious group: None

Profession and occupation: Peasant

Category: Traditionalist

Address: N/A

Tape: N/A

identification: N/A

MATHEPSWA, M B

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL  
INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

AC- Kokwani, n'wina mu nga va khale, mu nga hi byela yini ke hi ta ntumbuluko? A ntumbuluko xini ke?

MM- A ntumbuluko lowu minavo a ni nga ta wu tiva kahle.

AC- Swini va nga maha khale swa ntumbuluko?

MM- Leswi ni nga wa khalenyana ka laha phakati, he!, ni wa khalenyana wa laha phakati, ani wa khale ngopfu. Ni ta swi sungula a phakati kwala ni nga swi kumela kona. Hikusa a swa khale, khale na minavo a ni swi tivi, swa va kokwani, va mamani, swa va manimani kwaseyo, se a ni nga swi tivi.

AC- Ahati loko a nhanyana a kula swini va mahaku ke?

MM- Loko akula, a xo sungula o kula, va ku n'wana mani a kulile hi ku vona leswiya swaku psuka. Loko a kulile, a suka aya a ka sungukati aya mu rilela, a mu wela aku kuputsu. Loko a wile laha hansi, a sungukati li mu byela, 'pfuka' se a pfuka, a teka kumbe xipeneti kumbe wuhlalu a veka laha hansi, se a ku, 'mina ni vonile leswaku ihi' se a pswatsi liku, u vonile le swa ku yini? A hi fambi u ya ni komba. Se a famba a ya mu komba. Se a ta mu swekela a xigodo xa laha ndleleni. Se loko a gile, a mu tsala a xihambano laha ka xinena. Se a mu pfalela lomu ndlini a tsama kona. A tsama a tchuvukela a swilo leswiya swi hela.

AC- A mu tsala hi hini ke?

MM- A mu tsala hi xigodo lexiya xa laha ndleleni. Ahisa, a teka a hlungu la kona a sweka na swi wuswana, se a ga a nhanyana luya na xinhanyetana lexi a to

tsama naxo, se; a teka a hlungu leli li salaka a li tchela mafura se a mu tsala. A swi mahela ku yini? Kumbeni, va li hi mahlula zotlhe.<sup>117</sup>

**AC-** Swi tirela yini ke?

**MM-** Ku mu lahela ka kona, ka xilandi xa hina, ku endlela a ku a nga tsuki a onheka. Loko a tlula a tindlela na a kulile, kumbe loko a nga swekeliwanga ni ku tsaliwa, a ta tira ku lanza ku lanza [endless periods]. Se loko masiku ma hundzile, na va lava ku mutchinela mbutsa, vata famba va bikelana, a sungukati li ta teka a tluka li famba li tloma lomu ti nyangweni li ku ni rileliwe hi xikhombana. Loko a za a tlhoma a xitluka laha nyangweni, va swi tiva leswaku a li 'ni weliwe hi xikhombana.'

Loko va hetile ku mutchinela, va ku a khomba se ya huma, va hlengeletana masungukati, va ta va ta humesa a xikhombana lexiya. A xigodo lexi a nga mutsala hixona, a ta tlhela a mutsala kambe, se va teka a xikhombana vaya xipeta matini. Loko a mapwsatsi va yile vaya mu peta a matini, hi kameni wa hlikanhi va ya tsawula a khomba.

**AC-** A va mu peta a kama muni ke?

**MM-** A va ya mupeta na mixo, a Save. Se va pima a kama vaku se khale, va ya mu tsawula. Van'wani a va fa pheya! Loko a dyambu li nge se huma, a mati ya Save ma kufumela, kambe loko se a gambu gi huma, matuvika musu, se ku kufumela ku hela, ma sungula ku titimela. A nawu wa kona wa ku mu peta matini ani wu tivi. Kambe loko va mu humesa a matini, va mu veka a masaneni; hi ndzaku se va mu teka va ya mubwewula, hikwayo musisi yiku psetu, yi hela.

Loko a tekiwe, a vawu kati va ve kona, se a maheliwa a mu gaqo, ku tekiwa a duku li sotiwa ku sotiwa a gaqa. Se va finingetela a khomba na xinhanyetana (xikhombana) se va famba na ku andlaleliwe a swi theve ....va yimbelela.... Loko va fika a

<sup>117</sup> A munhu na munhu loyi anga na swakwe, loko a famba wa tlula a xigodo lexi se xi tiva hikwaswo xi heta a swiyila. A xihambano lexi, a ni tivi leswaku a xi vitanisiwa sweswo a khale.

nyangweni ya yindlu, ku andlaliwa swi theve va wa ka swona na tin'wani tikhomba ta malembe, va ambale swi andani swo psuka. Se va pfuxiwa se tifola a ti khomba hi kwato.

A muti na muti va byeliwe ku sweka wuswa, kun'wani va sweka tindluwi. Se tikhomba ti tsama, ku suka a mamani wa khomba leyi ya n'winyi wa mbutsa aku: 'Niku thaka ndipe guruwo,' [this part of the ritual seems to come from Ndaui since the words sang are in Ndaui] a mu khava laha (seno ndzaku), a mu ba hi dzovo la loyi wa mutsongwani, a ya mahlweni hi ku mu khava seno ndzaku na a yimbelela.

Se ku ta makwenu [mistake is time for pwsatsi] wa kona wa xinuna na xipeneti, se a mapwsatsi ma tchetela tindluwi a mavokweni ya tikhomba, na tona ti khunarile – se va ta va vanuna vaku: 'Hi mangatlu, hi mangatlu, psoriyo, vaku hubu va teka tindluwi a mandleni ya tikhomba (a va mangatlu lava va fana, a hi vava nuna va hombe). Anawu wa kona ani wu tivi, kumbe ku lumisa khomba.

Se ku ta a makwenu wakwe a humesa a xipeneti, se a mu tlhateka a xipeneti a gama a ku mupso [kuba hi khava kutsongwani], a mu vutisa a ku, hi wena mani ke? Se a bala a vito leli a nga tchuliwa, lawa n'wina munge ya wu jaha, hina hiku ya wu tombi, ya wokhomba. Se loko a vulile a vito lakwe, yiku du vata na swi peneti va ta va xava va va ba, a ntirho wa vona hi ku biwa. Swilo leswiya swi tcheliwa a ka ngelo.

AC- A vito legi ga wutombi a gi tchulisiwa ku yini ke?

MM- Loko a ntumbi yi ngena a ndline yi tchuliwa a vito<sup>118</sup> ga wutombi. Aniku mina no kula ni hi na vito ga mina, a kama ni kulaka se ni tchuliwa a vito la wutombi. Vani tchula a vito, niya na nyima lahaya, va ku a gi ni fanele, va tchula, va vitana, vaku agi fanele, se vaza va kuma legi voto, ya, ga mu fanela, hi gona legi a to vitaniwa hi gona, va ku ga wutombi.

Se loko swi helile swa ku muxava, va teka swi peneti va manyela ka xi andani lexo psuka, va teka masinza na wuhlalu va manyela ka mugaqu. Se tikhomba ti ya ngena

<sup>118</sup> A ma vito ya va Tsonga manharu (1) vito la mapswalwa, (2) vito la xikwembu kumbe mabizweni na (3) vito la wu jaha kumbe la wutombi.

ndlini ti ga. Se ku huma a mbita ya byala, se mapwsatsi va ta na xikhuwana va ta rwexa<sup>119</sup> khomba, va karhi va vulavulela minawu ya vona, va ku vomu laya lezwaku inawu.

AC- Mu nga nibyela a munawo leyi va yi wulaka na va mu rwexile a xikhuwana ke?

MM- Aaaa, hahaha, a na ha yi tivi; yi hundzile khale. Ni layiwe, kambe a na ha yi tivi. Va ni bohilele wu hlalu, va boha a fundzu, va vula a nawu va boha fundzu va vula nawu. A wu hlalu legi vali *xikhulu*<sup>120</sup>.

AC- Loko se swi hundzile hi kwaswo leswi, ku fika karhi wo tekiwa, aswi mahisa kuyini ke?

MM- Loko a tekewe, a tchineliwa a hi tani, kuve a tekiwe.

AC- A hi vula vuleni hi loyi a kalaka a nga se tekiwa.

MM- Animutivi loyi wo tchineliwa a nge se tekiwa, ni tiva lavo tchineliwa va tekiwe<sup>121</sup>, a nuna ahi Joni. Loko a nuna a vuya o enela a ku mu vona a ku i nuna loyi a tsutsuma a ya ka masungukati aya va byela a ku a nuna wa mina a vuyile. Se va ngena va mulaya, a ku mu byeletela a xirotha; ma xitiva xirotha? – ani xi tivi – u lava ni ku byela hi kwaswo, - ina, munga kwangulukeni – a ni kwanguluki, ehe, kambe swi ta karata.

Se vo mu laya a xirotha, vaku, loko u ya wu katini, ku la ku ya wa maha leswi, u maha leswi, a ka nuna wa wena, wu munyika xirotha na nzawani. Va mu nyika a ximbitana, se loko a fika seniya a hlambisa a nuna. A nuna a vekwa la, la marumbini

<sup>119</sup> Ni hleketa leswaku a ku mu rwexa a xikhuwana lexi na va mu byela a mu nawu swi vula leswaku a ku sukela ka sweswiya a rwela a *ntumbuluko*. A nawu hikwawo wa Xitsonga wule hehla ka yena, a minawu ya wu nsati na ya muti a fanele ku rwala. Kambe u ta kuma leswaku a va va nuna a va rwexiwe tchume hi ta mi nawu yi nyingi ya *ntumbuluko*.

<sup>120</sup> A Xikhulu xi fana swinene na Roman Catholic Rosary na lexi xi tirisiwaka hi va Surhumani na va HariKrixina.

<sup>121</sup> Leswi swi komba aku a vu nyingi va tekiwa va nge se ngena ndline, na vahari va tsongo.

a ku mu go. A sungula hinhloko a muhlambisa, amuhlambisa, a tchela mati a non'wini a mu hlukuhla, se a phela a mati lawaya a mandleni ka loyi wa nhanyana. Kambe, a hi ku wa tsakama, xikalavilo xa xitsananani. Loko a hela nhloko, a sungula a tlhelo, a muqelo inhamu, loko a heta a xiro o wa a nuna wa kona aku vuka. Loko a heta a nhloko a sungula hi voko a hlambisa, a tsema<sup>122</sup>, awa...a hlambisa hikwaswo swiro hindlela leyo a mutsemeta a musisi yakwe ya seno phambeni (a khale a vo tsuvulela<sup>123</sup>) se a teka a mafura a mu tota hindlela yaleyo yo fana na leswi anga mu hlambisisa swona.

Loko a ti huku ti ku kikiri koo, a tlhela a mu hlambisa na ku mu tota a ma fura. Se li ku n'wee, va ta vata mu pfluxela. A nunavo a na mapwsatsi ma nga mu laya va ku, loko a maha leswi, ni leswi a tsandzekile. Loko swi endlile kwatsi, a ta ku a ngena a munhu luyani kumbe a laha mubedwini, a ta tchika a tsama hansi a khondla xi tava, se va swi vona a ku laha swi endlekile. Se va ku, lixile, a pfumela, vaku mupfukile, mu etele kahli? A ku ehe, hi etele kahle, na ku higona a tiko legi ga tisuna a wunge wuli, a ku tititi. Se va tsaka a venyi, se va humesa a swa ku bonga xirotha (pondo kumbe xini). Se vatlhela va ya kaya, a tchi kotile xirotha, ku vuyile le swo ihi, na leswo ihi. A muxwi, mo etlela hi wusiku mu ka mu ntira a ntirho wa n'wina, se muvuya.

Se ni nga bala ni swale ndlini? Ina mu nga bala. Se swa maqinga yo lava ku swi tiva hi wona! Loko hiya a kale ndlini, va mu nyika a xikalavilo xa nawu, xitsongo ngopfu ku hundza le xa xirotha. A xi voniwi hi vanhu xexo. Se vaya le ndlini vaya nyika a ti mhaka taku tiva a khombo. Se maha leswi, va ku maha leswi – loko ku hi na nguvo ya mamani, ku hi na batchi ga bava, ni swa lava va nga ku nyikaka. Se mu sungula a ntirho wa n'wina lowuya, se wu teka a nuna wa wena , laha hi kona ku nga na ntirho wu kulu. A khale aswi karata, a ku ngahi na xi singwana, a ku tira leti, u ku zin'we timbiri tinharu, kala wu heta [ku tsuvulela makaka] – a wu tsuvulela u heta, se mu tiva khombo, a nga phuquliwe, a xa ku sungula a ku sungula a mandla wu muphuqula wu ku zi, se u teka nyana a mafura ya wu thafuteni, u mu tota lomu ka mathanga, para ku yini, para a nga teli hi ma sema. Neti aza a huma a handle va tchuvukile yena, a ku

<sup>122</sup> A swiro kumbe muzimba wa munhu a ka nawu wa xirotha wu phakiwa hi 22 wa ma division.

<sup>123</sup> Loko a makaka manga heli kahle hi ku tsuvulela, a va khoma huku va tsuvula va siya tlhelo kumbe va maha hiku hlurulela vanga heti a mavoya, se yi nyikiwa a hahani wa kona aya nayo kaya, kuya komba aku a n'wana a tsandzekile a nawu wa xirotha a ka va beleki vakwe.

a mahiwe yini. A nawu lowu, wo mu halula, na ku mu hlambisa, na ku mu tota mafura a wu helangi laha ka xirotha, a fanele ku tsama a basile, na a tolile a mafura, manga hi ya ku tola hi yetche. Se a khoma khoma a swi ambalo leswiya a ya nyika bava na mamani,....niya tiva mamani, ku fana na leswi anga ni pwsalisa swona, a nga ni tiva. Bava ibatchi, mamani i nguvo. I ntirho wa ntumbi lowu kama hikwawo, awu heli. Wu mahe na seno wu katini, a nyika a n'wingi a nguvo, va ta tolelana mafura a bava a nyikiwa hi n'wana wakwe wa jaha. Loko muhi vambiri, ku hi na loyi a nga ranga, a a nyikiwavo.

**AC-** Hi mhaka muni va ku ku tiva khombo, kumbe ku tlhava khombo?

**MM-** Swi vitanisiwa a ku i khombo hi kuva a nawu wa kona wu vula a ku ikhombo<sup>124</sup> loko wa nsati adivana na wa nuna. Se va ku mani a tivile khombo. Leswi mutwaka a ka ti n'wani ti ndawu vaku loko mu hi na makhombo munga ngeni.

**AC-** Hi mhaka muni loko munhu a tala ku humeliwa hi swo biha, kumbe ku feliswa va ku mani u na khombo. Se a ku tlangana na wa nsati va ku ikhombo ke?

**MM-** Hiswona, kambe loko vaku, mani a tlavile khombo, va vula a ku ya ndlini va ya tlangana. Kambe minavo a ni tivi leswaku hi kolaho ka yini va vitana a ku ikhombo.

**AC-** Loko swi hundza leswo se a xura nyimba, swini swi mahekaka ke?

**MM-** Mina a mudawukweni wa mina...se a van'wani, kumbe va ndawu, va li, loko a xurile nyimba hi kona a yaka aya tiva va bava vakwe. A ka hina a swi kona, a siku la mina la ku tiva va bava, hi laleli la ku tlhava khombo. Hi swo ni swi tivaku, loko ni xura nyimba ya mina yo kula, ni ti velekela a n'wana a kula.

<sup>124</sup> Khombo, ku tiva khombo – a khombo hi Xitsonga iswo biha kunge, ku fa, ku kala ku kateka, kambe laha khombo iswa masango. A ku tiva khombo ku etlela na wa nsati kumbe wa nuna. A mhaka leyi, yi endla aku a wa nsati na wu nsati lakwe swi ve swo nyama. A va va nsati va voniwa va hi va tcheli va khombo. A ku teka ku ngena a khombweni, ku hela ka ku lulama na ku ngena a ku biheni hi ku hisa kumbe ku ve na makhombo. Ku na leswi unga fanelangiki ku khoma. Hambu swikwembu a swi ku amukeli loko wu suka a masangwini.

AC- Va n'wani va tota misava a ka kwirhi, swi vula yini ke?

MM- Loko a wa nsati a hi na nyimba a ngena a masin'wini, hi ntumbuluko a fanele ku a nyikiwa mbewu a tchakunya a phela, se a teka yin'wani ya tixaka xaka a famba a byaleta a ti khona hi kwato na laha phakati ka nsimu.

Se wu tlhatlha wu fambisa sweswi [u tlhatlha a hehla], kumbe ku na n'wingi kumbe ku na yini, a ta switiva a ku se mu ma kumile... leswi a hi swa khoholo, inyimba leyi, kasi ku a ti mbewu ti nga hlupheki, ti nga tchavi, leswi unga byalela, ti mila *bem* ti kula *bem*. Se loko wu rima ku sungula ku hisa, u hlamba a kwirhi na wu n'watsekela a mati lawa lommu masin'wini, na wu koka a timbilu ta mavele a ku ti kula.

Se loko ku na pfula, wu famba na wu hlamba wu koka timbilu ta mavele, wu dawula a gumi la wena wu kweketa laha ku humaka xifaki. Ku hlambelela timbewu kasi ku a xifake lexi xi ta beleka. Loko ti hi ti n'wembe na mavele yo rumbuka, wo xixitela khuma hi nyimba leyi ya wena, wu famba wu hahla a khuma leliya. Kumbe tin'whembe, u ti haxa kasi ti kota ku veleka, na mavele ma tchela kwatsi.

AC- Ahati, swi kona leswi swi nga mahiwa kasi ku a ku veleka ku ta vevuka ke?

MM- A swi kona ka hina. Loko munhu a hi na nyimba o ti belekela. Kambe kota swilo swa ntumbuluko swi karataka, loko a za a nga beledi, swi kona aswi tivaka. Loko a vula a ta beleka. Loko a nga lavi ku vula, va ta tlhatlha lisinga la wura va mu boha<sup>125</sup> se a ku ni tiva leswo kani ni swo kani. Loko a nga vulangi, hambu a psala, a n'wana a nga ta an'wa. Kambe loko a *vulela*, a n'wana u ta huma, a tlhamba, a xixita, a rila, a watsamula; se a *makhombo* ma helile.

<sup>125</sup> Va kholwa leswaku loko munhu a za anga veleki, inandzu wa yena; xikona a xi tivaka a kalaka ku vula (ku nge va va nuna, mi mirhi swilo swa wu mboni swa jaha etc.). loko a fa na a zama ku veleka, inandzu wakwe na wu bihi lakwe (loko a hlala va mu byela aku wo tidlaya hi wetche). A masungukati hikwawo mo mu kwatela ma muba tipama na ku mu holovisa na ku mu rukatela loko n'wana anga humi. Loko a nga wuli, va vitana kumbe n'wingi, kumbe n'hombe a ta boha hi ti singa a ba (a n'wingi o khongotela, a tsembisa aku a va nga ta byela a n'wana wa kwe, yena anga bi), kala a vula kumbe afa. Samuel a nga xikoleni xa bibeles sweswi, a mahile a ku velekiwa ka n'wana wakwe Bethuel. A boha Noria a ba. A mamani wa mina, anga nsati wa murangeli wa kereke, a a hi sungukati le likulu a ka ntirho lowu. Swi tlhatlha na musisi, leswi a wa nsati a twisaka swona ku vava, a tlhela a bohiwa, a biwa.

**AC-** Loko xin'wanana xi huma, va xi amukelisa ku yini ke? Hi mani a xi amukelaka a ka mapwsatsi lawa manga lahaya ke?

**MM-** Va ta kheta mun'we, va ku wena mani mu amukeli, se a mu amukela, a tsema xikavani, a mu hlambisa, se a hlambisa a mamani wa kona. Hi yena mu amukeli a to mu swekela, a muhlapwsela, a sindza a yindlu a mu humesa, se hi tchula a ma vito ya hina ya wu pwsaka.

**AC-** Swi kona swi n'wani swi fambelanaka na ku amukela ke?

**MM-** A ma amukelela ma hambene. Mina sweswi, loko a ni vona, a ni ta amukela vana; kambe, a naha tiva tchumu<sup>126</sup> (no more sex). Se a va ta kheta ntumbi vayi tsembileko a ku ya tiva tchumu; hi yena a to tiva n'wana, a to huma na khombo a ta tluta a n'wana. A ta ngena ndlini na nuna va etlela, kuve va bohile a fundzu li nga divani a ka xingotana, se loko va hetile ku maha swa vona, a khoma a swilo leswiya a totela xi ngotana. Na mixoo a famba a ya fika, a nga va xeweti (na loko wu yisa tinguvo ka va beleki a wu va xeweti) – a bohisa a n'wana laha xi sutini, leswi venge *ku mutluta*, kumbe *ku munyika khombo*.

A mamani wa n'wana nayena a siku a nga ta tiva n'wana kumbe ku boha n'wana a ta fambisavo a khombo a ka mu amukeli. Hambi o kala a nga hi yena a nga mutluta, a nga rivakeliwi a mu amukeli. Wu teka tchumu (xipeneti) uxi tchela khombo. Se u ta naxo u ta munyika a mu amukeli.

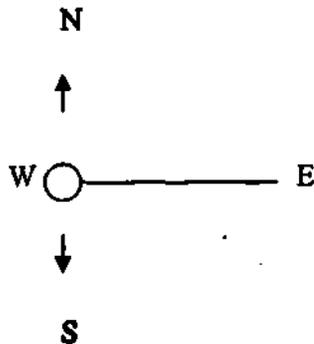
**AC-** Ni tlangene na mufana tolo (Xadrique Nyatchunge), a nga na xi n'wanana xa ha ku velekiwaka, xo va na maviki mambiri. Se a ku a la kuya kaya a ya lahelisa n'wana, hikuva a nga kula a nhloko. Swini mu swi tivaka hi ta ku kula nhloko naku lahela ke?

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<sup>126</sup> Ku tiva tchumu-to know something-this means to have sex or to be sex active. Sex in Tsonga culture is what define people mostly women. When small they are innocent and ritually clean, when period comes the innocence ends. When menopause comes, the innocence comes back and the woman is ritually clean. The period of menopause is to be kept without sex until death, except ritual sex for cleansing widowhood impurity. This is a huge problem for old couples.

MM- Xipandze xi kulisaka nhloko. Loko xi pwsaliwa va xi vona a ku a naxo, va mu lahela hiku mu lema nhloko kumbe ku mubohisa murhi kolweni. Loko xi huma se intirho wo lava ti mhamba. Va n'wani va tchela ndleve ya mhuti, va n'wani va lava pandza, va teka ngoti va boha fundzu va ku a kolweni va ku mu go. Se va lahelile (a mukatchira [mutove], muhlafula...). Hi maha hlungu hi tota hikwalaho xi dawulaka hi kona. Kumbe ku doneketela a mafi ya mutove, makhoma, loko mawoma u doneketela man'wani kwalahaya ku dawukaka.

KUFA- Loko munhu a file a swi fani na lomu ku nga na masimitela, vo rwala a munhu. A vanana a va mu voni, va ngenisiwa a ndlini kumbe va yisiwa a ka wun'wani a muti (a mufi a tsoveleliwa kumbe ku khinyiwa a swiro a pingiwa onge xihari. A pingu wa kona ve muthiko). Se loko va kumile a ndzuti wa kahle va ku, lowu i muti wa kahle, se va mu lata, va kela a khele (ve isela) se va lava a muti wa yena, va guba a tlhelweni [va fana na Mayuda swin'we na va Arabe]. Laha a tsamaka kona kumbe ku etlela, a kuyi musava, lava va switivaka, va tsema xitheve xi pfala a misava a ku yi nga ngeni<sup>127</sup> se va mu siyetela, kambe yena a li mutini wakwe.



Ku na ma fela yo tala, mavabyi, ku na ndenda, ku khohlola; a munhu wo khohlola a na ma lahleliwa yakwe. Ku ya ka laviwa libuku, ku laviwa lidaka, ku laviwa qanda, ku laviwa tsumani. Hi swo swi rangisiwaka laha hansa, laha a latiwaka kona. Hikwaswo leswi swi maheliwa a ku pfula yi ta kota kuna. Leswi swa *mudawuko*<sup>128</sup>.

<sup>127</sup> A munhu a lahliwa hi reve la xi nsati (xibaba) la xi nuna (xinene) ku fana na le mubedwini. Hikuva va li wa hanya a yo etlela a kaya lakwe la lipswa. Vona xikombiso ehehla.

<sup>128</sup> Mudawuko imasungulo (the beginning or reshit and arche). Leswi hi leswi hi xingezi hi swi vitaka: "immutable, belonging to the source of life and existence and the basic of its vitality."

A vana lava va belekiwaka, a ku fa ka vona ka fana na ka lava va tsongo. Sathani u mahile swin'wani swo humesa a tchilo lexi xinga ndzeni, xi kalaka xi nga se tiyela [miscarriage or abortion] – vaya vaya teka sweko la laha xi tikweni, la mbita. Va teka a swilo leswi va ku swi khubu kwalomu ka yona, va yi mbonya, va yi tlhohlhora seno hehla [a tsakweni] – loko ku hi Save, va famba vaya kela khele, se va teka a sweko legiya va ku gi khoo. Hambi va seletela lomu ma tlhelweni, lahaya va nga boxa a va seleteli.

Laha va boxaka va fela a ku a moya wu ta huma, hiku, una xiviti awunge se huma handle. Loko a n'wana afa ange se tiviwa, va mu lahla a koveni kasi ku loko mati mata ma hatla ma mu teka. Va mu lava a ku aya koveni, a ta hatla a famba kwalomo a yaku kona. Va ku tiva vona.

Loko a wa nsati afa na nyimba va lava libuku, qanda, madaka, leswaku a ta laheliwa a munhu loyi.

AC- Ndzaku ka lifo, loko va basisiwa ku susa malopa (munala), na kunga hi ku hlamba tindzaka, a va maha yini ke?

MM- A va vitana n'anga. Loko mufi a hi wa nuna ku dyawa a huku ya wa nsati [mbaha], loko a hi wa nsati ku dyawa ya wa nuna [kuku]. A n'anga leyi a yitela ku gisa tisinya. Se va tsuwulela a mavoya ya huku leyo, va ngena ndlini va hisa mavoya, va teka a lihlelo va puputela ku ku phu ximusi (loko mutwa vanhu vaku unga nipuputeli hi lihlelo). Se va teka timhamba va sweka na wuswa (a huku angaku yo woxiwa) se va khemelela va maha mukanyangwa yi tsongo (loko mutwa vaku swa yila a ku kanyanga a vuswa u veka). Se munhu na munhu a teka a xiwuswana lomu ka lihlelo a ga, loko van'wani vangahi kona va vekeliwa, loko vanana vangahi kona, ku vekiwa, a mamani wa kona a byeliwa a ku va nga phuzi mati ya laha kaya, kala va ga.

AC- Loko a phuza a mati ange se ga swi ta ku yini ke?

MM- U ta limala. U ta khoohlola, kumbe swi n'wani, vaku a siyiwile.

**AC-** Ahati a ku hlamba tinzaka swi tsamisile ku yini ke?

**MM-** A ti ndzaka, a ti na wa hombe na swi vanana, hikwavo ti kona, loko va hi va nsati va munhu va nga sala, ku giwa tisinya, se ku petiwa a byala la xikuma, se va ku a va va nsati va la ku hangalasiwa na tinguvo ta mufi. Se ku petiwa a byala laxikhale(o). Se hi laha va gangisiwaka kona. Va phakela a pahla ya yena, kumbe swilo sakwe ka maxaka. Ku hangalasa a pahla ya mufi/ ku hangalasa va va nsati va mufi. La va va nga teka va ta famba va ya hlamba tinzaka, va tivana, kambe leswo ani swi tivi.

Kasi ke a n'wana, leswi a fileko (ava feliwe hi xitukulwana David xinga gandliwa hi mova wa IFA), se loko va tsamile va vona a ku va karele, vo ngena ndlini, na hikwenu laha kaya na muswitiva, loko swihi swa xikhale. A khale khale leswiya, a va sila a fole va li teka, va ya ndlini, va ya tchela sweswiya ninga swi bala se va huma va ta mu dzahisa a mandleni. Hikwenu mu dzaha a fole leliya, hambi na swi vanana swi dzaha. Se ku swekiwa a wuswa, muga ka ngelo wun'we hikwenu lihi hava muro. A li na murhi, lo mu tlhanganisa.

**VAFI-** Hina hi tiva a ku va file, kambe sweswi ku na ku va vuyisa laha kaya [mutchapi] – kambe ku phahla ku ve ka ntumbuluko. Ioko uya a tihlofweni, a va ku a swikwembu swa wena swi lava byala, se ku petiwa byala, ku vitaniwa hi kwavo va wukati. Se vaya swiyela [magandzelo].

**8.3 Appendix III****NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview****Date:** April 2001**Place:** Matola Rio**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko***Language:** Tsonga (Xitswa and Shangaan)**Conf/access:** Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee****Name:** Kalamano Veyane Thombeni**Gender:** Female**Date of birth:** c.a 1920s**Place of birth:** Mabungele (Save region)**Residence:** Matola Rio**Religious convictions:** Traditionalist**Position in the religious group:** N/A**Profession and occupation:** Peasant**Category:** Subsistence agriculture**Address:** N/A**Tape identification:** N/A

THOMBENI, K V

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

AC- Hi taya mahleni na bulu la hina la tolo. Hita sungula hi ta loko a ntumbi yi ngena ndlini.

KT- A ntumbi loko yi ngena a ndlini, yoya ka sungukati aya fika a mu wela. Se, a sungukati liya kela xigodo xa laha ndleleni ata hisa a mu swekelela aka ximbitana a mu nyika a vuswa la kona a ga. Loko a gile, se va teka xi mbitana lexiya va mbonya hansi. Loko se a hetile, a tlhela a kaya. Se a sungukati lita teka ximbitana lexiya liya nyika a mamani wa ntumbi, liku: a ximbitana ninga swekelela a n'wana wa n'wina aka xona hi lexi.

Loko a tekiwa, aya a wu katini, vata gama vaku a a yi kaya aya layiwa. Kuta huma a masungukati mambirhi kumbe ma nharhu ma mulaya. A malayela hi lawa: Vaya vava lava xikalavilo xa xitsongo, va lava a ndzawani – se va lava a bohlela kumbeni xigoboza. Se va lava mafura<sup>129</sup> va tchela kwalomo, va teka ndzawani va tchela kwalomo, se va lava a tsumani va tchela kwalomo.

Se a sungula hi swale phambeni swa musisi a suselela swi hela. Se a sungula ku muhlambisa a sungula hi nhloko na awa, kuhi na loyi a muvuxaka a tsamileko ko kota leswiya....[a hlambisa hi himahlambisela lawa hinga makomba lomu ka Mathepswa].

Loko anga hetangi a musisi ya le phambeni, vata khoma a huku va yi hlurulela vanga heti a voya, va yi yisa a ka va beleki. Se a va beleki vata swi vona aku a n'wana wa vona anga wu kotangi a nawu. Loko aswikotile, ata pfuka a boha ximolowani [a nuna], kumbe nguvo, se va ba mukulungwani. Se loko va yile kaya a va heleketi, mu sala mu tlhava kumbe ku tiva khombo-munga va tsemankanyi, hikuva ve ku va tsema muhlana; se va tsikeni va tlhela, hikona mutivaku khombo. Se a nyikiwa [lo wa

<sup>129</sup> A mafura ya wutafuteni Manga vuliwa hi Mathepswa, laha ma patsiwa na tindzawani na tsumani. Swonge Mathepswa a vulavula hi mafura yo nuhela la yo mahiwa a ma frabrika kumbe pomada.

ntumbi] xikalavilo xo hlapswa nuna loko va heta. A xikalavilo lexi xa fihliwa a xi voniwi.

Loko a fika a masikwini ya yena yaku hlamba, ata suka a etlela a ndawini ya hena. Loko a swiyela anga ta fika seniya ku etlelaka a nuna, ata tsema a siya. Naku khoma tipahla ta nuna wa wena uka u hlamba swa yila-unga tsemankanyi a ndawini ya wa nuna swa yila.

**AC-** Loko a swiyela kumbe ku khoma a pahla ya nuna ku endleka yi ke?

**KT-** Aku humelela aku a nuna a ta telwa hi nyoka a telwa hi xi rwala.

**AC-** A tolo mu vulavulile hi timhaka ti nyingi ta ku mbonyiwa ka ximbitana, ni lava kutitwa kwatsi nyamutlha.

**KT-** Xa mbonyiwa [ximbitana] loko a mbonya loyi wa timbitsi ta yena waku mbonya hi swi n'wani; hiku ku na ku mbonya tsena anga tivi tchumu, se naku mbonya aku a ta nyikiwa a swa wu rileli; a mbonya hi wu loyi. Leswo hi swona swi khomiwaku loko vaya tihlolweni; vaku, fambani ka sungukati, a mu vekile, hi swona swi endlaka aku anga beleki. Loyi wo mbonya tsena, a mahela aku anga hatlisi a awu vona [ngati] a heta hambu nyanga anga phindangi a vona [ku hlamba].

A xigodo xi mahela aku, loko se agile, a totiwa; a swikota ku huma a famba. Hikuva, loko anga gangi na ku totiwa, a ta onheka a hlamba anga gami.

**AC-** Ahati loko munhu ahi na nyimba. Ni twa leswaku, a teka misava a kutla ka kwirhi a hwahla lomu masin'wini, a mahela yini ke?

**KT-** Loko wa nsati a hundza hi lomu masin'wini ya munhu na ku hisa<sup>130</sup>-a teka a musava a kutla aka nyimba a hwahla lomu masin'wini aku a mavele manga pswi. Na n'wina vava nuna, loko uhi na banga, wo gema a xigodo kumbe sinya kasi ku lahela. Loko anga mahi leswo, ti tafa ti mbewu

**AC-** Loko se a xin'wanana xi velekiwa swini va mahaku ke?

**KT-** Loyi anga amukela<sup>131</sup> aya aya lava a madamba swiyila/madanga swiyila<sup>132</sup> -  
**AC-** aku amukela swivula yini ke? – a mu amukeli wuta ve loyi ato kangatela a mandla ya yena a amukela a n'wana loko a huma. Se loko ahi na ta yena a mbilwini ata tchula. Se loko a mu amukele, vata sweka a murhi lowu a mu amukeli na mamani wa n'wana vaga se va tsala a n'wana loyi na mamani wa kona a hlaneni; na va endlela lava va mona vo khoma a n'wana na va yila (vanga lungangi), xo dawuka [xo fa a xin'wanana loko xinga laheliwangi].....

Loko a ta ngena ndlini[sex], hiyena a pswatsi loyi a to ta na khombo. Naswona a ta swekela a muhlezeni wa kwe. Yenavo a muhlezeni, loko a ngena ndlini[sex] a ta tlhelisa [a khombo] a ka mu amukeli.

**AC-** Ahati ku tiva n'wana swi mahisiwa kuyini ke?

**KT-** Mu teka ngoti mu boha, kambe yinga mahi ku pswi. Mu etlela a hehla ka yona, mutira leswi mu tiraka swona a tambu yihi laho-loko mu hetile mu bohisa a ngoti yiku pswi. Se mu teka a n'wana wa n'wina mu mu boha laha xi sutini.

<sup>130</sup> The group of Tsongas in the Save region believe that if a pregnant woman or the husband of the said woman is exposed to temperature, it does affect the crops if they are working or crossing or passing by a field or farm. Therefore, a proper ritual is to be performed as they work or cross or pass by a field to prevent the crops from burning and die (to dry up).

<sup>131</sup> *Ku amukela* is undertaking to uphold a baby from the birth to the 8<sup>th</sup> day of life. This involve performing rituals of protection, giving *muti*, cooking and taking care of the mother as well as abstinence from sex until the ritual intercourse in the 8<sup>th</sup> day called *ku tluta n'wana*.

<sup>132</sup> *Madamba* or *mandanga swiyila* is a very popular and powerful traditional medicine. It undo or breaks or protect children against all impurity, contamination, diseases, evil as they interact with the evil world, bad and evil people, sex and blood polluted individuals and witches.

AC- Loko ku fa a mulumuzana swini swi mahekaka laha mutini ni le ka mufeliwa ke?

KT- Loko ko fa a mulumuzana laha kaya, anga humi hi laha nyangweni. Va phatula a yindlu hi le ndzaku ka yindlu a humesiwa hi kona. Loko va hi laha xikumeni, va susa a byanyi la xitchungwa a etlela a ka gona a mufeliwa. Se a mundlana waku hangalasa kumbe ku swiyela a xikuma ku suka a mapswatsi mambiri kumbe manharu vakha mati ya vona ka magula, va famba na mufeliwa a handle, sevaya kuma sinyi. Va mu halula se va teka musisi ya yena va yipatsa na byanyi leliya la xitchungwa anga etlela ka lona. Vateka a qanda va munyika a faya hi ku limanya hi mathanga-a tsutsu hikwawo wu xililikela a munengeni yakwe. Loko swi mahile leswo, se va muhlambisa hi mati lawaya; se va hisa a byanyi leliya na musisi yakwe, se va tlhela kaya (hikona ayaku aya boha munala). Leswo aswi maheliwa aku a ta kahlula ku rivakelwa, a tiva aku a nuna a luzile.

Ndzaku ka leswi, ku landza ku tchingiwa tindzaka; laha ku nga ta giwa a murhi wa kona....loko a murhi lowu wu giwe, se vava etlela, a nsati wa kona a fanele ku pfuka a sweka wuswa gi giwa hi vona hikwavo [valixaka kumbe va muti], loko ahi na tingana, ata halata mati va maha hi ku makandziyela kumbe a tchela mati a non'wini a kapfula a ka khuwana leli hikwavo va phuzaka ka lona.

AC- A mavito ya swikwembu ma tchulisiwa kuyini ke?

KT- A n'wana o rila, se vaku u lava vito. Se kuya hlahluviwa<sup>133</sup> tihlolo va vutisela mavito loko va mupfumala, va tlhelisela a mavito se va kuma leli tihlolo tito vumela. Se ku laveka palu, nguvo yo basa, loko a lava ku tchuliwa hi byala la xifaki xa maphuvukwa [byala la mahleko], loko a lava leli la dyan'wa la mahuva va vula, se va hlahluvela loyi a faneleko ku tchula. Karhi wun'wani xi n'wanana [xilavekaka aku xi tchula], se xita tchela fole se a wa hombe a wulawula aku: 'wena tchimani mani....'.

<sup>133</sup> *Ku hlahluva tihlolo*-in the case of giving a child 'the name of the gods' there are three divinations. The first divination is to determine which god (a relative who died, but in some unusual cases can be a living one) the child will be named after. The second, after knowing what is the name to be given to the child, they divinate to know what kind of bear to be used for the naming libation or ritual. Finally, now that they found the name and know the type of bear to be used in the naming, they undergo the third divination to determine who will be officiating or pouring the libation and name the child. The three important decisions in the naming process are decided by divination.

AC- A swi yila swi n'wani muswi khumbulaka hinga kala ku vulavula hi swona hi swihi ke?

KT- KUHAMBAMBA-Loko uhlamba awu khomi a tinguvo ta vanana, loko u khoma a vanana vatave na mathatha/matsatse-se vaku mu teka a tinguvo ta vanana mu hlamba nato, ma vona aku va na ma onhwa ke? Se ata teka a mafura ya tihlafura a divanisa na gumi legi anga ti siva hi gona a gi hisa se a pfuka na mixo a va khoma a va totela...tindleve na matihlo, se u va lahelile; vanga taha telwa hi tchumu.

AC- Ku naku *tluliwa* naku *siyiwa*, swi vula yini ke?

KT- Aku siyiwa hi loko, konge hi leswi laha kaya ku fiweke, se mun'wani a ngena ndlini anga munyiki tchumu; loyi mun'wani a ta vabya, loyi wo siyiwa, kumbe loyi wo siya mungana. Hiwona masiyana lawo-hiku anga swi fambisangi hi nawu.

Aku tluliwa ku kota leswi, aniku mu na maxaka, se mu teka nsati, se hikwenu mu tlangana [to have sex] kwala ka wa nsati loyi, kumbe ku mufamba [sex] na wa nsati, a maxaka ya n'winavo mafamba naye wa nsati loyi; hikwenu mu hlengela a wa nsati loyi. Loko mun'we [wa n'wina] afa, se loyi un'wani aya kuya lahla, a ta tsemeka a hlana afa [it is an immediate death out there in the grave yard] se vaku va tlulene. Se ku laveka aku unga tsineli, hiku, a moya wakwe loko u vuya ka wena u nga ta lunga. Va helile a vana va.....hi karhi wun'we<sup>134</sup>.

AC- Aku onha a hindlu kumbe nguvo swi vula yini ke, na swona swi vanga mavabyi muni ke?

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<sup>134</sup> There can be many reasons why some people died during funerals. It can vary from shock, self fulfilling prophecy, fatigue and demonic attacks. It is to be remembered that there was little knowledge of death and comma. There are many people buried in comma. Beside all that, let it be taken seriously that *ntumbuluko* has laws called *swiyila*. If violated, there are consequences. To avoid such consequences, one is to *lahela*. *Ku lahela swiyila* serves both for prevention and treatment or cure or removal of curse resulting from violating *ntumbuluko* or as pure observation of *ntumbuluko*. Only the gospel can free people from these curses, *swiyila*, *ku lahela* and all *ntumbuluko* powers.

**KT-** Aku onha yindlu ku teka a wa nsati u ta etlela naye a ndlini ya mun'wani.

Loko a n'winyi a ngena a etlela a kuma ma onhwa kumbe mapele-swi maha leswo.

**8.4 Appendix IV****NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview**

**Date:** 13 April 2001

**Place:** Orange Farm, Johannesburg

**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango

**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko*

**Language:** Tsonga

**Conf/access:** Open

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)

**Interviewee**

**Name:** Johane Juvanise Mazive

**Gender:** Male

**Date of birth:** c.a 1960s

**Place of birth:** Malindile (Save region)

**Residence:** Malindile and Orange Farm

**Religious convictions:** AIC (ZCC) and traditionalist

**Position in the religious group:** Member

**Profession and occupation:** informal trader

**Category:** Traditionalist

**Address:** N/A

**Tape identification:** N/A

MAZIVE, J J

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

**AC-** Hi swihi swi yila swa ntumbuluko leswi mu swi tivaka ke?

**JM-** A swilo swa khale leswi a va hlamusela na va hi byela, ku nge loko ku fiwe avaku, a munhu wa tsinani anga fanelangi ku vona a munhu wa ku fa. A swilo leswo a swi yila a masiku ndzaku ya kona.

Loko munhu a vabya a swi karata a ku pfluxela. A vanhu va le handle a vanga va pfumeli hiku a va tivi tindawu lomu va sukaka kona, vanga tsuka vaya yengetela wu vabyi.

**AC-** Mute ku na lava va nga ku vanga engetela wu vabyi, a vali engetelisa kuyini ke?

**JM-** Va li engetela hi ku va n'wani va huma e masangweni. Leswi swinga engetela a ku a munhu luya a ve a hiseka muzimba hi swona. Aswi ringani a ku ta pfluxela a munhu loyi a vabyaka ngopfu kuve wa hisa[had sex last night]. Loko u nga tsamisekangi, u nga pfluxeli mu vabyi [Mfundisi Simion Chitlango a a vekile a nawu lowu a ka va vangeli leswaku wu tirha a ka ma kereke ya le Distrito ya Mabote lomu a nga rangela kona].

Loko wa nsati a nga yimangi kahli[period], a a nga sweki swakuga swa ku ta giwa hi muti, hi ku a vona swa le hehla. A vanana va va fana a va nga pfumeleliwe a ku ya tsama a xitikweni hikuva, loko a va va nsati va nga lungangi, a kama va pfuretelaka a ndzilo; a va fana va ta kuma a ma vabyi ya nyoka.

Loko ku lungisiwa ta miti, a vanana a va nga kumeki a ka ndawu liya, hi ku swa va hombe, swa muti.

**KUTEKA-** a vari va pswali va nga vona a ku a n'wana a kulile, va ku, a hi mu lovoteni a nge se hi mahela ti mhaka. Se va lungisa tlhambi. A wa nhanyana na yena a va mahisa leswo. A va pswali va jaha va nga ta va ta kombela va pswali va ntumbi a xihlangi xa vona a ku xi ya kaya ka vona [no involvement of the two].

**AC-** aka ntumbuluko loko munhu a fa a a lahlisiwa ku yini ke?

**JM-** Ka ntumbuluko loko munhu a fa, ako vitaniwa a va kulu vo karhi va tiko; a ku ya ka laviwa a malandza kumbe madoda ya lomu tikweni, va va bikela a ku mani a file. A ndoda yona yiya ya bikela hosi. A hosi yi vula lava va faneleke ku ya seyo va ya vona a mhaka leyo.

A vava va ya tiva a ku a munhu loyi a file njani, lexi xi nga mu dyaya i tchumu xa ku karhi, kasi va ta tiva a ma lahlela ya yena. Loko a fa hi xifuva, kumbe a tikile, a ni ma lahleliwa ya yena.

Loko a file na a khohlola, a va nga pfali, a vo faka ti godo. Loko a siyeteliwa a swi koteka a ku a pfula yi nga ni, va ku u khomile tilo. Loko a fa na nyimba swa fana....\*

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\* Marginalization of youth in the church, neglect of children, etc has its precedent in *ntumbuluko*. The youth never had responsibility towards their marriage and they married yet teens.

## 8.5 Appendix V

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview**

Date: 27 April 2001

Place: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga-Ronga

Conf/access: Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee**

Name: Felix Khosa

Gender: Male

Date of birth: 22 February 1933

Place of birth: Ka Pfumu (Maputo city)

Residence: Maputo (UEM)

Religious convictions: Christian (Methodist minister serving the Presbyterian Church)

Position in the religious group: Minister

Profession and occupation: University Lecturer (Tsonga department) and Pastor

Category: Academic

Address: C P 257

Tape identification: N/A

**KHOSA, F**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

**DEFINITION OF NTUMBULUKO**

**AC-** Tatana Khosa, i swini leswi munga wulaka hi mhaka ya Ntumbuluko ke? A rito leringe ntumbuluko li vula yini ke? I swine kumbe i xini a ntumbuluko?

**FK-** A Ntumbuluko i swilo leswi hikwaswo hi swi endlaka swi khumbaka ngopfu a wutomi la hina la mapswaliwa, hinga vula leswaku ntumbuluko i nntamu lowu hinga wu voniki, lowuswikotaka a ku hundzulusa a wutomi la hina, wa swikota a ku li onha, wa swikota aku lilulamisa. Hikwaswo, leswo shi endleka hi loko hi kholwa ka swona, kambe a nntamu lowu, wuta hile ka va kokwana va hina. Wu hitela loko hi kholwa ka vona, hi hleketa leswaku, loko ni endla leswi, kumbe ni phahla, kokwana uta ni pfuna. Lo ni tshika, ninga mutsundzuki, a wutomi lamina lita hela. A xikombiso xa matimba lawa i mimoya ya vafi. A ntumbuluko wa hina i mimoya ya va kokwani.

**AC-** Mute, a ntumbuluko i matimba lawa manga voniwiki, manga onhaka (FK manga onha loko o maphoxa, loko u ma onha) kumbe ku pfuna. Munga hlamusela leswaku ma onhisa kuyini naku mapfunisa kuyini ke?

**FK-** Nita sungula hileswi manga onhaka. A matimba lawa ya *ntumbuluko* ma onha loko wena unga va tsundzuki lava vanga hi siya. Ku laveka leswaku karhi ni karhi uva tsundzuka wena. U phahla. Hi laha ma onhaka kona laho. Se loko unga mahi leswo vataku anga vatsundzuki a vafi, se vanhu vataku, 'wa vabya, wa xaniseka, hambu a lava a ntirho angawukumi na kuve van'wana vawu kuma' aswilo hi kwaswo swinga mufambeli kwatsi. Kasi loko vaku vona uva tsundzuka, hi ku phahla, kumbe hikuba nyika a xifihluta, a wu mahele a xifihlulu ka vona, wo maha wu vitana a maxaka ya wena, uku, tanani hita ta kumbuka manyani. Ata swivona leswaku I pela hi kona ha mu tsundzuka. Leswo hitala ku swi endla, hambu hinga humeleliwanga ha tchumu, ha vula leswaku a hi tsundzukeni manyani. Kambe a vu nyingi bya hina hi maha loko swinga fambi kwatsi. Loko swilo hi kwaswo swa wutomi swinga fambi

kwatsi, va li a vaka vona va mutshikile, kambe loko swi famba kahle, vataku, ati nguluve taka Khosa ti na mina.

AC- Loko mu vulavula hi ta vafi, nivona onge ku na ku hambana ka *ecatalogia* xa Vatsonga na xa Bibebe, i swine leswi munga vulaka hita vafi. A Vatsonga va hleketa aku a mimoya yavafi yiya kwihi, yitsama kwihi, yitirha yini xana?

FK- Ya, hina hi Xitsonga xa hina, a mimoya ya vafi ayiyi helo. A lixaka lahina likwala na hina. Hi mhaka leyo, a vanhu a va lahliwa laha kaya<sup>1</sup>. Loko kufika a karhi wo phahla hi tchela byala ni fole laha hansi, hikuva hina vona kwala. Vana hina, kungahi laha kaya tse, hikwako lomu hi fambaka vana hina. Na tsundzuka loko na hari tsongo. Loko hi famba a nhoveni, hi kuma a masala, loko maha sungula, ahi faya hi tchela non'wini, hitlela hi kapfula, hi nyika lava vanga hansi. Hambu loko hiya a Joni, hina vona. Vakona.

AC- Mhaka leyaku twa a vafi hihi navona, loko vanhu va hundzuka, ya vapfuna a ku va maha a *transferencia* se vatwa a Xikwembu xihhi navona ke?

FK- Ayi karate leyo aku hlamula. Nita vulavula hileswi ningo yo swi hanya. Kokwana waku pwsala mamani, a makwavo wakwe a vuye hi Joni na a hundzukile ka Wiliseni, ata kuma leswaku kokwana awali nyanga, nyamusoro ni hikwaswo swa wunyanga na ku femba. Se a hundzula kokwani, a tshika a wunyanga hikwalo, (ku sungula ka Metodista ka Magudo), kambe leswi anga kala a kutshika i mimirhi leyi anga yitiva, loko a anga fanga, hambu mina anitave nitiva yinyingi. Kokwana a xi vona a Xikwembu na xirikona hikwako; kambe vakona van'wana niva vonaka lava loko a huma a sotweni hi mun'wani munhu.

Awu kwembu la *ntumbuluko* lina wukwele. Ku fana na Xikwembu. Ali lavi swin'wani swilo. [Khosa a hambana na vanyingi lavenge a wukwembu bya

1 Hi mhaka leyo, loko ku sungulile a swilahla (cemiterios) ku tumbulukile a ku vuyisa a vafi a kaya, mhaka leyi a khale yingahi hava tani ku vula ka Salvador Matsombe. Hi yona futsi yi endlaka leswaku loko munhu a fa a Joni (SA) kumbe a Maputo, a ya lahliwa a kaya. Na swona loko valava kurura, vasungula hi ku ya phahla a ka ndawu leyi yitove wuhlava, va byela a vafi aku valava ku rura, leswaku vata kala vanga sale le marumbini va kumeka voxo awu hlaveni.

*ntumbuluko* a byi aleli swin'wana swikwembu kumbe swiheno, handle ka leswi swi sindzisaka a ku swona swi khohliwa ku tsikiwa a ntumbuluko, aku nge wu Kreste].

**AC-** I swini leswi hinga vulaka a ku a ntumbuluko wutirha swona a wutomini la siku ni siku la Vatsonga ke?

**FK-** Se nivulile leswaku a ntumbuluko wunga ku pfuna, naswona wungaku tshika wuhohloka. A mapfunela ya ntumbuluko, hihina vanhu hiti nyiketaka. Swin'wana wunga tsuka wuswivona hiku lorisiwa, se loko wu lorile swaku karhi, uku, a muloro leyi ningave nayona, swikona nibyeliwaka swona. Se wulava a tlamuselo wa kona (hitihlolo). A ntumbuluko wa hina waku lungisa a swilo, a hiwaku onha. Kambe kulaveka a mhamba a kan'we hi lembe (*o coelho so engorda uma vez por ano*). Ko laveka mun'we a kalixaka loyi anga vulaka leswaku ahi maheni a mahewu hi tsundzuka vakokwani. Kambe lexi nihlamalisaka, ku, avafi vahina vała hansi, kambe loko a pfula yingani, hili, lowalehehla a hi tshikile.

**AC-** Kuni mhaka mutaka nayo laha, hi leswinge a vafi va va Tsonga vale hansi ke?

**FK-** hiswona leswo. Loko va maha a byala va phahla, va tchela a hansi, hiku vale hansi, le vanga va tchelela kona, a va halati hehla kumbe ku phahla va langutile hehla, kambe a hansi.

#### **NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL ENCOUNTER**

**AC-** Swini swi humelelaka loko a matimba ya Ivangeli ma kumana na matimba ya ntumbuluko ke?

**FK-** A xosungula, a Ivangeli ayi tanga lomu ka hina na va missionario, leyi ya hina ya xi Protestante. Yi fikile na vakahina vanga vuya nayo hile Joni. Se va maha hikuya vitana a va missionario kuta tsakamisa ni ku dyondzisa, tsena a Katolika yitile na va missionario vava lungu, na sweswi ya hateleke hi va lungu. Loko a vanhu va amukele a Ivangeli, kufana na kokwana, a hanyeke na Ngungunyana, voyo switshika hikwaswo swa ntumbuluko va landza a Ivangeli. Hiti mhaka taku lahla, loko ari mukreste, kumbe va vitanile a mufundise, hi kwaswo swi endliwa hi mufundise.

Kambe kuna leswi va endlaka a kaya na mufundisi angahari kona. Hi kolaho, ninga vula leswaku van'wana va tshika a ntumbuluko loko va amukela Ivangeli, kambe van'wana ava tsiki, hambu swiritano, va maha aswa ntumbuluko loko a va kulukumba va kereke vangari kona, kumbe nalava vanga va hlevetelaka (ku swin'wani, ho xidyoho, kambe hinga hlamuseli leswaku i xidyoho hayini. Kunge i byala, kambe a Bibebe ayi vule, hambu Yesu a phuzile a vinyu).

**AC-** Swine swihumelelaka lomu tikweni a ndzaku ka Marxismo ke?

**FK-** Kambe lomu tikweni, ndzaku ka Marxismo, leyi yinga pfukela awu khongeli, sweswi a ntumbuluko ni wun'wanga swi fuma hintamu ngopfu. A magandzelo ma pfuxiwa hi ntamu wa mufumu, a maprojecto ma khanguliwa hi mhamba, a ti n'anga ti nyikiwe a vito ripswa, tina associacao (Associacao dos Medicos Tradicionais Mocambicanos). A vaha vuli leswaku iti nyanga, vali, vadokodela kufana na van'wani lava vanga dyondza a xikoleni, kambe vona lava i vadokodela va ntumbuluko.

**AC-** Swikona a kereke yi nga mahaka aka timhaka leti hikwato ke?

**FK-** Hahaha... swakarata. A kuvulavula, u komba xidyoho, ngopfu loko xi mahiwa hiva kulukumba a tikweni, wo dyayiwa. Va Paulo va xanisiwe va dyawa hi mhaka leyo. A swidyoho leswikulu swina lava kulu, ava rangeli. Lomu ka hina loko wuvulavula vo dyaya. Kambe kulaveka aku tchumayela a Ivangeli, hi vula aku a Bibebe livula leswi, livula leswi, se hina vanhu hipoxa laha, hipoxa laha. U boxa, na kungahi kuruketela. Loku ali kulu, womuyela, wuya mubyela, kunga hi hiku tchumayela a kerekeni, hikuva ataku womu phoxa.

**8.6 Appendix VI*****NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL*****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview**

**Date:** 30 April 2001

**Place:** Radio Mocambique, Maputo

**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango

**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko*

**Language:** Tsonga-Ronga

**Conf/access:** Open

**Permission**

**Restriction (period)**

**Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**

**Interviewee**

**Name:** Roberto Mario Mundlovo

**Gender:** Male

**Date of birth:** 02 March 1970

**Place of birth:** Magude, Maputo

**Residence:** Maputo

**Religious convictions:** Swiss Mission (Presbyterian Church of Mozambique)

**Position in the religious group:** Member

**Profession and occupation:** Locutor (broadcaster) and Journalist

**Category:** Academic

**Address:** C P 2000, Maputo

**Tape identification:** Tape 11-Mundlovo

**NTUMBULUKO****ROBERTO MARIO MUNDLOVO****INTERVIEWED BY THE AUTHOR****DEFINITION OF NTUMBULUKO**

**AC-** Tatana Mundlovo, xana a ntumbuluko xini ke?

**RM-** Nikhensile, kambe aniswitivi leswaku ninga swikota aku tlhamuselela ni hetelela aku a ntumbuluko i swini. Hayini? Hikuva, loko uku ntumbuluko swini tlhamuselo wunyingi. Hayini niku a ntumbuluko wuni hlamuselo wunyingi? Hi Xiphutukezi xaka hina hili a ntumbuluko *é apartir de formação da pessoa, até quando chega à fase de falar como pessoa, no entanto que pessoa. Uma pessoa que tem cabelo branco continua a ser pessoa porque teve o seu princípio.* Hinga vula leswaku a ntumbuluko *é o princípio.* Kuni ma vulavulela hinga nawo namutlha, hi randza aku a ntumbuluko wa vanhu lavaya, kumbe hiku, levaya va dawukisile sweswo a ka ntumbuluko wa vona. Na swilava aku hlamusela leswaku kuna leswi va swi endlaka vona swihambeneke na leswi hi swivonaka hina. Leswo i swilo leswi va swi endlaka na vaku i ntumbuluko wa vona. A mhaka ya ntumbuluko, yi tisa na ta masungulu ya munhu, leswinge, a munhu a tumbulukisile kuyini? Wanitwa, nipatsa na ntumbuluko loko nivulavula hiku mahiwa ka vanhu. A ntumbuluko i ma sungulu.

**AC-** He Xiheveru na Xigriki, ku na marito lawa va ma tirisaka manga hlamuseliwa hi Xitsonga tani 'masungulu' kambe ma kombaka a matimba lawa ma endleke aku a swilo swi sungula (reshit na arche). Swingave swona leswaku na hina Vatsonga loku hi vula a ku a "ntumbuluko" masungulu ya hikwaswo hitave na hivula leswaku a ntumbuluko i matimba lawa ma sungulileke hikwaswo ke?

**RM-** Loko niku a ntumbuluko wula ku hlamusela a masungulu, ni vula nitiyisile leswaku a ntumbuluko u kombisa antamu lowu wu ngave kona a kuza kuhumelela xokarhi.

**AC-** Bava Mundlovo, ahati, iswini leswi wumbaka a ntumbuluko xana?

RM- Loko ni vulavula hiti mhaka ta ntumbuluko, ni vulile kwala niku ku ni swihena, anitivi aku kumbe maswitiva a swihena. Kuna swihena swa vanhu, leswi hiku famba ka mikarhi, swinga engeteliwaka kumbe swikhohliwa. Tani hi leswi a Bibeletse yi vulaka leswaku hi fanele a ku rivala a swakhali, leswi swinga mahiwa hi va kokwana va hina, hive vanhu vapwsa a timbilwini ta hina. Laha a va vuli leswaku hi fanele ku tshika a va kokwani vahina, kambe a swi hena swa va kokwani. Kasi aku ni khanyisa a hlamulo wa mina, nitaku; leswi hinga swi endla a khale a kaya i ntumbuluko. Laha unga twaka vaku 'lava va dawukisile kutani'. Kunge hi ku leha ka hina vaka Mundlovo, Mundlovo loyi wo sungula a a lehile; kutani na lava vaha velekiwaka valehile hi mhaka ya ntumbuluko wa vona. Laha a ntumbuluko wu vula *transmissão de genes*, se a vanhu va vula vaku lava va dawukisile sweswo ni le ntumbulukweni wa vona a va lehile. Leswi hi nga xi swona namutlha hokolaho ka va kokwani.

AC- Hina va Tsonga hi tolovela akuvula leswaku a vanhu va tshikile ntumbuluko, swini hi vulaka loko hi vula leswo ke? Swini leswi vanhu vanga tshika ke?

RM- Wa vona a vanhu lava va pswaliweke a ti handle ka madoropa, nyamutlha loko va fika doropeni va sindzisiwa hi doropa a kuva va hanya xidoropa [Khosha ate xilungu]. Hina van'wani hi kulile na hidya muhungu na guxi na makhutla futsi hidya, kambe loko hita fika doropeni, a makhutla aha ha dyi, naswona amakona. Loko no heta a malembe yotala nihilaha doropeni ni landza amahanyela ya doropa, nihlamba laha kunga na gezi, nihikwaswo swa xilungu, nje hi swakudya swa xilungu, anahari lavi na wuswa, hikusa nitolovela a masa leyi dyiwaka haleno doropeni; a nyama nidya a mabifi niswin'wani swin'wani, loko votsuka vava veka a nyama ya nhloko anaha yidi. Hitchitcha na maambalela, a vanhanyana va ambala a mabuluku....a tikereke hoti hlawulela, hambani ni tumbulukile ni hi wa Musawu Suwisa, naswikota a kuya hlawula Siyawu Apostolika. Loko, nisukile a kerekeni ya vapswali, ni hambene na ntumbuluko....loko ni fularela a mahanyela lawa mangari kona khali a kaya hi ndlela yo kala yinga twisiseke, nitava ni tshikile ntumbuluko.

AC- Loko a vanhu va amukele a Ivangeli, va tshika a ntumbuluko kumbe va patsa a ntumbuluko na Ivangeli ke?

**RM-** Ya, ... xivutiso lexi xiyelana nakuve nitiva ngopfu wutomi la van'wani, kambe anita hlamula a xivutiso lexi himina yaloyi ni vulavulaka. Loko ni pswaliwe, a vapswali va mina vani tsakamisile hi ku tcheliwa mati, kutani loko nikulile ... nivutisile niku, he, muyoni tchela a mati ningase hlawula a kereke leyi niyi lavaka ke? Vaku, n'wanga, hina hiku tchelile mati kasi kuku komba a kereke leyi hi khongelaka ka yona. Kasi ke, leswi unga kula unga kheta leyi uyi lavaka, kambe ahitive leswaku vahataku tsakamisisa kuyini. A khale ani swi vona, loko vakokwani uva xavela kumbe i *vinho*, a tchela a ka kopo, a gama a tchela nyana a hansi, a ku a phuzisa va kokwani kumbe vafi, se a phuza. Kambe hina sweswi a haha phahli kumbe ku tirisa a vanyamusoro. ...kambe vakona van'wani Vakreste u vakumaka kun'wana. Van'wani vaha switirisa leswaku, loko o tsuka a ni lora, a pfuka aya a n'angeni aya vutisa leswaku ani lorile hi mhaka muni.

**AC-** A ka '*vida publica*' ya tiko la hina, i xini lexi xinga na *influência*, Ivangeli kumbe i *ntumbuluko* ke?

**RM-** Makereke manga na *influência* hambu manga landziwe....

**AC-** Kambe nitwile a *Rádio Moçambique* yi vulavula hi xitesawu xa TV a Niassa xinga kala ku tirha, kala va vitana a hosi yita phahla. Uyitwile a mhaka leyi ke?

**RM-** Niyitwile kambe aniyi tivisise ngopfu. Tsena mina ni pswaliwa a Magude, wa tiva a ku a Magude vali Madude<sup>135</sup> Nkanyini? - **AC-**Anitivi tchumu hita Nkanyini, no tiva aku kuna ka Magudu- **RM-**Loko munhu a ku i wa Magudu, ufanele akuswitiva leswaku iwa Magude nkanyini. Anitive leswaku uvona njani, loko vaku Mugudu nkanyine, awu hlamali tchumu kwalaho? - **AC-**Nahlamala, a nkanyini lowu ixini, wuvula yini ke?- **RM-**Magudu i tiko a nkanyini i sinyi. Kutani, le Magude kuni nkanyini lowu wuhlamuseliwaka swo tala; wu nyikiwa swotala leswihlayiwaka hi wona a nkanyini lowu. Hikuva hiharhi wun'wana unga tsuka uya wu tsema hiku ranza ka wena nje, wu pfuka wufile. Kumbe wutsuka, wuku nilava aku swivona, hakunene leswivuliwaka swihumelela. Kambe ahileswaku wo loya a nkanyini lowuya, kumbe ku

<sup>135</sup> We have a serious problem of spelling in Tsonga. When we speak, we speak of "Magudu" because that is what it is; but in Portuguese it has been spelt "Magude." Being the official spelling in Mozambique, we write that way but speak differently. In this interview the informant used both Portuguese and Tsonga variances and I had to transcribe accordingly.

a vanhu va Magudu vo loya, tsena swikona swiyelanaka na ntumbuluko swinga ko ka nkanyi lowuya.

**AC-** Unga vula yini, ixini xinga kona aka nkanyi lowuya xidyaka a vanhu xana?

**RM-** Aniswitivi hiku hetelela, kambe va hlaya leswaku, loko uya a Joni, khale ka va bava na vaha famba himilenge,...utsema hika xikhukhuza a livaleni la swihari, akuri na laha swinga nabyala ngopfu aku ukhomiwa hi swihari, kambe, loko uta na unga switive uta ndlula. Swibiha loko u swi tiva u sima uya...Leswo swivula leswaku mina nitivaka hita nkanyi lowuya, loko nowu ringa a swinge lungi, ninga famba. Kambe loko wuwu yela na unga wutivi, akuna *problema*...nitwa leswaku, a karhini wa nyipi, kuve ni musotchua anga wu duwula na a lava aku swivona, kambe apfuka na a file.

*Tivemos um estudo de gênero, não gênero masculino ou feminino, mas gênero que analisa as relações ou relacionamento em casa, no serviço, interpessoal etc. O estudo salienta que na biografia dum indivíduo, há desvios no comportamento da vida dum indivíduo (os desvios de alguns acontecimentos. Nesses desvios é para o bem ou para o pior). Aonde há mudança há uma força invisível que desvia; então, penso que também nesta questão do canhueiro de Magude há uma força invisível que devemos procurar descobrir.*

## 8.7 Appendix VII

**NTUMBULUKO IN TSONGA MUSIC IN MOZAMBIQUE**

## CD RECORD

Collection of the CD (songs of three different composers blended by RM in one CD)

Date: 30 April 2001

Place: Radio Mozambique, Maputo

Collector: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Theme of the songs: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga-Ronga mixed with Portuguese

Conf/access: Open  (copyright controlled by RM not the composers)

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names: (in full / abbreviated / group )

## Composers

Name: CD with songs about ntumbuluko by Mavota; R. M'boa and Conjunto Gezi

Gender: Mavota and M'boa are females and Conjunto Gezi is a male

Date of birth: N/A

Place of birth: N/A

Residence: N/A

Religious convictions: N/A

Position in the religious group: N/A

Profession and occupation: Musicians

Category: Artists

Address: C P 2000, Radio Mozambique, Maputo

Tape identification: N/A (CD)

<b>Tsonga</b>	<b>English translation</b>
Vonani a <i>ntumbuluko</i> aku xonga ka wone! A <i>ntumbuluko</i> ni mutchumo hikwayo; Vonani a <i>ntumbuluko</i> aku xonga ka wone! A <i>ntumbuluko</i> in mutchumo hikwayo.	See how beautiful <i>ntumbuluko</i> is! <i>Ntumbuluko</i> and everything; See how beautiful <i>ntumbuluko</i> is! <i>Ntumbuluko</i> and everything.
Nadzo tilo na misava, tinyanyana tihahaka; Hikwaso leswi swi vangiwe hi Xikwembu. Swi vangiwe hi Xikwembu, Swi vangiwe hi Xikwembu.	Heaven and earth, flying birds; All these were caused by God Were caused (created) by God! Were caused by God.
Pimisa we makweru, pimisa ha kunene; Loko ne wu xaniseka, Wuta kuma ku zula.	Think brother, yes think carefully, When you are suffering; You will find peace.

(Mavota,

CD)

Here *ntumbuluko* is associated with everything that exists as deriving from *ntumbuluko* and is celebrated as beautiful. It is then associated with creation of heaven, earth and everything and with God the Creator. It is not clear whether *ntumbuluko* and *Xikwembu* are the same thing or different here. In the Tsonga Bible, to create is *ku tumbuluxa*, the creator is *mntumbulukombuluxi* and nature, natural things, phenomenon, and laws are *ntumbuluko*. Although *ntumbuluko* and *mntumbulukombuluxi* (creator) come from the same root, suggesting any easy association of Christian *Xikwembu* (God) the creator (*mntumbulukombuluxi*) with *ntumbuluko*; in Tsonga cosmology that is not easy. *Ntumbuluko* is separate from *Xikwembu*. *Xikwembu* is an ancestor, remote human being who was produced, sustained and recalled by *ntumbuluko* whose function is sanctioned by *ntumbuluko* and operates to strengthen and reinforce *ntumbuluko* in his/her domain.

#### **Tsonga/Portuguese**

Goza a vida como ela é...a tua maneira...

Ni na mahanyela ya mina, na wena una mahanyela ya wena

A ntirho wa swilo loko u swivonela kule sha hlamalisa  
 Você não julga loko unga swi tive, a ntirho wa swilo swa hlamalisa (loko uswi vonela  
 kule)

Unga swi hleki loko swi ngahi ka wena, é natural (x)6  
 Você não julga a natureza é assim, vai lutando a vida é assim  
 I *ntumbuluko* lowu (x)8

Toda gente conta naquilo que sabe, a vida é uma luta wa switwa.  
 A wunga yihli nyepi na wunga hi na matlhari  
 Não foge, vida é assim, é natural (x)8  
 I *ntumbuluko* lowo (x)8

Mahanyela mahibinza hikweru, ko hambana matirela (decisão) ya hina  
 I *ntumbuluko* unga ali leswo *intumbuluko*  
 Você não foge a natureza, a vida é assim  
 É natural (x)8  
 I *ntumbuluko* lowo (x)8

#### English translation

Enjoy life as it is...in your own way...  
 I have my own way of living, you have also yours;  
 It is always like that; when one sees things happening  
 In someone's life from a distance, it is fun.  
 Don't judge what you don't know,  
 Things look fun from far.

Don't laugh when things happen to others, it is natural (x)6  
 Don't run away, nature is like that, go striving, life is like that  
 This is *ntumbuluko* (x)8

Everyone count on what they know, life is struggle you know.  
 You cannot fight a war without weapons;  
 Don't run away, life is like that;  
 It is natural (x)8  
 This is *ntumbuluko* (x)8

Life is heavy to everyone, what differs are our ways of working, or doing things  
 And making decisions, it's *ntumbuluko*.  
 Don't reject this is *ntumbuluko*.  
 Don't run away from nature, life is like that,  
 It is natural (x)8  
 This is *ntumbuluko* (x)8

(M'boa, CD)

This is a highly intrigue song. Rosália M'boa is fighting off her critics and justifies whatever way in which she is living her life, things she does to love, how she does, the things happening around her causing people to laugh and judge her- these are all *ntumbuluko* (nature and natural course of life). *Ntumbuluko* here is translated nature and natural or those inescapable laws of nature that influence life. Her life style and way of living, what happens to her (normal and natural things), the way she earns the living and how she goes about that (which may include rituals as weapons to equip her better), all that is imposed upon her by *ntumbuluko* and she cannot run away from *ntumbuluko* but to accept it and fight her way and survival though *ntumbuluko* determined course. *Ntumbuluko* is inescapable force of nature that influence human course of life that one cannot run away from or resist or ignore. This understanding of *ntumbuluko* and use is the most influential one even amongst Christians. This is the most traditional understanding of *ntumbuluko*, this understanding is very conservative and does not tolerant transformation of *ntumbuluko*. But the next and last song is a different one.

**Tsonga**

**English translation**

Va vansati ni va vanuna x2

women and men (x2)

A hi dyayeni a moya lowu x2

Let us kill that spirit (x2)

Hi taku *intumbuluko*

We will argue, 'it's *ntumbuluko*'.

Hi taku *intumbuluko*

We will argue, 'it's *ntumbuluko*'.

A hi dyayeni a *ntumbuluko* lowu,

Let us kill that *ntumbuluko*

Kuta sala a <i>ntumbuluko</i>	There will remain <i>ntumbuluko</i>
Lowu kulisaka tiko,	<i>Ntumbuluko</i> that develops the nation
25 a lizandzo lisalako	25x love that remains.
A misaven ku ni lizandzo (x2)	On earth (world) there is love (x2)
A wa <i>nsati</i> a va xavi!	A women cannot be purchased!
I mali muni?	How much is she?
A wa <i>nsati</i> a va xavi!	You cannot purchase a woman
A wa <i>nsati</i> a va xavi (x4)	A woman cannot be purchased! (x4)

(Conjunto Guezi, CD)

This is a paradoxical song. The author invites men and women to kill “that *ntumbuluko*” so that *ntumbuluko* remains. Although the author is a young man and there is possibility that he is dealing with his personal problem of *lovolo* (*lobolo*), this gives an opposed view of *ntumbuluko*. The *ntumbuluko* to be killed was first identified as “this spirit” (*moya lowu*) a Tsonga word for wind, spirit and breath. Here the word spirit means mindset or mentality as driven by the spirit within. The mindset or mentality he is dealing with here is the one that imposes *lovolo* and justifies it as *ntumbuluko*. He is calling for the killing of this “*ntumbuluko*” so that *ntumbuluko* that is dignifying to women and serve for nation building and development remains. So we can say that here *ntumbuluko* are social norms and practices that are dehumanizing and degrading to women, serving for their oppression. The song gives us alternative, we must kill such *ntumbuluko* and promote *ntumbuluko* that is women dignifying, and serves for their development and wholeness.

So far we can say that *ntumbuluko* is the celebrated in the first song with its association with creation of everything, which one needs to meditate upon in times of trouble to find peace. It is the inescapable force or power of nature, which influence course of life for, which there is nothing one can do. One cannot run away, but accept as *ntumbuluko* and strive to live. *Ntumbuluko* is also oppressive social norms and practices, which need to be eliminated so that women development is possible. But there are still more other views on *ntumbuluko* that we need to see to widen our understanding of what *ntumbuluko* is in relation to women.

Ndzukule defines *ntumbuluko* with the following words: '*ntumbuluko* is the greatest thing above everything on earth upon humans, to everyone whoever exists' (Chitlango 2002:41). He adds that *ntumbuluko* cares life and death and that those who follow *ntumbuluko* have life. "*Ntumbuluko* upholds my family...the woman I married and my child's family. *Ntumbuluko* is a fence around the home' (Chitlango 2002:41). He divides *ntumbuluko* to three different categories, the national or communal, the tribal or clan and the family *ntumbuluko*.

## 8.8 Appendix VII

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

## INTERVIEW RECORD

## Interview

Date: 22 April 2001

Place: Chibuto

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga-Shangaan

Conf/access: Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)

## Interviewee

Name: Salvador Matsombe

Gender: Male

Date of birth: 02 February 1925

Place of birth: Chibuto

Residence: Chibuto

Religious convictions: Christian - Baptist

Position in the religious group: The most Sineor Minister (equiv. to Arch-Bishop)

Profession and occupation: National Advisor for IUBM (ex-General Superintendent)

Category: Christian Practioner

Address: Conselho Cristao de Moçambique, Chibuto

Tape identification: Tape 8

MATSOMBE, S

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

AC- A Bibe le khale la Xitsonga, lomu ka Va Roma 8:6,13 alivula leswaku nyama, kambe a Mahungu la Manene ma vula leswaku ntumbuluko. Ni tsundzuka leswaku n'wina Mfundisi a muve kona a ka cometi leyi yinga maha a *revisão* ya Bibe le ya Xitsonga. Xana hiyih i a *discussão* munga ve nayona kuza mu tchitcha nyama hi ntumbuluko xana?

SM- Hiswona, anitsembi leswaku nita ku hlwelisa aka mhaka leyi. Lexi xinga ve kona ku, hivonile leswaku a nyama hi leswi hi Xiputukezi hinga i *sentido figurado*. A nyama swalava ku fana na loko hi vulavula hi munyama. Swilo leswi swilavaka a tthamuselo aka Xikreste. A munyama ahi wu siku. A munyama wu vula laha a Ivangeli yi kalaka yinga se ngena. Loko hiku a munhu loyi a lemnyamemi, hi vula a ku ange se amukela a Ivangeli. Kutani a nyama a ku vuliwi a nyama leyi [a khoma a nyama ya yena]. A nyama ku vuliwa a swihena leswi ngavekona ka lixaka lihi na lihi, kumbe a ntumbuluko wa vanhu vahi na vahi. Ali hlovo lihi na lihi lini ntumbuluko wa lona wa munyama. Kutani, a ntumbuluko u lava a livoni, kungahi a dyambu, kambe a livoni leli linga rito la Xikwembu. A rito la Xikwembu li voninga a ka ntumbuluko se a vanhu vasuka a ka ntumbuluko va landza a rito. Kambe va n'wani va teka a ku vonakala vaku patsa na ntumbuluko va famba naswo hi wumbiri la swona. Ninga vula leswaku, a ntumbuluko. A hiwu khongeli, a ntumbuluko wu maha hikwaswo leswo biha. A ntumbuluko wuni nawu wa wona, lowu wu vulaka aku aswocarhi aswi mahise ku karhi. Kunge hilomu *Sul* (Dzongeni), wa switiva, loko a mulumuzana a file, a siya a nkosikazi yakwe, i xini xi humelelaka?! A mamana luya a feliweke, a fanele aku a sindzisiwa aku a veka a mavoko a ndzaku loko a famba a ndleleni. Loko a tthangana na munhu, kulaveka a tsama a hans i, i ntumbuluko lowo, i nawu wa ntumbuluko, munyama lowu wukalaka wungarhi na ku vonakala. A ntumbuluko wona hiwoxe wulava a livoni. Lomu ka Yohane hi kuma a ku, Yesu a tisile a tintswalo na ntiyiso. Swilo swimbirhi. Tintswalo, hikuva swa karata aku susa a vanhu vanga ka ntumbuluko aku vata aka Ivangeli.

**AC-** Mfundisi Henry Holmgren, a vula leswaku siku rin'wani a ka Chokwe a vulavulile ni vafundisi van'wana lava va vulaka leswaku a Bibebe la khale a li tlhamusa kahli loko liku nyama, kambe ntumbuluko a swi twali. Hi yihi a *comentário* ya n'wina ke?

**SM-** Mina a ni longoloki nayona a mhaka leyi ya nyama, ni vona leswaku Mahungu Lamanene ma ni ntiyiso loko maku ntumbuluko. Hikuva, ku nge hileswi ninga vula, a nyama *é sentido figurado*, tchumu lowu wu lavaka a ku tlhela wu hlamuseliwa swinene, nene, hikuva ahi nyama leyi. A Bibebe a livuli a nyama ya xihari *ou* leyi yahina. Kasi ke ntumbuluko swi vula a munyama lowu wu endlaka a ku a vanhu va nge se na vona a Xikwembu ha wona.

**AC-** Xana Mfundisi, yikona a minawu ya ntumbuluko wuyi khumbulaka unga nitlhamuselaka ke?

**SM-** Loko a mamani wo karhi na a feliwe, a a fanele a ku tsama aku zileni kala a masiku lawa anga ta kombiwa wona hima sungakati. A karhi lowo waku zila a tsama ndlwini na va n'wani va mamani lava va muhlayisaka, kumbe vamu xanisaka. **AC -** Mfundisi hinga hlamuselani leswaku mu vula yini loko muku va muxanisaka ke?)-

**SM-**Hahahaaaa....(kuhleka). Hankanyingi leswi ni switweke na leswi ni swi voneke, nivona ku hi ku xanisa. Hikusa, ku humelela yini xana, a fanele a kuve mamana loyi, a phindzela a kwelisiwa hehla, aya susa a byanyi leli vali lavaka a xitchungweni, leli anga ta tsama na lona, a etlela ka lona. Niswin'wana kambe swo nonoha va mahaka ka lo-wa mamana swaku muxanisa.

Loko swi hunza leswo, ata tsama a xipimo xa lembe, kumbe mambiri se a tekiwa. Kambe aku tekiwa loko, a phakiwa laha mutini. A mulumuzana a a vitana a majaha yakwe kumbe a va makwavo va mufi, ataku ya: wena muokazana, a nuna a fambile, hivalava a vamakwavo va mufi. Se lo wa mamani a pambula mun'we loyi a mulavaka ka vona.

Loko kufika a karhi waku tchinga, he, atimhaka tinyingi laha ku tchingeni laha. Laha ku tchingeni, loyi a tchingaka, a fanele ku tchinga hiku etlela na mamani loyi. Se vata

tchingavo van'wani, kala swi fika ka mulumuzana hi irarkia (kuya hi wu nkulu) la muti. Teke loyi a tchingaka a phindile lawu mbiri.

Xin'wani ninga vulaka, hileswi swi mahekaka masiku lawa. Loko munhu a file, avanhu vaya mahleni hiku landza a munyama. Nivula leswo ha yini, hiku, a ka masiku ndzaku, a kufeni ka va tata va hina a hi swivonanga leswo. Namutlha kuna leswaku loko a mulumuzana a file va mulandza a simitela va ta mu ngenisa a ndwini<sup>1</sup>. Va suka, na byala va fika a sireni va tchela a byala lelo va vula vula leswi vanga ta vulavula swona. Va maha leswo vahi na xinguvuana xo basa, lexi va nga ta nyika a xin'wanana xikokovisa a nguvu liya, van'wani vali karhi va tchela a byala *até kaya*<sup>2</sup>. Se kun'wana ikule, ava koti ku famba hi milenge. Va lugara a mova, se vaya fika va mahetela hikwaswo, va tchela a byala, se vateka a tchigumana lexiya venge hikona anga kona a mulumuzana kumbe mamana lwiya, va bohelela seno ndzaku ka mova va kokovisa. Hambi a xicravatura (*escravatura=slevary*), a vanhu a vakokiwa himahatchi. Kambe a ongo la hina ali tiri. Hi ehleketa leswaku hipfuna ava tatana va hina hikuva boha hikoka himumova!

AC- Xana swilo swotano swahumelela eka Makreste?

SM- Hahahaaaa...(kuhleka). Swa humelela ka. Kambe va maha hiku swi fihla, loko hitsamile hisungula a ku switwa a ku swi endlekile. Ninga wula a *exemplo*(xikombiso), wukona a muti wokarhi, ixaka munhu loyi, imakweru loyi a lovileke na nsati wakwe, kuyo sala a vana. Se, vaku aku kambuwe ati mhaka, vavulaka akuya ba tihlolo. Atihlolo tiya ta vula leswaku mahani leswi, mahani leswi. Se hileswo swi mahekaka aka va Krete lava va ha hanyaka aka ntumbuluko,

<sup>1</sup> Kuvuyisa a mulumuzana- Mfunedisi Matsombe a vula leswaku a khale aswingari kona. Nivona leswaku a swilo leswi swina tlhamuselo wu mbiri leku tchitcheni ka ntumbuluko. A xin'we iku ngena ka Mutchapi hi ma 1930s, axin'wani iku sungula ka masimitela. A khale a vanhu a vanga tiviwi na vapfuka, ati n'anga atinga koti a ku khoma a moya wuti wula mufi, kambe swi tchitchile hi mutchapi. A vanhu vofa vasungulile kuve vohanya, va ve vavhikeli va lavahanyaka naswona va sindzisa swinyingi (kuhlawuliwa, tinhloko, kuphahliwa na ku vuya kaya naku maheliwa ngelo kumbe ku akeliwa ndumba, timbuti kumbe tihuku). A khale a Vatsonga va nyingi a valahla laha kaya. Amufi a ali laha kaya. Kambe a Maputukezi maswi vonile na swingahi swinene, se va sindzisa a masimitela. A vanhu va vonile leswaku va lahlekelwa hi vafi va vona, se va kuma yin'wani a ndlela yo va vuyisa a kaya, leyi a Maputukezi manga ta kala manga yitivi naswona vanga kumi ama alisela ya kona, hikuva swa moya.

<sup>2</sup> A mavuyisela ya mufi (kukokovisa a nguvu na van'wani va tchela a byala) swifana na leswi swi mahiwaka a Ghana a Akropong-Akwapem aka *Wubyira* (khuvo wa Vakwapem wo tlangela a vafi na swikwembu swa vona).

vakalaka vanga wutshikangi. Kasi ke lava vangawutshika, votsundzuka kunene a vafi hikubyelela a matimu a vana va vona na va tukulu.

Kambe lava vanga munyameni, vaha famba aka tihlolo. Vavutisela, a tatana wakwe a maha hiku heleketiwa akaya. Aku khohlwa hayini ke? Atave maluko (ku hlanya). A Matsalwa mavula leswaku a munhu loko a timeka, a Xikwembu xiteka a moya wayena. Xiteka a munhu, hina hisala hiya lahla a tsumbu, kambe a munhu angahari kona. Se himani loyi va yaka vaya teka esireni ke?

**AC-** Swini leswi hina vantshwa hinga mahaka leswaku a Ivangeli yiya mahleni naku ethisisa xana ke?

**SM-** Na ninge se hlamula a xiwutiso xa wena, nilava aku vulavula hi n'wina vantshwa, n'wina va fundisi la vantshwa. Mutchumayila kwatsi, hikuva mudyondzisiwile. Ati kondzo ta n'wina tisasekile kwatsi. Kambe lexi ximihihuphaka n'wina i *pricipitação* (kutsutsuma kumbe gugu ni matloti). Muna kutsutsuma loko mu yela a munhu loyi a nga na swakwe, loyi akalaka ange se switiva aku loko a tshika leswi a nga ya kwihi. Swinonoha ngopfu aku susa munhu aka leswi anga ka swona hi ntamu wa leswi u switivaka wena na anga swi tivi leswaku aya kwihi. Ninga vula leswaku .... Dyondzisani a vanhu. Loko u vuya u nyikiwa a xipandze, unga yi hixilalelo tsena. Tiva atimhaka ta zona na zona, uya nati dyondzo leti tinga ta va pfuna. Se uva komba, ahi sukeni laha, laha ku bihile laha hi mhaka leyi na leyi na leyi, ahi teni laha. Hi leswi mufaneleke ku maha swona. Loko uku: *isto não dá, não pode ser assim, deixa isto...* a swinga ta famba. Ngopfungopfu, mufanele aku sungula hi va rangeli. Haka nyingi, la vahluphaka ahi vanhu lava va xitsungu, ivarangeli. Hikuva loko loyi arangelaka na arandza leswi aswi randzaka, ata koka avanhu aka swona. Kulaveka atinhloko, usungula hitona. Varangeli [va kereke], varangeli va mitlawa uva dyondzisa, u yengisa a *macometário* ya vona aka hikwaswo leswi va dyondzaka.

**AC-** Ahati swini leswi munga wulaka hintirho wa va *missionário* ke?

**SM-** Ninga vula leswaku kuna *missionário* wa tolo ni wa nyamutlha. Awa tolo uve *agente* wo susa a vanhu aka ntumbuluko. A wanyamutlha, wa tsandzeka a ku a funda

a *cultura* lavanhu va ndawu leyi anga ka yona kasi aku ata kota a kuva komba leswi bhihileko. Akunge idyondzo leyi yinga kona (Mapuderi Exipirituali=*Poderes Espirituais*) i *curso biblico*, ayi vuli tchumu hi swiheno swatiko, swiheno swa va Lomwe, swiheno swa va Tsonga, swiheno swa va Txopi, swiheno swa Vatshwa, ni swiheno swatin'wani tixaka leti tinga kona lomu kerekeni. Amissionário wa tolo atirile aku susa a vanhu aka ntumbuluko, kambe awa nyamutlta anga koti.

**AC-** Loko ko lungisiwa a buku yi kombaka aswi heno swa tixaka leti tinga kerekeni ya hina kasi kuve *manual* yo dyondzisa ha yona a *mapuderi* muhleketi leswaku yinga pfuna ke?

**SM-** Yinga pfuna swinene ngopfu (aphindile kotala). Lexo xinga pfuna hikuva xita ngena awutomini la ntumbuluko wa lixaka lelo. Vata switwa aku hakunene [intiyiso] hikuva wena utave utamelile a Bibeke na xiheno lexiya uxi tamelile amavokweni. Uku hina ha switwa leswaku hitsamisile leswi na leswi na leswi, kambe leswi swinga tisiwa hi Yesu, aku vonakala, na tipswalo na ntiyiso hi leswi, na leswi na leswi. Se hi vakomba leswaku hi fanele akuta laha atipswalweni, hivakomba leswaku loko hinga se fika laha ahi se fika ati pswalweni ta Yesu.

**AC-** Loko no sungula a *investigação* leyo a kati xaka talaha kerekeni, munga swi seketela ke?

**SM-** Ina, ninga swiseketela, loko wena hakunene uswirandza leswi, swaku hlota atimbhaka leti tinga pfunaka, naswikota akuku seketela hiku teka andoda kumbe mandoda ya lomu, Xai-Xai na ka Vilankulu hita tsama hixuxa. Hikuva swikona leswi xanisaka a bandla swamukhuva, akaman'wani masiku hiku vulavula ka hina a *púlpito* vakalaka vanga switwi. Loko hi endla hiku tsama a hansi, swinga apswa swinene. Hinga endli hiku va khahla hiku tshikani leswiya. Van'wana avaswitive lomu swin'wana swinga ntumbuluka kona, voswilandza nje. Kasi ke loko vongo kuma ku pfuniwa hi ndlela leyo aswita pfuna swinene.

Loko aniswitive leswaku hita bula hindlela yo tano, enge ni lavile yin'wani ndoda yo karhi, kunge hi Mfundisi Muhlana, hitile hita tsama hiri swin'we. Kambe hita bula himan'wani masiku hi vona leswaku swini swinga mahekaka.

**Mhamba-tikona** ati kereke leti mahaka amikhongelo wo phahla a vafi. Van'wana a vazalwani va hina vaya kona vaya kombela aku katekisiwa hi va tata wa vona la va feke. Loko ahikota leswaku a bandla li tiya, aswitave swisasekile ngopfu. Amasiku ndzaka ahiri ni makuruso (tidyondzo) ya hikwavo vatiri. Ahiva dyondzisa a timhaka leti, niswin'wana leswa mukhuva aswi ngena aka *programa* lelo. Kambe a *programa* ali fambanga, kambe lisasekile swinene.

**Mutchapi-** aninge vuli leswaku wu helile lomu ka hina, hikusa vahali kona a vanhu va hlawulaka a muhliwa. Hiti mhaka ta mutchapi, ka takiwa a vana va vanhanyana vaya hlawula ha vona, handle ka va xinuna a va hlawuli hi vona. Switele aswinyamukwaxani swi hlawuliwaka. Kun'wani afile a 50 ou a 60 anos kambe waha hlawuliwa na nyamutlha loyi. Hikwaswo leswo ima *visiigio* ya mutchapi. Ati n'anga ni madimoni na swona swatira akuve ma engetela aswilo leswinga swa *programa* ya Sathani. Kufana na leswi wena wutiraka sweswi uni garavara, na yena a garavara van'wani vanhu lava vanga talwa ni leswi niku byelaka swona. Swinyingi aswi nga hi kona a khale kambe switumbuluka sweswi, Sathani utaya a mahleni hiku engetela aswayena, kulaveka hitira ngopfu. Loko munga tiri, yena watira aya mahleni himatimba. Sweswi kuni mabandla lawa ma dlayaka. Loko amamani wo karhi aya kavona, kumbe ka Mfundisi wa kona aku, mina anilava anuna wa mina angaha vuyi hijoni. Va lungisela ati nayethi, va maha xikaxawana, *pronto* afa. Se a Mfundisi loyi a hola a male ya lifu leli. Hikwaswo leswi i *programa* la Sathani. (xileriso-dyondza vanhu-Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Zambézia).

## 8.9 Appendix VIII

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

## INTERVIEW RECORD

## Interview

Date: 21 April 2001

Place: Matimbine

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga-Shangaan-Txopi-Xitshwa

Conf/access: Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)

## Interviewee

Name: Rafael Mangwele

Gender: Male

Date of birth: 1910

Place of birth: Matimbine, Mandlakazi (Manjacaze)

Residence: Matimbine

Religious convictions: Christian -Baptist

Position in the religious group: Retired Pastor

Profession and occupation: Minister and peasant

Category: Christian practitioners

Address: N/A

Tape identification: N/A

MANGWELE, R

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL  
INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

**AC-** Ahati, Mfundisi, loko hiku ntumbuluko hi vula yini ke?

**RM-** Kunene mina ni tiva leswaku ntumbuluko i nawu. Ku tlhanganisa ka hikwayo mu nawu yi taka hi ka lava va nga hi beleka.

**AC-** Yi kona a mi nawu ya ntumbuluko ma ha yi khumbulaka ke?

**RM-** Ina yi kona, hi ku, loko u fika lomu tikweni wu hanya, u fanele ku maha leswi va ku gwelako. Lava va nga hi beleka va hi byelile leswaku mu nga tsuki mu maha leswi hi mu byelaka a ku mu nga mahi. Swa yila.

**AC-** Swi ngani swi yila leswi mu swi tsundzukaka ke?

**RM-** Hi tsundzuka[a ku tsundzuka *can mean to remember or to observe. I used it to mean to remember, but my interviewee meant to observe or respect*] swi nyingi, hikuva a mhaka leyi ya ku xi tchava a xilo yi nkulu. I nawu wu nkulu lowo wa ku tchava a tchumu. Ku na ku tchava a bava wa wena na ku tchava a tchilo, va ku byela va ku, u nga tlangi hi xona xilo lexo xi ta ku dyaya.

Loko u teka nsati, va ku layela va ku u nga mahi a swa ku kani, xi yila xo karhi, u nga mahi; u nga kuma ti mhangu (**AC-** mu nga ni hlevela – **RM-** hahaha!!! A hi ku hleva ku vula ntiyiso]. A wa nsati a ni tsamela ga kwe, se loko gi fikile, a wu swi koti a ku etlela naye.

**AC-** A lembe li nga hela ni ve Ghana. A wa nsati venge hi Arnestina a tsalile a mhaka ya ku loko va va nsati va hi na swa le hehla a va gi a Xilalelo a PCG (Presbyterian Church of Ghana). Ahati yi kona a mhaka leyo lomu ka hina ke?

**RM-** Hi swona na ha ha kula hina, a yihi kona. Loko a hi masikwini a a yila [a wa nsati], a a nga gi Xitalelo. Hambi swi nga hi leswo, loko wu vulavula hi ku ti tsona, ku ti tsongahata, na ku kombisa a ku a meza lowu hi yako ka wona wu nkulu, wena Mfundisi a wu nga yi a ndlini ya nsati wa wena [to abstain from sex]. A bandla a hi nga li byeli a ku mu nga yeni a ti ndlini ta n'wina, a vo swi tiva vona [so obvious that no teaching is needed], na wena u yaka u ya khoma a meza lowuya.

**AC-** Ahati hi wa hi mavabyi yo yila, naku, a va mahlayisisa ku yini a mu vabyi ke?

**RM-** A mavabyi yo yila (xifuva, mapele) a va mu veka yetche, swa yila a ku a tsama, a ga na van'wani a nga ta va tlueta.

**AC-** Loko a fa hi ku khohlola, a a lahlisiwa ku yini ke?

**RM-** A ma lahlela a ma hambene, hikuva a munhu wofa hi ku khohlola a va lava a murhi wo karhi; lava va nga mu khoma a va nyikiwa a murhi lowu na vona. A va ya lava lidaka la le combeni, va tsuvula a byanyi (a rivele a vito la byanyi lelo, kambe la le combeni-ni swi n'wani a swi rivele). Se va rangisa a hansi na ti sinye se va lata munhu kona.

**AC-** Swini leswi va nga vula a ku loko va nga mahi hi ndlela leyi mu yi vuleke swi ta humelela?

**RM-** A vaku, manga tala a makhombo laha ka muti lowu hambu tiko linga onheka loko va nga mahi leswi. Va vulavula swi tele va ku hambu na tivula hi nga ta ti vona hi ku ma xakela tiko.

**AC-** A ka malembe ya n'wina ya ku tirha ka n'wina, swi kona munga swi vona lomu ku lahleni ke?

**RM-** Va Kriste la va tsamela lelo va maha u va tchuvukela, u nga vuli tchumu, va maha a swa vona. Lavo hi lava va kalaka va nga hundzukangi, hikuva, a munhu a wu nga ta mu hundzula hi kanu, u ku hundzuka, tshika leswi a hi swona. Hikuva wa ha li ka swona.

**AC-** Swa maheka a ku vanhu va ya teka mufi ke?

**RM-** Swa maheka, swi maheka a ka lava va kalaka venge se yi tiva a ntiyiso a ti mbilwini ta vona. Va tivisa vaku, a hi yeni hiya mu teka, wa fa hi xirami; va dyaya tihuku, vaya phahla vaku: 'a hi fambi kaya.' Va maha na va hleketa a ku a ta ta va vhekela.

A mhaka leyi ya ntumbuluko ya karata. Loko hiya ku lahlani-va hi kombela a ku hi khongela; se hi khongelela a ndawu na va tirhi a ku va tirha kwatsi. Kambe hi ndzaku, lavo lava a ntumbuluko va teka kumbe swi faki va khumuzela se a swi hangalasa a phahla a ku: 'N'wina va ka mani, na n'wina va ka mani (a khuza va ka vona), amukelani a munhu wa n'wina loyi hi la ku mu veka laha.' Se ni ku tsee! Se la va nga khongela va tirhile yini ke loko va hi va ka mani na va ka mani va faneleke ku rangela a ntirho lowuya?!

Lava va hanyaka ka ntumbuluko na va hi Makriste nizwa guwa. Loko munhu a vabya, va ta landzelela a mavabyi se u twa a ku a ka khombo legiya, a va swi mahangi kwatsi. A va ha hlanganangi kwatsi va hangalasa khombo [*ritual sex*]-se a tekile a tchilo xa mufi a ngenisa a ndlini ya kwe, se a ngeneliwa hi khombo, a ta fa. Wa yi vona mhaka!

**SWILERISO-** Loko hi ku hlawula, wena, ku la ku ti hlawula, u suka a ka mahanyelo ya ntumbuluko. A hi ku kwalaho hi nga ku hlawula kona, u tsama kwalaho, u landza ntumbuluko. A Ivangeli leyo yi nga ta famba, hikuva, a tiko la ku vona, li hlamala; liku, kasi leswi a ngo khoma seno a khoma seno. A ni tsembi leswaku wena u nga hundzula a vanhu va tiya a Ivangelini loko wena u nga ti hlawulangi ku sungula.

**AC-** A ku khoma seno na seno mu vula yini ke?

**RM-** Ku patsela. Ku patsa ntumbuluko na Ivangeli. **AC-Xi** tave xi karato lexo a kerekeni ke? **RM-Xi** karato, xa ni xanisa; ni sungula ku twa a ku ni tirhile mahala. A vanhu va hina a va yingisangi, vaha landzelela leswiya. A le Ivangelini, kambe a vanhu va mu tiva. Se a vanhu va ta tsikisa ku yini loko u ku a hi tsikeni leswi, kambe

wena u swi maha. U ta mu hundzulisa ku yini, na yena uta maha hikuva a vona wena. Va n'wani va li a ninga tsiki ntumbuluko wa hina-swa ni xanisa. A vana va swi tiva leswaku bava a a tirha a Ivangeli, kambe a a maha leswi. U ta kumisa ku yini a ntamu wo hundzula van'wani wena u nga hundzukangi? U nga khongela na u kota leswi? Ha kholwa leswaku a Xikwembu xi kona? [*from here he related his story of great escape during the war*].

## 8.10 Appendix IX

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview**

Date: 13 April 2001

Place: Orange Farm Ex.8

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga-Shangaan/Xitshwa

Conf/access: Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee**

Name: Filimoni Josayi Chitlango

Gender: Male

Date of birth: 1961

Place of birth: Gundani (Save region)

Residence: Gundani, Mozambique and Orange Farm, South Africa

Religious convictions: Christian (Baptist)

Position in the religious group: Preacher

Profession and occupation: Informal trader

Category: Christian practitioner

Address: N/A

Tape identification: N/A

CHITLANGO, F

**INTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

FC- Ni navela ku komba ku tsongwani hi lomu ti kerekeni. Lomu tikerekeni, hina hi pswaliwile (mina ni pswaliwile hi 1960), loko nipswaliwa, ku na lava va ngahi phakati ka Ivangeli. Ina ka, ni munhu ninga pswaliwa ka Xilotani ava sunguli va kereke leyi ninga ka yona, ya Uniao Baptista, i vanhu vanga va bava va hina. Ina ka, ixini xi humelelaka, aku a Ivangeli yi kota sweswi hinga pswalisiwa swona, ayiyi phambeni, ayiyi ndzaku; iswilu swi tsamaka angaku swi laha ndawu yin'we.

Lexi nixi vonaka hi lexi, va kokwani va hina, kuza swita fika ka va bava va hina, kuza swita fika ka tanga ya hina, a kuhi na leswi vanga hanya hi swona, vanga ti byela aku leswi i vu tomi lahina; hi swona swikwembu swa vona hi swona swi va vikelaka. Aswilo leswi ku sukela loko ni pswaliwe, ani tiva leswaku a Ivangeli yi sungulile rini, ku sukela mikarhi yaleyo ninga sungula ku tiva, ningena a kerekeni (iqovo longwe ni pswaliwe a kerekeni) ani voni aku hundzuka ka tchumu.

Lexi endlaka ku hundzuka ku hi hava a tikeeni la mu lungasavi, le ka Xilotani, aninga vulavuli hi ti ndawu to tala hiku ndawu na ndawu yina nawu wa yona. Nita vulavula hika Xilotani, hikuva hikona ninga pswaliwa kona ni funda aku kereke tchini. Ku sukela ni sungula aku tiva aku khongela tchini na tsemba aku ayi se tchitcha kereke.

Nita vulavula hi Uniao Baptista. Hita ngena ka tin'wani ti kereke, hikuva ti kona kambe loko niti tchuvuka ama tirhela ya tona ma fana. Hina vanhu va mulungasavi hi kulile na hi tiva leswaku leswi hi hanyisaka swikwembu leswi hi phahlaka<sup>136</sup> inaka, loko hi kulile na hi tiva aku swikwembu swihi hanyisaka, ene, ahinge kumi pfula loko hinga yanga a ku phahleni, ahinge kumi nyama loko hinga yangi hiya phahla. A swilo

<sup>136</sup>. A Ivangeli kumbe a wu Kriste, li kumeka yi hi nyipi ya Xikwembu na swikwembu. Ku lwela aku kumeka aku huma loyi a fumaka na ku vikelaka a wutomi ni ku hanya ka vanhu. Laha hi na vanhu va mbirhi, awa *ntumbuluko* iswikwembu, awa Ivangeli hi Yesu.

leswo swi akile ku sukela ka va kokwani na va bava ku ta fika ka hina. Swilo leswi swi endla hina va zalwani hi ve na ku tlhelela a ndzaku hiku hive na ti rimi ti mbirhi. Hi ve na tihosi timbirhi; hikuva ahi swikoti aku loko hi ti yimisele ku tirisa a mademoni hi tirisa amademoni tsena, loko hi ti nyimisele ku tirisa Xikwembu hi tirisa Xikwembu. Swilo leswi swa bangana, ha swi banganisa hina. Hikuva a xa xinene ahi xitivi, ango ho fika a Mfundisi nyamutlha, a veka kereke, a sungula ku hundzula vanhu, a sungula ku qova vanhu.

Se ningenile ka tlhelo lin'wani la va Fundisi, va Vangeli kumbe lava vanga hlometela a Matsalwa. Xi khalo xa mina hi lexaku, va swikota aku ni qova vaku ni Mfundisi, nakuhi hava xitsongwani ni xi tivaka<sup>137</sup> hi tlhelo la wufundisi. Vaswikota aku muqova vaku loyi Mfundisi na xihikona axitsongwani a xi tivaka hi tlhelo la wufundisi a fika a veketela minawu lomu tikweni a lava kuvona a vanhu na va tchitchile hi nawo lowu anga veka; keve timbilu ta hina na nyama na ngati ya hina hi tiyele aka leswiya hinga kuma va kokwani na va tirha swona.

Kasi ku swi heta hinga fanela ku endlasa ku yini ke? Hiza hi suka laha hinga kona hi tlulela ka lin'wani gaji ke? A mahetela, hi mavonele ya mina leswo nivula ni tiyisile aku amahetele hi mavonele ya mina ku tshika va n'wanyani, a ku hiku lava vanga hlometela xihikona va xitivaka hi tlhelo la Bibe, xihikona va xitivaka hi tlhelo la nawu wa kereke, xihikona vaxi tivaka hi nawu wa ku a Xikwembu xini, xi tirha njani, kona Xikwembu xina matimba ya njani [he has a broken thought here].

Hikuva, hina vanyingi ho fika hi byeliwa aku Xikwembu xi na matimba, *right*, loko nyamutlha hi zama kuya ka Xikwembu, Sathani ahi ninginisa, hi tsutsuma hi tlhela hiya ndzaku. E, Xikwembu xina matimba, hikuva hi xona xi nga endla a tilo ni misava, swilo hikwaswo leswi hi swi vonaka laha misaveni swi endlwe hi Xikwembu, tsena ku a hi hi kule na xona. Hina hinga ku suhani ni Xikwembu ahi zameni aku lava vanga kule na xona hi va komba a matimba ya Xikwembu. Hikombisa kuyini? ku hiti nyika timbilu to leha a ka vanhu lavo, hikuva ava ti endl.

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<sup>137</sup>. He is attacking lack of training for the ministry and the ordination of non trained people.

Haka nyingi, hina vanhu ha hela ku lova u lava kuya seno ku hava, uya seno ku hava, hiku ka Xikwembu u hafu, aka Sathani u hafu, a Xikwembu a xiku tivi, Sathani anga ku tivi<sup>138</sup>; u le xikarhi. Se hina vafundisi, kumbe hina va vangeli, kumbe hina va bandla (swa endleka a munhu wa bandla swi hi kona a Xikwembu xinga mu nyika, a swife ku Mfundisi, a fundile). Tsen a Xikwembu a xi lavi ku phazamisiwa ka matimba ya xona, ku tatisa kumbe ku hunguta, xi lava u tirisa a matimba ya xona aka vanhu lava xingaku rhuma ka vona....(he mentions Moses and his punishment).

....Sathani wata aku khomile hivoko, loko a fika a xi ziveni, laha ko seno kule, seno kule, aku tsiketela. Loko u laku hlamba kuya ndzaku a mati awu voni lomu ma qinaka kona, phambeni kumbe ndzaku, awu voni....

...[K]u laveka ku tlhamusela aku Sathani laha musaveni u kona, a madimoni<sup>139</sup> ma kona, hikuva hi swona swi karataka a tikweni la hina la mulungasavi<sup>140</sup>. Hina kanyingi ahi swi tivi leswaku loko o tsema mapalo ya yena unga hanya. Va gingima gingima ku fana na lisimu lelo. Loko a tshika mapalo, mundzuko a twa nhloko, kumbe a tlangana na nyoka; a ta [tlhela a] boha. Mun'wani a endla hi womu, mun'wani imbuyangwani, laha kunga na ntiyiso a nga ku tivi.

*The most* ya vona loko ni languta na loko ni twa a vo endla hi womu, vanyingi vo endla hi womu, kambe ku na lava ungo loko u languta u swi vona aku loyi anga ti endlisi tsena lexi faneleko ku muhanyisa anga xi tivi.

....[V]afundisi...va fanele ku dyondzisa vanhu....leswaku loko va nyikela mapalo va veka a tsemba ya vona hikwayo a ka Xikwembu, hi teka mu alakanyo ya hina

<sup>138</sup>. This statement reveal a belief that there are absolute two temporal and eternal systems and kingdoms. That of Satan and that of God. This is deceitful since there is only one and the counterfeit. It is right now, but when the eternity begins, it ends, it is not eternal. Now people can say, we chose, but then, even Satan himself will try to be in the kingdom of God to escape the eternal damnation.

<sup>139</sup>. I will go back to Filemon to hear what does he mean when he says demons. I want to hear his definition of demons, their origin and his definition of familiar spirits and their origins (swikwembu swa laha kaya, swikwembu swa ka hina, va ka hina, va mabizweni, tinguluve, mipfukwa, muhliwa, swinyamukwazani, wu loyi [ku kamba, ku tsema, ku haha ku tekelela, ku rhuma, ku phahla, wu n'wanga, wu profeta]). Note that he died before I could interview him the second time.

<sup>140</sup>. A mulunga savi and all other Tsonga areas as well as parts demons create rituals and ceremonies into *ntumbuluko* or they are parasites (phakama) in those practices. We must remember that culture is Post-Eden Human development, thus under manipulation for the purpose of the evil one for his grip on fallen human race. Only the gospel can redeem us from all the schemes.

hikwayo hi yi nyikela Xikwembu, a Xikwembu xita ba mimoya hikwayo liya ya mademoni, swikwembu swa hava va ma bizweni<sup>141</sup>. Sathani a siku u mahaka leswo, hambu tlhanu wa tinyoka wa ku maha u tlangana nato, a lavaka ku vona aku u tiyile ke? U vabya, xin'wanana xi sungula ku vabya munga etleli; loko mo tchela fole, se mu vitana Mfundisi ata khongela, a ngata hanya a n'wana. Hiku mu lwisa swikwembu swi mbirhi. A Xikwembu a xi lavi ku ringiwa, kumbe ku hlanganyelwa ni matimba man'wani. Hilaha Xikwembu xi swi nyenyaka ngopfu. Loko u hi na pulani unga yi endla, unga vitani Mfundisi, tshika a pulani ya wena yi tirha. Unga lwisi Xikwembu na swikwembu....

Loko va tchumayela va haxa rito, a va hi tthamuseli kahli leswinga hi hanyisaka<sup>142</sup>. Loko o tsemani tinguvo ta n'wina na ku hi hava lexinga hi sirelela<sup>143</sup>, a munhu wa biwa hi li pfalo. Na anga ti endli, tsena anga xi tivi lexi a faneleke ku xi endla....

La vo kala ku ti mahisa va lava ku kombisiwa a ndlela yo huma a ka swikwembu<sup>144</sup> a kulile na a tiva leswiya, a fanele ku kombiwa a ku a humisa kuyini. La vo kala ku ti

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<sup>141</sup>. He gave a story on his name and nguvo yo basa but I am suspicious because I am the one ministering in such kind of situations and if other person in the church he is member does, they report to me. I never heard hi case, what I know is that he still goes to divination and he uses mediums and diviners for healing, protection and prosperity.

<sup>142</sup>. *Ku na lisimu le linge 'Zilo le zi hanyisako wula zona ka mina' (A Tisimu ta Ivangeli :U nga hundzi o Dadani no 16)*. This call for our teaching and preaching to be serious because we are handling matters of life and death.

<sup>143</sup>. *Ku sirela* is to protect. I use this term but, I am not sure what does my interviewee mean. In *ntumbuluko* there is a message, rituals, ceremonies, laws and objects that are combined into a protection charm. These elements are absent from the protection of God. There is message, but the rituals are not so convicting, and the law (grace) has no immediate punishment and there is no charm or amulet in the gospel. The power of God works in a very irrational and unreasonable manner. It is just the word (but it created the world and everything in Gen 1 and became flesh in John 1). To use Paul's language, I would say that this is foolishness to the Tsongas but salvation for those of us who believe.

<sup>144</sup>. Leswi swi komba leswaku a vafundisi a va kombi vanhu a ndlela yo huma ka swikwembu (this can be a flash light to the nature of the gospel presented to the people). This takes us to questions of: who brought the gospel, when, how and why; then who received the gospel, when, how and why. This can help us to understand what we have today.

mahisa, hi nga vona ndzaku ka lembe kumbe malembe mambirhi<sup>145</sup> swilo swa hina swi ya a mahleni.

Ku na mhaka mina ni khongelaka a Uniao Baptista, lomuya mulungasavi, ka Xilotani, kereke ya hina ayi kulangi yi tsongwani, tsena, kuna mhaka yi ni karataka: ahi ku tala a ti kereke hi nga natona kwalahaya, kwalwe ka Uniao Baptista. A masiku ndzaku hi leswi va swi vitanaka ku i *ntumbuluko*, ahiku, loko ku fiwe a ndawini yo karhi, a va tolovela aku ku vitaniwa va kokwani Magezi; hi yena dokodela hinga pswaliwa na a tirha wa wu dokodela la yena la xilandi<sup>146</sup>; a ta ata teka ntirho wa loko ku fiwe laha kaya, kumbe wu yile Joni, wu vekeliwa xiwuswana laha nyangweni. Hambi wo heta 10 years u ta vuya xiwuswana lexi xihlona.

Kambe sweswi, swini swi humaka? Mun'wani na mun'wani loyi a humeliwaka hi kufa a ta ata vitana a va Uniao Baptista a ku, tanani muta hi humesa xikumeni. Ani tivi ku swi vula yini, hiku kuna va dokodela va xilandi lava hambu vo va Tchovani va landziwa na wusiku. Kambe sweswi vanhu lavo (tin'anga [N'wa-Xilumuli]) va ta ka UB va ta humesiwa a xikuma; a vahadyi musinya, a swi wuswana swo tcheliwa tihlelweni ana ha swi voni; avaha khohloli. Leswi swini komba kahli a ku kupfumela ku kona na ku ku na ku gingima, loko munhu a nge se twa kwatsi a ku ku pfumela tchini, a Xikwembu xini, a ku suka a ka swikwembu swa hava aya aya tsama kwihi? Xini xi to musivela a ku a swikwembu swa hava swinga mu landzeleli, hikuva a mademoni makona, futhi a demoni li na kani, loko woli tsunzuluta, litaku mahela aswilo swa ku uku Xikwembu xi hava, kuve a demoni ahi tchumu ka Xikwembu.

<sup>145</sup>. A mhaka leyi yi vuliwaka laha yi komba aku a ntirho lowu wu lava karhi. Loyi a vulaka a ku ku laveka a lembe kumbe mambirhi, anga tivisisi hi ta ntirho, kambe aswi vonile aku ku laveka karhi wo dyondzisa na ku pfuna a vanhu aku va huma (conversions as transference or paradigm shift). Hi 56 wa malembe ahi binzulangi tchumu hi ku tsutsuma. Hi fanele ku tsundzuka aku Yesu a a swi vona leswaku ntirho wu kulu, kambe anga tsutsumangi; a hetile a malembe manharu na a dyondzisa a vanhu lava vanga ta fambisa a ntirho, kasi ku va ta huma aka *ntumbuluko* wa Xiyuda va ngena aka *ntumbuluko* wa Ivangeli.

<sup>146</sup>. Avanhu va nyingi va pimisa aku a tin'anga kumbe va nyamusoro iva dokodela va xilandi, lava va xibehlela iva xilungu. Kambe, hambu ka va lungulu ti kona a tin'anga ni va nyamusoro. Loko hiku a tin'anga ta fomu ka hina va dokodela va xilandi, xana hita vitanisa kuyini a tin'anga ta valungu ke?

Naswona, a xibehlela axi valetangi a ti n'anga. A xibehlela xi hava ku lahela (ceremonies after death, birth etc.) va tira mavabyi ya nyama, ata moya a va ti tivi na ta tiko a va ti tivi. A kereke hi yona yi tivaka leswo, hi yona yinga pfaletaka tin'anga, kambe, loko yi nga tivi swa moya a yona yihi ya nguva leyi venge Muvoningo (*Illuminism/Enlightenment*) a va ti pfaleti (*my theology is to come to terms and correct the damage inflicted to Christian faith by the Enlightenment theology*).

Loko demoni u li tsundzuluta, loko munhu a ku byela a ku ahi yi kerekeni, u ta ku a kereke a yi tirhi; kuve loko ku hi ku wa swi tiva u ti mahisile, loko unga swi tive, awu kumangi a munhu wa ku ku byela....(unga tsama unga loyi[wi], utwa aku ve mani wa swekelela, uku swaka nidya); uga unga fi, vaku u na xifula, uku, fula, na utsembile Xikwembu...kambe loko uyo ya n'angeni, Xikwembu xi taku tshika...ku na leswo pswaliwa u nyikiwa hi va kokwani, ku na leswi swo ti lavela, hi ku laku fuma, hiku la ku tchaviwa, hi ku lava ku kuma tinyama kumbe ma wuswa; hiya ka munhu hiya sayina xivumelwani. Aku nyikela aka swikwembu swa yena, u swi khizamela. Ha!, u qapakile, loko u mu byela a noyi kuve u maha leswo, u taku khipa.

A kerekeni ya mina, nina xihlamaliso, yi *off and on*. Yi kufumela na yi hisa, se ni swilavalava, kambe, le muhleketweni ya mina, ni vonile leswaku, ahi zameni ama tchitchele leswaku kumbe a vanhu lava hinga za hi va kuma. Ninga tlhela niya kaya, ni ya kuma leswaku a kereke yi tele, ni tlhela ni kuma leswaku yi hungutekile; ni tlhela niya va kuma va tele. Se swa fika kahli aku, ha!, a ntiyiso ya vavisa. A ntiyiso a munhu u yi lava a siku a hlalaku, loko aha hanya, hina vanyingi a hi yi amukeli, hina vanyingi hi naku xisana – loko vaku, awu yile kwihi, u bala, vaku, ah, u li ikereke lexiya, u tshika akuya leko ihi kunga hava a nawu waku karhi.

Wa vona, hiku a swilu swiya swiya onhekela aka nawu<sup>147</sup>. Ku na lava ninga vakuma, ni tlhela ni va pfumala, ni tlhela, va vuyile, leswinge loko ahi seniya, a sungula a ku vona leswaku, a kama ningahi seniya leswi aswi nifambela kahle, a vuya na anga landziwanga hi munhu. U vitaniwa hi mintirho<sup>148</sup>, tsena loko a ta ata fika laha, akuma nawu angaku wa mu tikela; le angahi kona aku yapswa, a tsutsuma a tlhela; loko aya fika aku futhayaya, aku du, aswi twa swaku heyi, a swo kani na swo kan swa olova hikuva va endla swo kani; a vuya ata ku du, aku kumbe nawu wu tchitchile, a kuma leswaku waha kota sweswo. Swi kona a swi lavaka a munhu lweyi...a himu laveni hinga heli timbilu hi yena. Loko ahi na xikarato ata vula, loko ari ni tingana himu

<sup>147</sup>. Although we try to seldom use the term law for new life standards in Christian life, in Tsonga it is more used the term nawu (law). The laws refers to the moral spiritual conduct of the believers that touches the fundamentals of faith such as libation, communication with the supposed spirits of the dead, use of divination for guidance, healing, power and prosperity and rituals connecting the individual, the family and the community with the spiritual realm of the area.

<sup>148</sup>. Ku laveka a ku tiva leswaku a mintirho leyi ya moya kumbe ya nyama. Ku pfuniwa wu siwana kumbe ku pfuniwa hi matimba ya xikwembu aku hlula mademoni. Swi fanele kuve swona swa swi mbiri, loko xihi xin'we, ku laveka hi engetela le xin'wani.

tshika a tolovela, hikuva *the most* wa hina loko hi suka niku a kereke leyi ayi lungangi, se ni vuya, na titwa tingana aku niku, heyi, ku na leswi swi ni karataku; ani fambile, niku switekanikani.....

## 8.11 Appendix X

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview**

Date: 19 April 2001

Place: Mucambi-Feha (Inhambane)

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Tsonga-Xitshwa

Conf/access: Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee**

Name: Amisson Jane Dule and Jeremias Penicela Nhanombe

Gender: Males

Date of birth: Dule: 14 September 1935; Nhanombe: 01 February 1925

Place of birth: Dule: Mucambe-Feha; Nhanombe: Pacula, Morrumbene

Residence: Dule: Mucambe-Feha; Nhanombe: Cambine

Religious convictions: Christians (United Methodist)

Position in the religious group: Dule: Elder; Nhanombe: Pastor

Profession and occupation: Dule: Peasant; Nhanombe: Pastor and agricultural advisor

Category: Christian practitioners

Address: C P 7 Cambine, Morrumbene, Mocambique

Tape identification: Tape 4 A &amp; B

DULE, A & NHANOMBE, J

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

**AC-** Loko vaku ntumbuluko xana va vula yini ke?

**AD-** A ntumbuluko, a ntiyiso kahle nita ringeta aku vula leswi: Ntumbuluko i ku vangiwa ka vanhu. Loko va vangiwe a vanhu na wu tomi laku sangula ka munhu.... Wu tomi laku sungula laha misaveni li vitaniwaka ntumbuluko.

A ku sunguleni a vanhu a ka hanyela gabye, ku ni leswi vanga nyikwe aku swi hlayisa....lomu ka tiko legi ga xi hangula (ku vumaleka a tiva na mucongo, a ku na tchumu), kutani ke, lomu va tirisile a mi ntamu yo tsama va hleketa. Se va maha a ngoma ya hombe ya 2m. Yive na xikhumba seno ni seno. Yive yi akeliwa yindlu – va veka xiphande laha na laha, vayi veka laha.

A ngoma leyi a va yi phahla leswaku yi ta kota a ku va byela a swilo, kumbe ma babyi, kumbe ku a ti vula ti tana; xi ta vula. Loko ku fika a karhi wa ku a vula yina, a xitrumeto lexiya xita dzinza ku kwa xi biwa hi munhu. Xi wa fana na ku dzinza ka tilo. A nga kona a to kala anga xitwi, lomu ka ma 4 horas xi ta dzinza.

Loko xi dzinza vata swi tiva leswaku a vula yi la kuna. Vata vuka ni mixo va amba mahungu va ku a gi tcheni, vaku mu vukile njani, vaku hi vukile, kani lezi (xiwa vitanwa aku Mapude) – vaku Mapude a dzinzile a mangala a ku a vula yi tave kona. Se va ta famba va swiyelela a mun'wereti na ti mhakwa leti vanga kela lomu ka swimuwo; a siku legi yi tana a yinge tsandzi.

Swi fambile swi famba vaku va lahlile a ntumbuluko. Kuni mukarhi a xitrumeto lexi va xi totaku mafura na tsumani. Xi wa hlayiswa ku fana na loko wena munhu u tola mafura. Kambe hi ku famba ka swi khati, a xaha tirhi.

**AC-** A va kotisa ku yini ku tiva aku ku dzinza loko ku dzinza ka vula kumbe ka makhombo ke?

**AD-** Xi wa hambanyisa ku dzinza ka kona. Loko xi dzinzela a vula na loko kuhi makhombo aswi hambana.

Loko hi hundza ka xitramento lexi, lomu va tirisile a zinyanyani. Na nyamutlha ha ha xi tsemba a xi nyanyani xa matchowani. Loko xiku, tchowe, tchowe [tcha-tcha-tcha....] – ha zi tiva aku a vula yi tana. Zilo lezi zinga hi lomu zinga mahilwa hi ntumbuluko, ahi hina hi nga swi maha. Naswona ku na xinyanyani xi singitaku, I nhura [or ndura]. Loko yi ba, lavo kota a manganakana kumbe hosi, ku tave na ku fa. Se, a madoda ya tiko, a ma hlangana ma lava ku tiva leswaku ikhombo muni gi lavako ku humelela. Se va hlahluva tihlolo.

Se va tiva aku ixini xi onhekileke – loko swihi swaku swa koteka aku va swi pfala hi ku phahla, va ta phahla [*prediction and control of reality*]. Loko ku kumeka leswaku a swi nga ta koteka hambu va phahla, a khombo gi ta tsama gihi kona, avo rindzela.

**AC-** Loko ku huma makhombo, a va mahisa ku yini ke?

**AD-** Loko a hi munhu wa hombe a fileko, a ta lungiselwa hi va hombe – anga voniwi hi vanana. Se va panza yindlu a ndzaku; anga humi hi nyangwa – va mu phutsela – loko va ya tchikela a ka wu tsamu legi va lungiseleke (**AC-** I mhaka muni anga humi hi nyangwa ke? **HD-** Avaku loko a huma hi nyangwa, a lifu leli, linga ta huma hikuva mu vulile a nyangwa. Kasi ke ku lava laha a nyangweni onge o nyamalala<sup>149</sup> anga voneki aku wa huma). [A nite] loko vaya fika laha va nga lungisela, va fanele ku nyima, va teka timbewu hikwato ta tixaka leti tinga kona laha mutini.....se loyi anga wa hombe, a phahlaka laha ka muti lowu, a bika a teka timbewu letiya a xwanya laha vato ngena hikona; a bikela vafi lava va fileke khale va lixaka lelo, a vaka mani, vaku: ‘hata se mutini, muhi amukela lezaku hinga kumi zo hi kanganyisela’ se va xwanya hi ko va ngenaka.

<sup>149</sup> Ni vona leswaku himhaka leyo a kufa hi Xitswa ve ku n’walala (to vanish).

Loko va tchikele a ka ndawu le yo tchela a khele, a xwanya a tlhela a vulavulela aku: 'E – hi kwala hi mu heleketileko kona laha aku hi mu veka kona'. Se a teka a xikomu a tsema ku kombisa a pimo wa kele wa kona. Loko se va kelile va vona aku swa ringana va guba a ndawu, kasi a musava yi nga wi hehla ka yena, ave reveni. Loko ahi wa nuna vata mu etlelisa hi reve ga xinene, loko a hi wa nsati hi reve ga xibaba [see my diagram elsewhere].

**AC-** Loko vanga xwanyi mavele va phahla, swini swinga humelelaka ke?

**AD-** Va swi kota ku kumana na tinyoka. Va kota aku kumana na nyoka yo karhi ya swikwembu. Va swi kota ku laha va to kela kona va kuma a timitsu ta hombe, mu karateka – kambe loko mu mahile leswo, swa swi kota aku munga kumi mutsu.

**AC-** A makelela lawa ya khele, yo maha a ndawu, makona na le kahina. Hicolaho ka yini va kelisa lezi ke?

**AD-** Va kholwa lezaku a yo etlela, no podi hi mutsikelela hi musava, yi ta mutikela azwa ku karateka...Aka vona waha hanya. A va tsula laha a to etlela kona va veka ti tsulu ku komba leswaku, awa etlela aka yindlu yi tsuliweke; a wutsulu a swi kombisa lezaku waha tsama laha sangweni gakwe anga gi tshikangi. A mareve makomba a mareve lawa va etlelaka hi wona na va nsati/nuna loko va tchadile.

**AC-** Hi leswinge va latiwa hi mareve lawaya kasi ku vata tlhela va hlangana ke?

**AD-** Hi zona lezo, hikuva a mi moya ya bye ya hanya va ta tlhela va hlangana [naswona a va Tsonga va kholwa aku a mufi waha hlangana na nsati wakwe. Hikwalaho a nga tekiwe, a tchingiwa a ndzaka, a maha a nsati wakwe kala ku feni, 'nsati wa mufi'].

**AC-** Ahati, lomu ka Makreste na vona va tchela mavele ke?

**AD-** *Depende*, ku n'wani a va vumeli aku hinga tcheli mavele. Kambe van'wani a va ha tcheli mavele.

AC- Ahati, loko lihi kwirhi li humaka mu maha yini ke?

AD- Loko se a sungulile kuve munhu, a voneka a ku wa nuna kumbe wa nsati, vo lava a mbita va fammba nayo kwatini va tchikela va swiyela va mu lahla lahaya va finingeta hi mbita; a va mukeleli, va boxa laha ehla ka mbita. Loko vo mbonya lahaya [va nga boxi] anga ta ha pswala<sup>150</sup>, wo gumesa a n'wana yoloye.

AC- Ahati a munhu wo khohlola i wa lahliswa ku yini ke?

AD- A munhu wo khohlola i maxaka ya kona manga lahla, loko voya naye kwatini, vata mu veka *ao lado* (a tlhelweni)– anga ngeni ka tlhawa wa lava va nga fa hi mavabyi *ou* kutani a lahliwa a taleni, ku fana na xijani.

JN- Naswona, a munhu wo khohlola anga humi hi nyangwa, vo boxa yindlu hi le ndzaku, va muphutsela hi byanyi...va mu boha hi ngoti va koka a huma a handle, anga khomiwi hi mavoko. Va ta mu khoma hi mavoko loko a humile – lomu ndlini vo koka. Se a ngoti liya na byanyi, va ta swingenisa a kheleni, va ku, hi hlongola a khohlolo u nga ha ngeni laha mutini. Loko mukhoma hima voko, kaha ta khohloliwa, kambe loko mu boha hi ngoti, mu tlhela mu muphutsela hi mabyanyi, mu hlongolile a khohlolo.

AC- Ahati a xin'wanana loko xi velekiwa va maha yini ke?

AD- Loko ku velekiwa xin'wanana ita tsama lomu ndlini kambe a wa nga pswaleli lomu ndlini. Ata tsama 5 wa masiku, hi ga wu 6 a ta laha nyangweni. A ga wu 7 a huma. Se va lava a mafura ma patsiwa ni sin'wani – va tir[y]isa a xin'wanana. Va teka a kondzo wa xona seno ka xirendze va tsala a makwenu seno phambeni na seno ndzaku. Va maha leswo kala vanana va mbela. A mamani lweyi anga khomi zakuga hi mandla, kala a lavelwa ti sinye ta kwati a ta hlamba mandla hi tona. Loko swi nga mahi leswi, a vanana lava vo to khoma n'wana loyi, va ta ve na mabala, ya ku wonha, venge ikanje.

<sup>150</sup> A va mulungasave vari loko va mbonya vanga boxi, a pfula a yi nga ta na. A vaka Barane (Massinga/Murrombene/Funhalouro) vali a mamani wa kona anga ta ha beleka.

**JN-** Naswona a mamani luya a tsama a masiku lawa ya 8 na anga hlambi – a ta tsama a swekeliwa a ga, anga hlambi, kala a heta a masiku lawa. A siku leli la wu 8, va maha a muthimba waku mu humesa ndlini – ku hlawuliwa a munhu wo karhi wa sungalakati, wa wa nsati – a mu swekela, a mu nyika mati, a maha hikwaswo. A mamani loyi a mu hlaysaka, a fanele ku zila anga tlangani ni nuna wa yena, va hambana masango hi 8 dias; kala a li kavani liwa, hi kuva a liyila – a va mutota a tsumani a mamani wa n’wana. A siku legi hikona a to suswa misisi a hlambisiwa, a huma handle. Se va muboha a tchungu a ku a kwirhi linga kuli, kala a heta a tin’weti tinharu, se va susa. Loko ahari ndlini anga vonani na munhu – hambani nuna wakwe – tsena a sungalakati legiya tse. A siku legi ga ku huma, a n’wana a fanele ku nyikiwa a vito ga tinguluve ta laha kaya, na gi tlhamuseliwa hi ti hlolo. Hambani anga va na man’wani mavito, ku na legi ga ntumbuluko<sup>151</sup> - a wu zi lavi u kheta a ti hlolo tinga vulangi. Loko swinga mahi lezo, a n’wana u ta rila kuve nini, kumbe loko mu tchula o ka anga hi yena mufi loyi a hlulileke<sup>152</sup> va n’wani lava va lavaku ku tchuliwa aka n’wana kala va ba tihlolo, se tiku a vito munga tchula a li vumelanangi, se va lava lin’wani vito. Se loko litsamile, a n’wana a hanya.

**AC-** Loko a vonana na vanhu swini swi to huma ke?

**JN-** Ku humelela a swilo swi mbirhi, *um*, wa swikota aku a n’wana afa, hikuva un’wani karhi, loyi a taka a ta losana naye, ina makhombo, *dois*, *ou* ku vabya a n’wanana loyi, a boxekela a tindleve anga yengisi. *Ou* a rila anga an’wi – kala va lava tihlolo va kuma leswaku, loyi a nga ta losana nayena a munyikile makhombo; a ni mahanyelo manga fambelanangiki na n’wana, se a n’anga yi mutira, hikona a miyelaka – kasi ku vitara hikwaswo leswiya, ku la ku anga losani na vanhu.

**AC-** Ahati, loko a ntumbi yi kula, ku endleka yini ke?

<sup>151</sup> A vito ga mabizweni kumbe la xikwembu a mulunga save, a ka Homoine na Murrombeni li vitaniwa aku ivito la *ntumbuluko*.

<sup>152</sup> This shows that spirits fight over a dominion and control of babies that is symbolized by naming. These fights sometimes result in the death of the baby as revenge of the defeated spirits.

AD- Loko a kulile ntumbi, u ta tsama masiku a ta nyamalala laha kaya, va mulava – loko a vona aku a va mukumi, a ta teka a nguvo ya yena a yi bohelela laha ka dzavi – karhi lowu mu tsamileko, a ta tchukumeta a dzavi legi gi tawa laha kaya – se va sungula a ku muyela. Kambe anga ta vuya laha kaya, kala tihanu wa masiku na mambiri – se a humesiwa. Se loko a huma anga khomi tchumu hi mandla, za yila...a nyikiwa xipuni xakwe loko a humesiwa, n'wina vavanuna munga ta tsama laha kaya; muta susiwa laha muya tsama *ao lado*, vata sungula ku munyika a mulawu, va mu phalula a misisi, va muhlambisa, a totiwa a tsumani a ka nhloko....se va landza madoda, se muvuya, se ku busiwa.

JN- A siku a vuyaku, ilikulu aka munhu wa Africa, asiku venge vo mu hlomula, ku rambiwa madoda, ku rambiwa a ti tombi hikwato, va ta maha a xirendzelekwani, na va vekile a tchuri linga hava tchumu, se va kandza – vaku – 'gwa, gwa,gwa' – va tchina kasi ku byela a tiko na majaha aku laha kaya a ntumbi yi kulile, va vitana majaha aku mata vuta hi ngoma leya, hi leswi va nga ku imbutsa. Va kina, ku giwa, ku tivisiwa a majaha lomu tikweni aku laha kaya a ntumbi se yi kona.

A siku legi a gihi ga ku munyika a minayo – a pswatsi legi gi mu humesaka agi munyika a masiku yo vona wu nsati gakwe – manharu, kumbe munie, hivona vangahi na midida<sup>153</sup>. Loko a tata a masiku, a wa vuya aka sungalakati ga yena. A siku legi hi gona vanga mu laya vaku ku sukela ka sweswi, awu swi koti aku tihangana na jaha – loko masiku mafika anga ha sweki swakuga<sup>154</sup> anga khomi xilo xaku giwa hi vanhu a tsama kule, kala a heta masiku – a wutomini ga wansati hikwago, teki a maha leswo. Hambi loko ayo tekiwa laha kaya, loko masiku ya yena mafika, ku laveka a hambana na nuna wa yena, anga sweki swakuga, swi ta swekiwa hi va n'wani vanhu [va mani? Polygamy].

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<sup>153</sup> Among the Tsongas and the Kinyarwandans there is a belief that the pswatsi gives the days of period (3 to 4). The spirits can be involved in this medida, but there is a scam here. 3 to 4 days is the normal and natural length of time for any health woman, furthermore, she observed her first and sometimes her second period and about her length before the day she gives medida or her number of days for her circles.

<sup>154</sup> In Zambezia, among the Lomwe in Mozambique, she does not even put salt into their food. I did not ask about this if it is the same since cooking and putting salt is the same.

**AC-** A Ghana, a PCG a va va nsati loko va hi masikwini ya vona, a va gi xilalelo, swi mahisa kuyini lomu ka hina a bandleni ga Metodista?

**JN-** Hi nayo wa xilalelo xa Hosi, *até* nyamutlha a Makreste lawa manga wuva ma ambala a Xikreste, ka layeliwa lezaku, a wa nsati loko a la ku ya ka xilalelo anga feli ku ve loyi a vonaka masiku – anga faneli ku sukela a ndlini a hlangene na nuna wa yena – a viki la xilalelo li kwitsimile ka wa nuna kumbe wa nsati, a va tsineli a xi lalelweni na va karhi va hisa, na nyamutlha va layeliwa lezo – zinga etcheka aku va n’wani va honisa, kambe a nayu wa kereke ya hina u vula lezo.

**AC-** Loko a munhu a file va hleketa yini hi moya wakwe?

**AD-** Loko munhu a file va kholwa lezaku a moya wa hanya – a moya a wufi – loko va phahla va mu khumbula, va ku wena mani - loko va ta mu phahla. Loko ti vula ti nga ni va ta phahla va fileko.

**JN-** Kambe hi nayu, loko munhu a fa ahi n’wana wa laha kaya anga hi wo tekiwa, kumbe wa nsati, kumbe wa nuna, a ndzaku ka viki, kumbe masiku ma mbiri va ba a huku va ku vo mureleta (ku ba huku ku daya a huku ya wanuna para wa nsati, kumbe ya wa nsati para wa nuna).

**AC-** Aku mureleta swi vula yini ke?

**JN-** Swi vula leswaku, ku mu amukela laha kaya – a tlahanganisiwa na tinguluve ta laha kaya – anga koti kuya ka tinguluve ta laha kaya anga hi na tchumu – ku fanele ku dawa huku. Lava va dayaka va fanele a ku bikela a ti nguluve le ta hombe ta laha kaya, kumbe wa nsati a karataka laha mutini, a fumelaka a muti, kumbe wa nuna, va taku, ‘wena manyani, amukela a n’wana wa wena ximani, amukela a tukulu wa wena ximani a fileko laha mutini. Kasi a wa nsati wo teka hi tchuma laha kaya, anga daweli huku, ku maheka leswaku, hina hi suka hiya a ka maxaka ya yena lomu anga pswaliwa kona, hiku, a n’wana wa n’wina a file – se va ta vona va ta daya huku, va maha minayu, va teka a nguluve liya va famba nayona. A tinguluve ta vavansati vaku tekiwa ati tsami laha, ti fanele tiya a kaya ka vona.

**AC-** Swi mahisa kuyini aku kuve na vava nsati va phahliwaka wu katini ke?

**AD-** Loko ahi wa nsati wo tekiwa wa phahliwa futsi anga heleketiwe a kaya ka vona loko va mu khomisile a gombe ga mhamba go phahla a tinguluve ta laha kaya na aha hanya; kutani ke, loko afa a munhu loyi, anga ha heleketiwi a kaya ka yena, idoda ga laha kaya.

**AC-** Aka hina a ti mhaka ta ku pfuka ve ti tile na mutchapi, a hati lomu ke?

**AD-** Hiswona na kwalomu ka hina. Swi sungulile hi kuteka a karhinyana a ndzaku ka mutchapi, zi sungulile hi ma 1956 ka xipandze lexi. A ku pfuka ku tile hiku tirisa a ti sinya ta kwati ti tlhavelwa vanhu – ti kona ti sinya ta ku pfuka lomu kwatini – loko va kala va ku tlhavela tota a nyameni ya wena a xipoka lexi xita pfuka. Ve ku na sinya (ani se wu vona) yaku loko u famba, a moya wa wena wuya fika ka sinya leyi, ayi na matluka, u ta yi kuma anga ku yi omile – mipfukwa lowu. A sinya lowu a wu lavi ku za a zi gingi za munhu. Kambe a tin'anga hi wu tlhari ga tona ti kala ti wu tsumbula, na tin'wani ti sinya, na maphakama yo karata loko va ku tlhavela. Hi laha a mipfukwa yinga ta hi kona ka tinyanga, hi tona tinga byala a mhaka ya mipfukwa [Jonod, P ali itungu wa mipfukwa].

**AC-** Hinga vula aku mupfukwa ya ntumbuluko, kumbe swilo zinga vangiwa ke?

**AD-** Mina nita vula aku a mipfukwa zilo zinga vangiwa, ahi ntumbuluko wa hina.

**JN-** Aku pfuka ahi ntumbuluko wa hina, ku ta hi laha vanhu vanga lava ku ti kulisa va engetela a swiyimo swa vona. Lava vanga tiviwa a ku va pfuka khale ti hosi. Munhu wa nyalidede anga pfuki – na swi sukela ka tinyanga – loyi anga hi hosi, awalava nyanga yita mu nyika ti sinya aku loyi a to ni ga ni ta mu pfukela – kambe, swi maha a *negocio*, mani na mani loyi a swi lavaka a tinyanga ti mutlavela. Se aka ha pfukeliwi lava vanga ga, hambu lava vanga pemba mali, lava vanga ni rukatela....xilo xinga ta sweswi ahi khale – xi tile na mutchapi – a tinyanga sweswi to tirha ngopfu hi swona.

Lomu ka tihosi a ku yisiwa a n'wanana wa nhanyana [wo hlawula] vaku Nyakwave, a tsamisiwa lomu ndlini, anga tekiwi, a nga tsuki a tlangana na wanuna, loko a tlangana na wanuna, a wanuna loyi a ta fa, hikuva a tlangene ni Nyakwave. AC- Xini Nyakwave? JN- Nyakwave imunhu loyi anga na mi moya ya vanhu va ku fa.

AC- Loko ku fika a Ivangeli swini swi humelelaka a ka vanhu ke mayelano na ntumbuluko?

AD- A ha ha ku tivi lomu hi yaka kona, hi famba hiya ngena ka Wukriste, hiya ngena ka ntumbuluko, hi huma. A hi na *balança*, ho famba famba. Kuna lomu hi tchipisaka a ntumbuluko, ku fana na ku hlamba ka va va nsati, na ku kula ka vona, a haha swi tirisi, kambe, ku na lomu hi fikaka hiku, laha a ntumbuluko hi fanele a ku wu landza.

A ku nge hi loko a munhu a fa hi khohlolo, hambu hi maha hikwaswo hi Xikreste, a vaka mani va sala va yiva, va ku, hevasan'wi, hambu lezi hinga maha zikhozelo ka yina loyi, lexi hinga hundzi ka xona, tchinga hi heta<sup>155</sup>. Va ta lava tinyanga ti tivaka ku fumba a lifu leli laku khohlola. Va ta lava humba, hikwavo va phelela se a teka aya yi tumbeta a yina loyi wa n'anga kasi ku daya khombo legi.

AC- I xini xinga na *influência*, intumbuluko kumbe Ivangeli ke?

JN- A mhaka leyi ya karata. Sweswi hina vanhu hi tlangene hi matiko yo tala – hambu hina va fundisi, kuna va Norte, va na matirela ya vona yo hambana. Sweswi, loko ku fiwe, ve ku na misa, a khale a va ku i mhamba. Loko vaku va humesiwa xikuma hi *Sábado*, va ta lava tinyanga hi *Sexta-Feira* va daya tihukum timbuti, va hlambisiwa, va maha timhamba va kelela. Hambu mbuti yi to giwa mandziko, vata daya na wusiku va hlambisiwa hi khata wa kona, vaku vo daya ku fa laha kaya. Muku mu ta n'wina Makreste muta maha mikhongelo, a nyanga a yi hi laha yi ta hlambisa a vanhu. Se ku na misa ya 3 *meses*, ya 6 *meses*, ya 1 *ano*, yinga mhamba; muku muta n'wina, mukuma leswaku va mahile swa xilandi. *Metade wu Africano*, metade Xikriste.

<sup>155</sup> Here we see the example of how *ntumbuluko* overrule Christian faith. Christ has no power, the diviner is supreme.

**AC-** Swini hinga vulaka hi mhaka leyi yaku Vakreste va vitana n'anga – vo kala ku tiva a matimba ya Ivangeli, kumbe voma vona na ma hundziwa hi lawa ya ntumbuluko ke?

**JN-** A mhaka hi leyi yaku a Makreste ya nyamutlha ma tchava a ku vula a xi onho. A ntumbuluko ixi onho. Byela munhu xionho. Kunge hi leswi, ni Mfundisi, ku laveka a ku bala uku, Mfundisi wa hoxa hi lexi na lexi, haku nyimisa a kuve Mfundisi. Kambe sweswi va tchava ku byela munho xi onho. A tolo Muvangeli, Mufundisi, loko a maha xo biha laha mutini, awa nyimisiwa ka ntirho wa yena. A paluxiwa lomu ka kereke aku, manyani a mahile xo ihi – swoswi a vaha mahi, va fihla ve ikulu wa munhu a hiswikoti ku maha tchumu; kumbe loyi Muvangeli kumbe Mukhokheli, ixaka la Mufundisi mani, loko hi mu nyimisa a ta hi sola Mfundisi. I tchukwana hi miyela zita hundza, ku miyeliwa. Kambe a khale, u wa nyimisiwa va ku ikota ya leswi anga maha xo kani – a nga ta maha mukombelo, a nga ta tchumayela, anga ta ha ga kumbe ku gisa xilalelo mu kombeleleni...se va mu tlhelisa ndzaku ka masiku...

**AD-** A hi ku a Ivangeli a yi na ntamu, tsena lezaku ku kholwa za karata – loko munhu a hi na ku kholwa ko mbelela, zotlhe lezi hinga hlawutela laha za ntumbuluko za mbela, a hanya ka Ivangeli hiku kholwa ka yena a hlula. Loku a Ivangeli hi yi kholwa wa hlula...va yi randza Ivangeli, kambe a hi kumi ku patsana.

**AC-** Kambe i xini lexi a vanhu voto vona xona, loko a Mukreste aya lava a matimba man'wani aku ma mu fpuna ke?

**AD-** A vanhu va ta vona leswaku a Ivangeli a yi na nntamu, hiko kwalaho a fambako aya lava man'wani matimba. Hi ta kholwa lezo, hiku a a nga ta lomba wu n'wani ntamu ka va n'wani, *nada*, a a ta nyima ka Ivangeli. Kambe, aku kholwa swa karata, iku vululelwa, se uzi vona [spiritual powers teaching is revelation]. Kambe a hi vululelwi hotlhe,

mun'we tsena a to zi tiva a ku lezi a ni faneli a ku ni peta xin'wani xilo. Vakona va kalaka ku peta, va na wu tomi ga ntamu ngovu, u zivona a ku loyi anga petangi

tchumu – a hanya hi Ivangeli – kambe va n’wani a ku ngena ngena lomu ka Ivangeli vanga humeleli hi khalaho va tchikaka vaya lava yi n’wani mintamu.

**JN-** Xin’wani xaku engeta, ku ni ti mhaka ti kulu leti hi ti lahlileko laha ta timbirhi. A khale a ka muti lomu ka *Aldeia*, a kuhi na *classe* ya ku fundisa wu Krete a vanhu....lomu vanga byeliwa aku a kuve Mukreste hi leswi, na leswi na leswi, a unge mahi Mukreste loko unga tsiki leswi na leswin na leswi – a *baptismo* u wanga yi unge se pasa aka ma *classe* lawa. A masiku lawa ahi na maclasse... A xa wumbirhi, a *influencia* ya Makreste lawa manga kona masiku lawa, ma ndlengandlengisa vanhu. Va kona lava venge Makreste [AICs] va yaka vaya khoma moya wo biha ka munhu – va ku va profeti – a moya wu vulavula wu ku, ni rumiwi hi mani nita ku loya. Va kona va dayaka timbuti va tira wunyanga va ku hi tira hi vito la Wukreste....vanhu va tele ka tona [tikereke leto]. Loko munhu a onha seno, mumu boha, aya seniya, loko a sukile a hi Muvangeli, vaya vaya mu boha khororo – se a ta a taku xeweni wena Mfundisi, kasi ku ku komba aku a nga hi Muvangeli, angahi mudyohi, kambe se Mufundisi [na yena]– se xikalo xa banara. Va vula vito la Xikwembu, kambe a mintirho ya kona yi hambanile kule ngopfu....

A masiku lawa, loko u vona a *movimento* wa vanhu va patsile swilo swi mbirhi, *civilização* ni wu Krete. Van’wani vaya hi kota ya mani a ta vona aku ni qokile kahle, van’wani hi kota ya ku yimbelela; ata ata kombisa aku yena wa tiva ku yimbelela u pala manyani – wa jondziza ku yimbelela. Va nyingi loko a huma Sotweni, u ta kuma leswaku, a humile a ka wu Kriste, anga hari Mukreste a kaya....(clean clothes, but dirt heart; civilization vs Christian faith).

#### **SWI LERISO:**

**JN-** A va hombe va *nível baixo*, kambe vapswa a va patsani na va kulu kasi ku ganya *experiencia*....

**AD-** Nyamutlha ndzi wa xuxa timhaka ta kata mwani anga feliwa, andzi ti koti. Loko hi lavile ku tiva aku va tsamisa ku yini, siku neneni, hi valiwe hi va fana vaku: lava va nsati va hina, a swi lavi n’wina, *mas* a nyamutlha ku ni guwa....se katamwani a nibyela leswi, ani nge tsami malembe lawa ya manharu ninga kumangi wa nuna; xi

hoda va va nuna va ta laha kaya. A va fana va hlamala manje – ve u hi tisela va va nuna. Kambe kata mwani o aninge tsami ni nga kumangi wa nuna. Kambe khale vawa tsama, hakuva a hi va nhika mi layo – A munhu wa nyamutlha anga fambi hi mi kondzo a 20 km, a fambisa Ivangeli, a famba 1 km, yi mu tsandza. Ko sala bandla ga maguwa guwana, lego khongela a ga hi kona....loko Mfundisi ahi hava mova, basikeni, *motorizada*, anga ha tiri....a bandla ga tolo na ga nyamutlha a za ha fani, ni vona ku tala vafundisa va xinsati, va ta vadira vava nuna zezi. A va va nuna se a va ha hi kona....a ni tivi lomu a bandla gi yaku kona...loko u landza minawu ya hina ya ntumbuluko, wu landza a Matsalwa yo Bosa, andzi kholwi lezaku a wansati wa vumeliwa a ku noma laha ka *pulipito* na a tsutsuma. Kani zi kona lezo andzi zitivi, ndzazi kholwa lezaku azikona lezo – hambu hi landza a minayo ya hina kumbe a xi Juda a ka Bibela, a wansati anga swi koti a ku noma laha ka *pulipito* loko a tsutsuma – na ku tlangana ni lava va n’wani anga swi koti, wa yila. *Mas* inyamutlha Mufundisa wa xinsati, mu angameli wa xinsati a la ku gisa xilalelo, *mas* wa tsutsuma – a nhloko ya mina makunu yi sungula ku banara. Lezi hizi tchipisaka, hi zona zi wutlaka a ntamu wa hina....a haha khizami, hi ga xilalelo na hi yimile...va n’wani va khongela na va tchukisa – rwada ndzi vona gaya, ndzi vona gaya....

JN- A xi vutiso xa wena xaku hita maha yini hina vapswa kasi ku Ivangeli yi ya a mahleni, a yin’we ya tindlela niyi vonaka mufela ku zama ku tsala mabuko – mu tthamusela a lisima la Wukriste tolo na kuwa ka Wukriste nyamutlha – hi ti rimi leti vanhu va ti kotaka, Xiphutukezi, Xingiza, lihi na lihi – va n’wani a vese tiva aku a Ivangeli ya wa hansi nyamutlha; vali swa famba hiku vona ku tala ka vanhu a makerekeni, vali swa famba hi ku vona ku tala ka vafundisi, ka makereke. Kasi ku ni laha swi nga fambiki kahle. Aya mina ndlela niyi vonaka, a ku tsaliwi tchumu tchi tthamusela a ku hinga voneni ku famba ka ngalava, ayi fambi a ngalava – yo mbemba yi ya hansi....

**8.12 Appendix XI****NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview****Date:** 20 April**Place:** Cambine (Inhambane)**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko***Language:** Tsonga-Xitshwa**Conf/access:** Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee****Name:** Nel Sinai Massango**Gender:** Female**Date of birth:** 1919**Place of birth:** Homoine**Residence:** Cambine**Religious convictions:** Christian (United Methodist)**Position in the religious group:** Ex-President and Monitor of Wemen Society**Profession and occupation:** Peasant**Category:** Christian practitioner**Address:** C P 7 Cambine, Morrumbene**Tape identification:** N/A

**NEL SINAI MUCAMBI-MASANGO (VIUVA DE PR. MANUEL M. MUKHAMBI)**

***NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL***

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

**AC-** Ni navela a ku tiva leswaku, loko a vanhu va lomu ka hina va vulavula hi ntumbuluko va vula yini ke? I xini a ntumbuluko ke?

**NM-** A ntumbuluko i xilu lexi xi kombisaka a wu munhu la hina laha misaveni kota swi vangwa. Loko Nungungulu a hi mahile, ku sukela ka Adamu a vekile a swilo swa ntumbuluko aka Adamu na Eva kala ku fika ka hina. A ntumbuluko ku ve na wu tomi ga ma tsamela ya tiko laha misaveni.

**AC-** Yi kona mi nawu ya ntumbuluko mu yi tsundzukaka ke, kunge i ntumbi loko yi kula yiya a wu katini, ku endleka yini ke?

**NM-** Loko a wa nsati a tchikela a xi khati xaku tekiwa, na a tlhatlhiwa hi va pswali...na a kulile, a fela a ku ve a hi loyi a byeliwaka a minawu ku sukela 14 anos kala a tekiwa.

**AC-** A va byeliwa yihi minawu ya kona ke?

**NM-**A va byeliwa leswi a ku sukela ka 13 anos a fela a ku ti hlayisa a ti khoma a nga mahi nya mu fambi, nya mu vulavuli, nya mu tsami- a famba hi nayu na a tlhatlhiwe, loko va yala va hombe anga fambi. Loko a anguliwa hi wa nuna kota a kulileko, a nga hlamuli, a li famba kaya. Loko a beliwa a noti kumbe ku 'heyi', a nga tchuwuki ndzaku-hikuva wa tiva leswaku a tisa a marito yo swara. Kala loko aya a kaya, hikona a amukeliwaka va zwanana naye a ku a mu teka, na a nga hi yena [nhanyana] a hlamulaka.

Se, va ya lungisa a 5 litros ya byala, na ndzava wo karhi wu nga ni tikarusu kutani lifetse. A ndzava lowu ve xilawani kasi a ku a ta khoma a nhanyana loyi na va mu

heleketa a wu katini. Loko a ya fika a wu katini, a nzava lowu va nga ta wu amukelisa muhoni, va ta wu amukela hi nayo-a nzava lowu wu lumba a nuna wakwe, a za kuga zinga lomu zi lumba a nuna wakwe, a hi za votlhe. Loko va hi Makreste, a va tirisa a xi nguretana xa wu lombe. Hambi vo va na zilo zo tala, a zilo lezimбири a zi tchoti. A va swi koti a ku mu heleketa na vanga hi na swona, na fuku ya yi tsongwani yi nga na mahewu.

Loko a nga hi naswo, a vaku, a nhanyana a hungukile- a va pswali a va tsakangi. Hikuva hivona va mu longisaka na va hahani; kambe loko vanga xalalangi a va swi koti a ku mu longisa. Hikuva ku na swilo leswi swi nga tiyisa mi miti. A siku go sungula a ku va etlela tani nsati na nuna, na mixo va hahani vata laha nyangweni vata nyimela tinguvo kasi a ku va ta vona a ku a nhanyana loyi a ti hlayisile ke? Loko va mi vona na ma losola, va ta ba mi kulungwani va suka vava a combeni va ya hlaza va vuya va ta tsaka swinene. Loko swi nga mahi, a va hahani a va salisi hi tingana-a va nga ta mu longisa a siku lo mu heleketa-loyi wa mufana loko swi koteka, na angahi yena a ta maha ti mhaka. A vula a kaya loko a tlhela. Aka va pswali va ntumbi ataku, a n'wana wa n'wina anga ti hlayisangi (Methodist used hospital virginity testing at the mission hospital in Chicunque).

...loko a wa nsati a ti twa a ku a na nyimba, anga faneli ku byela a nuna kala 5 mezes hi kona u vulaka a ku u na nyimba...(she is to observe food restrictions, avoid conflicts, problems to avoid witchcraft)...

...A nga fambi lomu masin'wini ya vanhu, wa hisa a nga hisa ti mbewu. A fanele ku boha a misava a ka txipetso kala a tsemakanya a masimu. Hambi Makreste ma kona ma mahako.

AC- Loko a n'wana tsongo a fa, a ka man'wani ma tiko ku lahla a masungukati woxe, swa maha lomu ke?

NM- Hizalezo- a va va nuna va nga famba, kambe a va tchikeli lahaya ka khele legiya. Hikuva va n'wani va huma masangweni va hisa, a khombo li nga ka li nga heli ka mamani lwiya.

Kambe laha swa karata Mfundisi, a n'wanana tsongo a lahliwa ku hambana. Va kela a khele angaku i bakwa se va lava byanyi, va lava manza (lin'we kumbe mambiri) va famba naswo le kheleni. A mamani wa kona a teka a tanza a faya hi madzolo kala gi ku pwandla se va teka a tsutsu wa kona lowuya va xwanya lomu ka kele, a hehla ka byanyi leliya, se hikona va tekaka n'wana va mu lata, kasi ku a mamani luya a nga ha feliwi kambe.

AC- Hi ntumbuluko loko munhu a fa, va hleketa aku a moya wakwe wu yile kwihi ke?

NM- Hi ntumbuluko va hleketa a ku a moya wakwe a wu yangi wu tsamu, wu kona wu famba famba.

AC- A ka hina, ku na leswi venge ku landza mufi, va maha lomu ke?

NM- Va maha- va famba na n'anga na male-kambe a xo sungula va ranga hi ku hlalulwa tihlolo se va byeliwa a mali leyi yi lavekaka na leswi va faneleke ku mahisa swona, na ku fambisa swona. Hikwaxo xitoriya lexi va xi kumaka ka tihlolo hi xona vo to landza xona va ya lava ti n'anga ti maha hi kwaswo va nga byeliwa-na kuya teka moya. Va xava nguvo yo basa na njiti kasi ku ya mu vuyisa ha yona....

#### TI MHAKA TA VA LOYI

A moya wa wu loyi wu kona nguvu, wa karata...nguvunguve xikhati lexi- zalezi mun'wani wa *sobrinha*, n'wana wa ku belekiwa hi ndzisana ya mina i delwe zalezi hi kota ya gona wu munhu....va ku a nani mu moya...va mu koka va mu daya lomu kwatini. Sweswi nyana, mun'wani wa *sobrinha* i wa hi na makabye wa wa nuna, a ma kabye loyi a fa a siya a va fana va mbiri na nhanyana mun'we va hombe. A va fana lava, va ku, wena tiya hi wena wunga daya papayi.

A viki legiya gi nga hela, a va fana lava, loyi wa *tia* wabye a wa tsama ni xi tirhi kota a vana vale Maputo. Se va ngena na wu siku vaku, vuxa *senhora* wa wena, hi lava ku vonana naye-se aku, a nga vuyangi- vo ngena va ba livati-se a huma aku, ma hungu muni, vaku, ho ku lava tiya (*tia*). Hinga huma. A huma, vaku ahi fambeni, va mu

rangisa onge vaya se kaya. Kuveni a va hi ni hamela va mu pandza laha [seno xikosini], va mu khemelela lomu [nhloko hikwayo], vaku "landza papayi wa hina" a fisa leswo. Va ku hi mu lorile, hi yena a nga daya papyi. Loko u nga va wa khale, loko va ku lora na loko va ve na ti feveri, vali hi wena wo va loya. Va fela ku daya. Hambi Makreste ma haha.

A ni vabya hi mu khuhlani wa hombe na feveri. Nahaku vuya hi Maputo. A ni hi na mukhuhlani lowo iiii [xipwembe] ni khohlola ni titivala a ka tanga leyi. Se, van'wani va zalwani va ku: 'ii, wena wo kholwa hava, swi kona va nga ku loya hi swona'. Loko va ngena lomu ndlini va vona leswi vaku, va ku tchelile maroxa na nyama....a maxaka ya wena. Leswi unge hi laha, maroxa na nyama lawa va rumelaka a vana. Se, va ku, 'pfumela hi ya lava nyanga yi ta hakula maroxa ni nyama wu ta hanya. Le swa mukhongelo zo tlhatekeliwa, ku ranga wu munhu, u vuya u tlhatekela mukhongelo; o vuniwa Nungungulu.' Niku ina hi zona.....

Ndzi miyela ndzi ti kombelela, vata va ta kombela vafundisi – ku ta xikhati va ta ni teka a vanana ndziya Maputo. Ndzi xaniseka, ku susiwa RX va ku *nada*, va nga kumi tchumu. A *doutor* wa wu 5 hi yena a nga ku laha ka *valvo* ya mina ku na lexi xi karataka, a yi vali kwatsi.... Se ni za ni hanya ku sukela Dezembro ku fika Marco 2000-2001 kambe, seno kaya va ku a nga ta hanya loko va nga se hakula a maroxa anga ta hanya. Loko ni vuyile ni khomiwe hi mukhuhlani, va ku hi wulile hi ku a nga ta hanya – kambe wu hundzile. Loko a ni yoya a ti n'angeni inge ni file....

Loko u babya ngovu u nani valala va taka hi wu xaka kala va ta ku hundzula u maha muhedeni.... A vanhu lava hi valava hi khongelaka navo, se u tlela u hlamala. A muhedeni a nga vuli a ku Nungungulu o vuniwa, Mukreste lo a vulavulaka leswo – mukholwa a vulaku aku Nungungulu o vuniwa...

A timhaka ta mipfukwa ta khale hi mhaka leyo ku na nyakwave. Va yaka a yindlu va hlawula hi nhanyana va ku hi loyi anga nsati wa mi pfukwa. Va yaka xiyindlwana, a musisi yakwe va tchela tsumani....swi wa hi kona hi kale ngopfu, lezi vo zi *civilizara*, kambe za hi kona.

AC- A va hi kona va Nyakwave va nga kholwa?

NM- Ko ku kholwa ka ku patsela, loko a kumana ni swi karato va ku hi leswi wena u nga tshika a wu Nyakwawe.

AC- Swi kona a swi yila swo feliwa ni swi n'wani ke?

NM- A hitiva leswaku, mamani lweyi loko a felwe wa yila, a nga fambi a ya hlakana na wa nuna i ta daya – ni lezi zi kona. Kala a kuma ku hlambisiwa.

Loko a n'wana kumbe nuna a babya, u nga holovi na vanhu, ti khomi...loko mamani a famba a hlakana ni va va nuna a wa vuyisa a *veneno* laha mutini. A vanana vakwe na nuna a va fele ku vabya. Loko n'wana a vabya a swi fambelani na ku hlakana – hambani loko hi swi hehukisa, a swa *ntumbuluko* swa *ntumbuluko*. Awu Kreste gikona, kambe swi kona leswi swi tiraku swi fambelana na nayo a ndzeni ka wukriste. A nayo hi wona wu mahaka a muti wu tiya. Loko mamani a *nkanyisa* a swarisa a wutomi ga ngangu. A va vula leswaku, loko wa nuna a hlakana ngovu anga mu kanuki ku hunza pimo...a fanele ku mutshika, a ta koneka hi yetche. Se a vuya u ku ni ku byelile. A nga mu hlongoli laha ngangweni, hikuva loko a mu hlongola i mhangu.

A a mu kawuke, loko a vona a ku a nga vumeli a kaketa, a nga mu vekeli pinya. Loko a vuya u ku ni to yini – hikuva, hi wena mamani u khomileko a wu tomi gakwe. A mamani swa karata a ku a hehuka laha ngangweni – a fanele ku ti boha mbilu yakwe; na ku fihla a wu fendze ga papayi. Ku nge hiloko a famba a nga tivi a ku a na ngangu, kumbe anga vuyisi na *quinhenta*, a vuya a ta ba nsati, swa binza ka mamani ku *pacientara*. Kambe a ku laveki a ku a hangalasa a ngangu hi ku kwata ka kwe. Tchela kota u khoma wu tomi gakwe.

AC- Loko a wa nsati a feliwe, swini a kereke ya n'wina yi mahaku ke?

NM- Loko hinga maha mikhongela hi hangalaka holava ku tiva leswaku, wa simama lomu a ka bandla ke? Wena mufeliwa hi wena u fanelaka ku ti tiva a ku u mu kholwa hakuva a maxaka ya nuna wa wena mata ku koka, *por exemplo*, ma ku hi fanele ku basisa a muti lowu, hikuva ha babya hi mhaka ya wena u nga feliwa. Loko hita hota

teka a ngumbe. Loko u nga tlharihangwi wa ngena mhangweni, kambe loko u tlharihile, wo, u ngati laha ka mina, tsama kwaseyo ka wena. Mina ni felwe, ni tsamile, loko u tchava makhombo tsama. Kambe, loko wo lava ku patsela va ta lava a wa nuna va ku wo basisa muti – kutani, a wahahi mukholwa.

AC- Loko a vakriste va nyingi va khomiwa hi swi karato, swini va mahako ke?

NM- A makholwa manyingi mahluliwa hi swi karato. Hiku, loko ku huma khombo a ka mukholwa loyi a kalaka a nga tiyangi, va ta a va rangeli va xikholwa va ta maha ti khozo ku ya fika 7 dias – se loko ku hi *Sexta Feira*, va tolovela aku tchela swi tsangi hi *Sabado*, a vitana n'anga ni zakwe za wu hedeni nyamutlha hi *Sexta Feira* va ta va ta mahetela swa vona swa wu hedeni. Va daya timbuti, va hlamba hi ngati liyani, va vuka na mixo va siyetela hikwaswo. Se ku ta Mfundisi kutani doda gi ta ngenisa kozo; kuve va hetile. Se va tlhatekela, ve Nungungulu o vunetiwa – hi xigelo lexi zi kona ngovu. Siku gin'wani Mfundisi a hojomelile na xitulu lomu ka khele va nga tchelela timhamba na timbave ta huku ya muphahlo ( a va siriviri va meza a va tivangi tchumu). Swi kona ngovu, a hi mbeleli hi ku kholwa.

AC- Swini leswi mahaku a ku swi tala nguvo lezi lomu ka Makreste ke?

NM- Hi leswaku a masiku lawa, a ku kholwa ka hina ka hehuka – a hilaha hansi, a hi le hehla, hi le ndengelengeni hotche makholwa. Va tsongwani nguvo va ngenaka ku kholweni va tiya. Ha vumela a ku hi makholwa; a hi Makriste, ho va makholwa. Loyi a nga Mukriste a nga tsekatekisiwi hi tchumu. Makunu, hina hi rangelaka, ka xin'wani xi khati hi ni nandzu. Hikuva a hi yi hi moya lowuya wa ku kholwa ka khale. Ha kiyelwa hi ku kholwa. Loko munhu a kiyelwa hi ku kholwa ka matirela ya wukriste, a nga wu kumi ntamu wo hundzulusa vanhu va vuya swinene [ka le swinene]. A va rangeli va byela vanhu a ku 'hambi vafundisi va patsela.' A mavulavulela ya hina ka xidlemu ma hehuka. A hi ngenisi ku kholwa. A mintirho ya hina hi rangelaka ntirho a yi kombisi wukriste.

A wu rangeli i mhangu. A karhi ninga fambela a *Central* hi tlhelo la *Sociedade* ya va mamani, niwa wula a ku wurangeli i mhangu. A kadera leyi hi nyikiwaka i xikalo xa wu tomi ga wena va ku nyikaka vaku tsama kota mamani, kota murangeli. Zalezi u

tsamileko laha se u fana na saka ya tikarusu kumbe ya timanga leyi yiyaka a lojeni yiya peziwa hi loyi a lavaka ku xava kasi ku vona a ku a tikarusu kumbe timanga leti mabobo kutani a hi mabobo. A karhi u vekaka a sacco a ponteiro wu ta vulavula a ku timanga tinene kumbe tikarusu tinene hi ku famba-famba. Hambu loko u nga ringa a ku yi veka kahle a sakwa, a *ponteiro* wa yala, wo a hi timanga tinene. Se loyi wo xava a ku, baxarisa a tsengo, hikuva a ti manga a hi tinnene. Loko u hi xi tulwini, ku peziwa a wu tomi la wena ku sukela *Janeiro* kala *Dezembro* – se a *ponteiro* wu ku kada.... Se va ku u rangele kwatsi.... Ni lava a ku vula leswaku, a muntirho ya hina hi yona yi hambanako na wukriste. Hi tsama a wu kholweni.

AC- Ahati, swini leswi u nga hi layelaka swona a ka ntirho hina majaha ke?

NM- A matirela hi halawa ninga vula niku a kadera yi nani mhangu xin'wani xikhati. A vanhu u va tirelaka va nani matlhelo mambiri. Va kona va to ku dzunza i tlhawa wo karhi, va kona va to ku sola, vaku zonda i tlhawa wo karhi; u nga ta tirha na u nga hi na swilo swi mbirhi. U fanele ku kuma valala, u kuma vangana. [Ti vutisi] lava ni tiraka navo va ndzi hlanya kota yini? Lava ni va rangelaka ke? Hikuva, a wu tomi ga n'wina va rangeli gile ka *povo*. Lava u tiraka navo va lava xihundla, kasi ku va xi kuma, va fanele ku tchakisela u biha. Ti vutisi, va ni dzunda hayini ke? Va ni sola hi yini ke? A vanhu lava ni hanyaka navo va ni xalalela ke?

Karhi wu n'wani a xidlemu xa hi yendla hi dzundzeka; loko hi dzundzeka, hi xidlemu, a ka va tiri kuloni hi va lala. Kambe tchuvuka xidlemu wena. Yesu a tsakile hi lava va nga ku Hosana.... Tchuvuka xidlemu....loko u vula tchumu vona a ku va swi kuma....hambu loko u va sola ku dyoheni ka vona, maha hi li randzu va ta tsaka a ku a wu va vekeli xi viti. Sola, mu sole u siya lirandzu, u musiya a twa wu n'wana. A vanga hati ka wena na timhaka. Ku laveka ku tiva a ku u nga va pfunisa kuyini. Siya wu dadani loko u sola.

## 8.13 Appendix XII

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview****Date:** 11 April 2001**Place:** Tsakani, Johannesburg**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko***Language:** Tsonga-Shangaan/Xitshwa**Conf/access:** Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee****Name:** Solomoni Chitlango**Gender:** Male**Date of birth:** 1943**Place of birth:** Malindile (Save region)**Residence:** Malindile and Tsakani**Religious convictions:** Christian (Assemblies of God)**Position in the religious group:** Deacon**Profession and occupation:** Informal trader**Category:** Christian practioner**Address:** Tsakani, JHB**Tape identification:** Tape 1 A & B

CHITLANGO, S

**INTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

AC- Xana a ntumbuluko ixini ke?

SM- Ya, se, nita vulisa leswi, niku a ntumbuluko iswilo swa le kaya ka hina a makwatini [geographic definition]. A ku fana na muti loko u yakwa. Avaku, a muti awu fanelangi ku yakiwa na unga rangeliwangi hi mulumuzana na nkosikazi – intumbuluko lowo.

A xa wumbiri avaku laha kaya a ku faneli leswaku loko n'wana a pswaliwa anga tiviwi. Avaku swa yila.

Loko a muti wu sunguliwa na unga rangeliwangi avaku swa yila. Aku yila hikwihi? Avaku swi nyika ku khohlola aka bava na ka mamani. Loko kota a munhu ata endla swa masangu laha kaya ka wena kuve awu rangelangi muti, uma kumile.

Khale ka matiko, a tikweni la hina nitiva aku loko karhi wa tipfula wu fikile ta ku byala, ava hlangana vaya a phangweni, aka swikwembu swa va kokwani lava vanga fa khale (vona hi vona swikwembu swa kona) – vaya vaya phahla. Se vaku, ati mbewu a ti byaliwe. Loko vabyalile, avaku, aswi fanele aku un'wani ni un'wani loyi anga kona lomu tikweni a sungula kudya a timbewu leto (loko ti upfa) na anga yangi tiya phahliwa.

Avaku swa yila aku ga vanga phahlangi. Avaku ku ta ta ti fenhe, tinyanyani kumbe tindlopfu ti ta ga mavele ti heta. Se, loko va la ku lumela timbewu, mun'wani ni mun'wani ata khaya xikhevana, xi riwana, hambu loko a phahlile a mutini wakwe a ka ntumbuluko wakwe, ata yisa a timbewu aku tiya phahliwa aka ntumbuluko wa tiko. Se, ava teka timbewu leti vaya phangweni se a hosi yi phahla ya tiko lego, se yiku: 'fambani mu ya ga a timbewu ta n'wina.'

Se loko vaya a karini waku hula, va peta a byala la ntumbuluko. loko li upfili mun'wani ni mun'wani a teka a mbita vaya hlangana aka ndawu leyi ya munhu loyi anga fa khale anga yena xikwembu xa kona. Se vaya fika va phahla se vaku; mun'wani ni mun'wani a nga ha endla leswi aswi lavaku; kumbe wa peta byala, kumbe a na swikwembu swakwe, se hi endlile swa ntumbuluko.

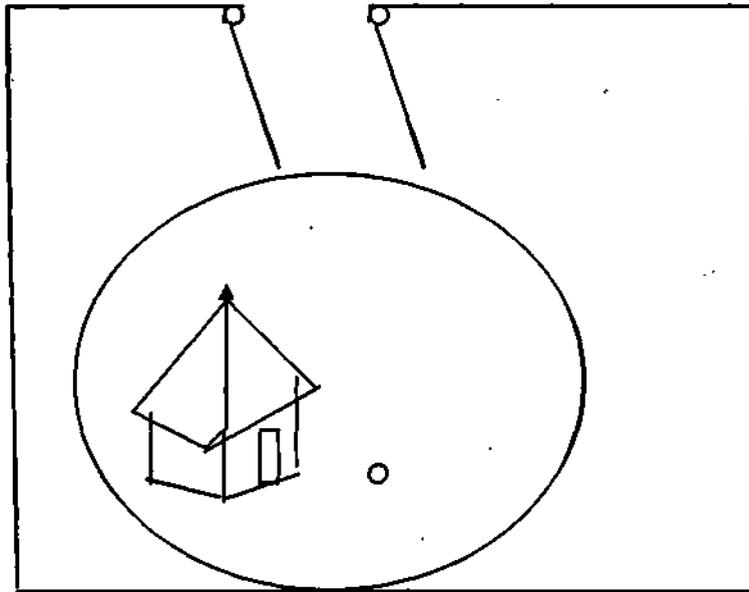
Ina ka, aka swilo hikwaswo leswi swi vitaniwaka swaku intumbuluko aswiza swi endlwa hi mhaka muni? A vaku, loko swinga maheke leswo swa yila; kufana na leswi ninga vula aku a muti na n'wana swa bohiwa.

AC- hinga tlhamuselani aku loko vaku a muti wa bohiwa, vaku a n'wana wa bohiwa kumbe vaku wa tiviwa, va vula yini ke?

SM- Ina ka loko vaku a muti wa tiviwa ava vula leswaku, loko ku sungula vaya fika lahaya va tsema hlapfu vaku hi laha mitini laha, se ayaka a heta, se aya teka nkosikazai yakwe, hambu ova na mune kumbe tlhanu wa vava nsati; a taya teka a nkosikazi yakwe leyi anga sungula a teka (a nsati wa xiteko) – loko va fika laha kaya la na vahi va mbirhi, na kuhi hava mun'wani. Se va teka a sangu vali andlala, loko vali andlalile, ku na mati lawa va ngata na wona, se va endla ti mhaka ta vona ta masangu, se va teka a mati lawa va hlambisana. Se va teka a mati lawa vaya laha sangweni [*entrada*] laha ku ngenaka vanhu, se va tchela a mati lawa aka magodi vanga cela...se va ngenisa tinhi va siyetela. Se va famba vaya fika laha phakati ka muti va hlamba a mati lawaya (ave se maha tchumu leswo) se va n'watsekela. Se va ya a ndlini vaya fika vaku hi hina venyi va muti; hi lava mun'wani ni mun'wani loyi a taku laha a kuma leswaku hina hi hina venyi va muti lowu. Hiswona leswi vanga maha swona kasi ku boha muti – ava etlela va maha swa masangu na kungo sota a munhu wa matiko kumbe a n'wana wa laha kaya kumbe vana va wukati va ta maha swa masango. Loko swinga endlekangi leswi, avaku swa yila – loko kota munhu ata

endla swa masangu, aswi endla leswaku bava wa muti a khohlola, mamani wa muti a khohlola. Aswi endla leswaku a n'wana wa un'we a khohlola; se vaku, swi mahisa kuyini a ku a khohlola na kunga fiwangi ke? Se vaku ayo siyiwa laha mutini<sup>156</sup>.

**N'WANA-** Avaku a n'wana wa yila loko a belekiwa anga tiviwi, se bava lwiya aya etlela na wa nsati a kwatini (a khale) aya vuya kuhi hava lexi a mu bikelaka, a n'wana a o tlula. Gin'wani siku, loko Xikwembu xi mu lava xi mu teka afa. Kumbe imamani wa kona, a huma aya etlela na wa nuna handle na n'wana anga tiviwangi, a n'wana a o tlula awa afa. Loko se va swi lava hi ti hlolo va ku a n'wana anga tiviwangi, a humile aya etlela na wa nuna handle.



Ku ni mhaka ya ntumbuluko laha n'waneni loko a pswaliwa ni nga yi siyile. Loko a pswaliwa a n'wana ako nyima majaha(avaku a masangu a ma nyimi hiku ku pswaliwe xin'wanana hikuva la vo suka ma sangweni, loko voya vona xi n'wanana se hi ntumbuluko avaku swayila) laha mutini, se [kala] a siku a humaku ndlini; kulaveka a

<sup>156</sup> Nita maha a muti na sangu la muti kasi ku komba tindawu ta ku boha muti. A timhaka ta ku boha muti hi tona ti endlaka leswaku a wa nsati kumbe wa nuna wo kala ku teka kumbe ku tekiwa anga yaki muti, hikuva aku na ndlela yo wu tiva hi yona (becomes a dangerous place to stay). A khohlolo wu vangwiwa hi ku siyiwa a mutini kumbe a lifweni. A basili de cock a yi kona. Loko munhu a khohlola ku laveka ku tiva aku a siyiwi khiwi, a siyiwi hi mani.

siku xikavani xi waka, a mapswatsi maya byela Maxava kunge hi leswi, vaku, nyamutlha leswi ku laveka u maha swa le masangweni<sup>157</sup>. Vateka mafura [euphemism for semen]. A etlela na nsati wakwe masangweni, mamani luya se a teka mafura na ange se hlamba, aya fika lahaya a xi tota...se a teka a xin'wanana lexiya se a teka mati a ku xi phaa (yo huma no'wini wakwe). A xiteka axi rendzelekisa a xi sutini se a xi tshika laha hansi a xi gigirita kunene a famba, va sala va xi teka a venyi va xona. Leswi ava endlela aku, loko se xi wile xikavana, hambu ku fika a munhu a hisaku a xi teka a xingata bola xi kavani xifa, avaku intumbuluko lowo.

**KU BOHA N'WANA-** A n'wana loko anga bohiwangi avaku wa yila. Loko bava wakwe ahi Joni kuza ku fika masiku matlhela ma hunza anga bohiwanga, kumbe bava wakwe a file – aswina ringani aku a jaha leli li hlangana na wa nsati; a va mu byela vaku: wa vona, leswi unga kula wena a wu vuyangi a xi sutini (ku bohiwa) xa bava wa wena hi ta ma sangu. Se, ku laveka leswaku, loko a teka a nsati a ti boha hi yetche.

**KU TI BOHA HI WETCHE-** Mu lava a ngoti, se mu yi maha a wu gungwa se va byela loyi wa nhanyana vaku, wa swi vona, a nuna wa wena anga bohiwangi. Se, tekani a ngoti leyi muyi veka a xitheveni a swisutini (phakati na phakati ka xitheve) mu endla swa masango a hehla ka yona; loko mu endlile se mu pfuka. Mu teka a ngoti [liyani]; loyi a khoma hi seno, loyi a khoma hi seno, mu phelela a mari a mandleni mu koka mu boha. Loko mu kikile (mu maha fundzu) se u boha a nuna a xi sutini. Loko liya kuxeni, mu tlhela mu maha timhaka ta masangu, se u tlhatlha a ngoti liya u boha nsati.

Avaku loko o teka nsati anga mahi leswo, a vana a to va beleka, loko vanga mahi swi gono vo to fa. Hiku u ta maha kunge nsati loyi makwenu, wu xumba li ngenaku hiku anga bohiwangi.

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<sup>157</sup> Sex in *ntumbuluko* is for the well being of the community, not for procreation only, let alone the enjoyment of wife and husband. Heads of the family (men and women) and those of the community would tell you when to have or not to have sex. Everyone would be prohibited to have sex and one would be told 'today you must have sex' and how many times to have it that night to break the prohibition. There is ritual sex even when normal sex has stopped (menopause).

**KU KULA KA NHANYANA-** Loko a nhanyana va vona leswaku wa kula, a va sungula aku mu byela vaku, loko u vona a ngati yi huma, kumbe wo famba laha ndleleni, hambuka laha ndleleni, vuya kaya. Loko u vuya unga tluli ndlela, loko u kuma mabaqa, tsala a ndzati hi mu kondzo hi kwayo. U vuya a kaya, kumbe uya ka hahani, kumbe uya ka tate; loko u fika ka tate, u fika u rila loko u rila u ta swi tiva aku hi leswo karhi.

Ata ku teka uya ndlini, loko u ya fika ndlini, se va mu vutisa lo wa nhanyana. Se lo wa mamani a nga ta ka yena ata pfuka na mixo aya tchela a xigodo xa laha ndleleni. Se a hisa a xigodo lexiya. A teka ximbitana a sweka wuswa a tchela a hlungu la xigodo lexiya a hlanganisa na ngati liya. Loko va vona aku a kulile ahari tsongo; vata teka a ngati leyo sungula na xiwuswana lexiya va tchela a ximbitaneni vaya mbonya a khumbini kumbe a ka sinye va tchelela. Leswo a va endlela aku, avo mu fihla leswaku loko a tsuka a etlela na majaha, kumbe nuna wa yena na kunge se lanziwa ntumbuluko (swa khale ku phazama) anga ta kuma tchumu. Loko akulile ahi wa hombe vo teka a ximbitana lexiyani va xi mbonya; se a tekiwa, se loko a tekiwe, va mu byela a nhanyana loyi vaku wa swi vona uya awu katini manje. Aswi fanele aku u etlela na bava lwiya na hinga so ku laya. A bava luya kumbe o vuya hi Joni, kumbe akona, a o tisa rito aku, layani a nsati wa mina hiku se wu fikile karhi, se na mu lava.

Se ku kandziwa byala, vabyelana a vava nsati. Na mixo hiku tchaya ka ti huku vaya a qivini vaya fika va mu peta. Va mutshika a matini. Se va pima a kama lowu va vonaku leswaku a mati se ma ngenile a muzimbeni, vaya mutsawula. Leswo ava endlela aku va tiyisa a muzimba wakwe, hikuva, awukatini aku laveki ku huma dyambu na aha etlele ndlini. A fanele ku pfuka aya matini a vuya a ta swiyela; a tiyela a xirami hikuve a tiyelisiwe matini.

Se loko va tlela vaya mu ngenisa ndlini, se ku biwa xingomana na vaku va mu laya, na va koka tindleve. Va mu laya hikwaswo swa xinsati leswaku a nuna a mahisiwa leswi, loko uhi naye a ma sangweni, u fanele a ku u dzukisa leswi; loko a nuna aku wa swi lava, u fanele ku mu nyikisa leswi. Loko a heta, ku laveka u mu vutisa uku mogamaleswi ke, hikuva akunga hi na ku lipiwa, a o hlapswiwa, na swona ava mubyela aku ku laveka a tsama na ndzawani, loko mu heta, se a phora ndzawani kasi ku anga heli matimba. Hikuva loko a tsukile aku hlapswa na unge se heta, angati liya

yi fela phakati, se u sileka. Kambe a nzawani liya loko a ku huhutela, yi endlela aku unga sileki<sup>158</sup>.

Hiku tchaya ka ti huku, a bava loyi aya phinda manje, se loko a phindile a tlakuliwa a vekywa laha marumbini se a hlapswiwa [a hlapswiwa a ka khati lo hetisela a ku endla swa masangu]. Hi mhaka mini anga mu hlapswi a etlele ke? Avaku aku mu xinga swi kombisa aku a wa nsati a layiwile vaku ngo yo ta, ata tekiwa laha wu katini.

Loko ahatile ku hlapswa nuna, se a teka a ximbitana lexi a mbonya a ti hlokweni. A ximbitana lexi axi khi mati, loko xo kha a nuna ofa; lin'wani siku kufa yena. A ximbitana lexi xa vona va mbirhi. Handle ka yena kumbe nuna vanga phuza ka xona mati, hayi munhu wota hiku famba, avaku swa yila.

Xibamani wa ka Marumbi, a n'wana Mazu, a ndisana ya Mabungele, afile, anga teka hahani wa mina, hi ximbitana lexiya. Hahani wa mina a tekile ximbitana lexi anga hlambisa hi xona nuna a nyika a va tukulu va phuza hi xona a byala, a tlela a vuya ata fika a hlapswa hi xona nuna – o vabya a nuna a gama a fa. Avaku swa yila.

**SWAKUGA-** A ongo la mhofu avaku swa yila aku u ga loko wa hi mufana na u nge se tiyela; hikuva, a mhofu yi na swi yila swo tala. Loko u pswala n'wana ata huma anga so tiyela, kumbe anga tiyangi. A mufana a swi yila aku ga a mongo wa mhofu na wa hongonyi. A mongo wa swi hari leswi wa oma. Se loko uhi masangweni, utaku swata, swata; swi gama swi nga ti le ka mamani luya.

Mina ni kulile hi wona ntumbuluko se niya wu tshika ni ngena a wu zalwaneni, kambe na kona a wu zalwaneni ni ka wona, mara kodya ni vula vula hi ntumbuluko, leswaku hi ndzaku hiya teka na wu zalwani li ngena (Yesu ate a ni tangi nita hungula kambe nita tatisa, kambe swin'wani hi ta hungula). Ku na ntumbuluko lowu Bayibela yi wu dlayaka na lowu yi wu randzaka.

<sup>158</sup> Laha ku voneka leswaku a vava nsati a va tekiwa na venge se ngena a ndlini, na vahi va tsongo. Naswona, akuri na ku vekywa aku anga kumi nyimba loko a etlela na wa nuna. Loko va tekiwa va fundisiwa ta masango. Va byeliwa aku loko nuna aku wa swi lava, a ku na tchumu loko vona va swi lava. A ku kala a nuna anga vukelwi, swi endliwa a nandzu wa wa nsati, hicolaho, afanele akuve na murhi wo endla aku anga heli ntamu.

Avaku, unga dyi ngoro na u hi mufana. Leswo ku a ngoro a wu na mongo, se loko upswala a n'wana ata ve a limalile, kumbe a nga tiyangi swiro (na sweswi swi kona vo kala vanga swi tivi vanhu aku swi ta hi kwih<sup>159</sup>). A huma a n'wana luyani anga tiyelangi a swiro swa yena se anga fambi kwatsi, se vaku hiku bava wa kona a gile munkoro.

Maqanda, avaku mufana ndziwena swa yila ku ga maqanda. Sweswi hi xilungu loko uku swa yila aku dla maqanda vali a maqanda mo nandziha. Hina a hi wu kuma a hlamuselo wa maqanda. A wa nsati avaku, anga fanele a kuga a maqanda na nhloko ya huku na ti tchondo ta huku loko aha beleka. Swa yila. A ntumbuluko na wona vo wu kahle. Loko a ga ata hlwela ku veleka, a heta a tlanu wa masiku na a ha lun'wa. Leswo aku hi ku, ya ha handza huku....na yi handza, yi jovotela....vata karateka<sup>160</sup> a mapswatsi vaku in'wana a vuyaka kuve ihuku yi handzaka.

Amaqanda a ka vava nuna a va yilisa aku loko nsati wa wena ahi na nyimba a nga gi maqanda. Avaku swa yila. A siku laku veleka, lahaya ka wu tomi la yena ku vuya a qanda<sup>161</sup> [*bolsa d'agua*] li ta pfala. Nayena a nuna wa kona avaku angadyi tanza swa yila.

**KUTEKANA-** A vanhu va xi bongo xin'we a vaku swa yila aku va tekana. I xumba. A vana va ta velekiwa va limele. Loko muku a hi tchumu, vaku, a munhu loyi makwenu, in'wana, loko mu veleka a n'wana ata tsamanyana ku ku loko a kula afa. Akarhi ku belekiwaka mun'wani, loyi mun'wani ofa. Swiku vambirhi, va nharhu, se

<sup>159</sup> The interviewee is an evangelist of an evangelical/pentecostal church, yet he believes that if one eats certain animals he or his offspring inherit the animals' characteristics. Ejaculation problems are attributed to *mongo of mhofu* and *hongonyi*. Disability and paresy are attributed to the brain of *mhofu* and the meat of *ngoro*. So all infant mortality is blamed to either the mother or the father of any violation, if not any one of the two it is a family member of the couple.

<sup>160</sup> Leswi swi fana na leswi ninga vula aka Mathepswa hi taku xanisiwa ka vava nsati ku velekeni hi mapswatsi (lava va gumileko ku veleka [Mwaora ali va ritual male]). Laha aku voniwi aku karateka ka muveleki, kambe ka mapswatsi. Aku hlwela ka yena ku veleka, ku vekiwa a nandzu ka yena, hi wu gana gana, kumbe a fanela ku wulela. This is a sophisticated system of blaming the victims or double victimizing the victim.

<sup>161</sup> We have to thank God for the wisdom he imparted on these women for our delivery, yet we have to indicate that they lacked understanding of the human body and do not know that all women have *bolsa d'agua*. For others it pumps before labour starts but others need to be pumped by maternity or surgical sesours or any safe instrument. When I met some of these ladies to form an organization, it was related as a mistry and puzzling situation in a labour.

vaku, ixumba, a vanhu lava vaka lixaka. Kambe a masiku lawa ha tekana hi tiyindlu, hi mhaka leyi hi kalaka hi nga ha hanyi kahle na ku hanya wu tomi go leha.

A ntumbuluko awu tirela yini? Awu tirela aku seva (*to save*) awu tomi la hina aku hi hanya kwatsi, hi kuma masiku ya ku leha. A ntumbuluko avaku, ahi pfumeleliwe aku, hahari va tsongo, hi etlela na vava nsati va hombe – a swi yila. Angati ya wena ayi sileka, kumbe u kuma mavabyi yo kala unga mativi aku mata hi kwihi – hi mamani loyi unga etlela naye hiku wa hombe. A va gomiwa kambe sweswi aswahari kona. Awu kuma n'wana a tsuvukela misisi a hlomukela a min'wala, se vaku a yo gomiwa. Se va muvutisa a ku ni etlele na ximani; se vaku i, hakunene, u gomiwile (ku psua), a mamani luya wa hombe. Loko a hi nhanyana vava vutisa a wula, se va lava swa vona [vata ku lungisela]. Aku yila loko a swi nyika aku a masiku ya wena mave matsonwani. *That's why*, hambu loko se vaku hivekile [ku hivekiwa *or treatment*], a wu tomi la wena a laha hi kwatsi. Awu tiyangi, a u nge he hanyi a masiku yo tala. Mina a ni khosahali hiku ani etlelangi na vava nsati na hi tsongo, van'wani se va khosahale [*he gave some names*].

**KU FA NA TIMHAMBA-** Loko wa nsati a feliwe, aku dyiwa timhamba hi nawu wa ntumbuluko. ava vula leswaku, loko wa nsati aga timhamba, aswi fanele aku a tsama kumbe a tlhanu wa tinyanga na yin'we....mutlhela muya a ka n'anga liya muya nyikiwa a hlungu leswaku mu tlela mu hlangana. A vanga vuli aku leswi mu nyikiweke nyamutlha, tlhelani muya hlangana sweswi. Avaku swa yila. Hikva swi nga endla na ange se hlamba ka mbiri, ange se basa. Yin'wani ngati ya wa nsati yi *strong* – anga basa<sup>162</sup> hi ti nyanga tinharu....

Aku hi na ku hambana. Aku hi na n'wana a fele ndzeni, ku boxa khiri kumbe lixixa. Avaku swa yila a li xixo, loko wo hlangana naye a wunge heti a masiku mambirhi, manharu. Netti li huma a dyambu liku i (8-10 am) wofa. Loko a n'wana a pswaliwe na a hanya, kambe afa ange se hleka, wa ha fana na lixixo a ntamu wakona loko u etlela na yena. Loko ku hiku a a hleka a famba a ntamu wa yena a waha fani ni

<sup>162</sup> They think that the vagina is dirty if she loses a baby and did not re-start to have her periods. They think the blood that comes in the periods is accumulated inside her vagina. So, to have sex with her is to absorb all that spoiled blood and causes death. It has to come out twice to make sure she is clean enough for safe intercourse.

leswiya. Loko u etlela naye wo *semeka* u khohlola, se u ya hivekiwa hi tin'anga. Awu khomi munhu wofa loku u semekiwe.

Yena u to khohlola tsena, aswi nge fani na lixixo kumbe loyi a kalaka anga se hleka a vulavula. Lavo loko u etlela na mamani wa kona wo hlata ngati ufa<sup>163</sup> – hi ku va na ntamu.

Se kambe loko a n'wana ayo kula a famba a vulavula, yena a vona tinyanga, a swaha karati ngopfu. A moya lowuya se wu humile ngopfu. Ku fana na loko a bava o pswala a vana va nharu va kula vaza va vulavula; avaku a ntamu wa yena se wu hungutekile u yile a ka vana lavaya, himhaka leyo loko wanuna anga pswali vali ana ntamu. Loko munhu ahi na ntamu ngopfu vali u na ntamu onge u ngon'wa.

Kambe amasikwana lawa a ntumbuluko unga hela, a wu tomi la hina a laha fani na tolo. Hiku, a swilo hikwaswo leswi va bava vanga hi byela, aswi hanyisa a wu tomi la hina. Sweswi aku ni fika a 70 years, kunge ve ku ranza ka Xikwembu, hikuva, a swilo hikwaso se swi tsemeleliwe. A wansati loko ahi ti nyangeni a a nga fanele aku mu etlela lomu ndlini, mu etlela xitheve xin'we. Loko aza aswi vona, a fanela ku famba hi le kule anga khomi tchumu; na mubedu wa wena anga khomi [*ground for polygamy, two beds*]. A mati yo hlamba na thawula na siphos aya swi veka kwale, anga khomi tchumu xa wena [kun'wani na mati anga tcheli].

Avaku loko a tlula tlula laha u tsamaka kona, a tlulatlula a ngati ya wena. matimba ya wena ma hela. A wa nsati a na ti mhaka to tala, ni swi yila swa hombe ngopfu. Vali aku hlamba lokuya, ivana va humaka [*monthly abortion*]. I qovo laku ayo feliwa. A siku a hetaka, a fanele aku a sindza laha anga fambafamba kona lomu ndlini kasi aku a nuna anga heli matimba. Loko a nsati wa wena aku bosopa, u za u famba hi tchongotela na wa ha beleka. Lexi xi endlaka a ku beleka ka hina kuve ku tsongwani, ku a va mamani lava a va hahi bosopi. Hambi aka a hlamba hi etlela naye.

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<sup>163</sup> Women in *ntumbuluko* are killers of men. Sex is killer, one is to have it with fear. Proper rituals are to be followed. Any health problem of the husband is blamed on the woman that she used her killing machinery against the husband. The vaginal mucous is held as deadly poison. If she deeps wuswa in her vagina and give to a dog or person it results in death immediately.

Ntumbuluko – hikwaswo leswi venge intumbuluko a wuhi ntumbuluko wa ku hanya. Leswaku wutomi la hina li hanya liya phambeni – hambu loko lifo lihikona. Sweswi, loko hinga ha hanyi, hiku hi lahlile a ntumbuluko wa hina lowu hinga hanya hi wona. Hina vaka Xitlhangu a hinga ringani a ku dla a humba, hiku ixibongo [*totem*] xa hina, loko hidya hita hela matino. A tolo na vaha swi tirisaka a swi endleka. Ku fana na vaka Nxumayo, leswi va ha swi tirisaka, loko vadya hlahi va file (ate akuhi na *totem* ya Xiyuda na ya Xigriki).

A swihi nyika ku hanya aku hlayisa ntumbuluko, hi hlayisa tipangu. Loko ku fiwa a vanga rimi vaku *ximusi*. A ti pangu a yihi ndawu leyi ku phahleliwaka a tiko, ku ngahi munhu. Ku phahliwa a pfula,...loko mu lahla a munhu munga landzi a nawu wa tiko, swi khoma a pfula [Patson a twile bava aku lahleni ka Nyambi vaku ava tiko a va mahi swa vona] yi ngani. Se, a vo ya vava vuvula. Loko va vuvula, aku laveka loyi a sukaka a xitheveni aya ranga a vuvula la hisaka. Leswo swi fana na xitchungwa. Loko mulumuzana afa, a va susa a xitchungwa, kumbe sweswi vaha vuyaka hi ku lahleni va hisa yindlu.

A tipangu ati tele. Akuhi na tipangu taka Magezi na tipangu ta ka Xilotani, lipangu laka Malindile. A pangweni ava phahla a mulumuzana loyi anga fa a khale lomu tikweni lelo va mutivaka, khale ka kona angahi yena a khomileko a ndawu leyi. Se loko va hlahlwa tihlolo vaku hi yena loyi a khomileko a pfula, fambani a ndawini yo karhi, ku na munhu anga fela a ndawini yo karhi (loko mutwa aku ku na va Xinanguli, ka Matchele) se a ndawu vayi vitana aku lipangu. A mutwi loko vaku vava ka N'wa-Teterume. Va phahla, uva kuma va swiyelile, kambe N'wa-Teterume imunhu anga fa.

Mavona, hikwaswo leswi aswi nga ha endleki<sup>164</sup> – ati pfula a tinga hani – kambe sweswi vangaku pfuxani a ti pangu, a pfula yina, kuzile ku tala a ndambi. Ntumbuluko a wuhi wa ku nyika wu tomi laku hanya. A wu nyika ku hanya ka munhu na ku hanya ka tiko.

<sup>164</sup> This is a critic to Frelimo's mid 1970s and 1980s. They banned all religious rituals in the country and the shrines were abandoned. He picks that and says that is why there was no rain in the 1980s. Now the government has changed its policy from the drafting of a new constitution in 1990. Now they revive this old practice through statements and *Ministerio de Cultura Juventude e Desportos*. Chissano attributes the rains to the same source, the rain shrines in the country that are now attended to and due sacrifices given.

Loko hi nga yi hiya rima loko ku fiwe, a hi nga sevi a muti wa ka Maxava tsena, a hi seva na muti wa hina. Loko muya rima kuve ixi musi, swi nga endla aku ati mbewu ti nga humi kahle. Swi fana na ku rima hi Soto, ku na xiphamu xi humaka; aku rima na ku fiwe na swona ku na xiphamu xi humaka le phangweni la hina. Se hambu yina a pfula hinga kumi tchumu. Se vaku, a lipangu li kwatile hi lahlile a nawu wa tiko.

A ntumbuluko a wu edlela aku hina vanhu hi kuma wu tomi loko hi mahile swa ntumbuluko. A ntumbuluko a a hi muhlayisi wa wu tomi la hina kasi ku hi ta hanya hi ku lanza a ntumbuluko. akuhi na ntumbuluko<sup>165</sup> wa lixaka na lixaka, muti na muti, kambe lowu wa hombe hi lowu wa tiko hi kwalo.

A ntumbuluko a wu endlela a ku a wutomi la hina li leha. Loko wu peta byala kunge se phahliwa a phangweni, a wu bohiwa; vaku hi ta geliwa hi ti ndlopfu. A ku hi na swi hari swa swikwembu. A xi hlahleni xa Makasela, loko wu hlahla mu tchema, se u phuza a wu budo lakona u nga se phahla, a ti ndlopfu ti tata ti ta tsovelela a mutchema hi kwayo; hiku a mu endlangi a ntumbuluko.

Ku na swilo swi yilaka. Vona sweswi, u kuma vanana va basa tinhloko. Va gile wu luvi.

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<sup>165</sup> His constant statement that *ntumbuluko* is life is opposite to Rom 8:6,13 maybe can be related to the use of *ntumbuluko* in Heb. 1:3. He shows four levels of *ntumbuluko*: (1) Personal *ntumbuluko*, (2) Family *ntumbuluko*, (3) Clan and Tribal *ntumbuluko* and (4) Community or Territorial or Societal *ntumbuluko*. (4) is the supreme *ntumbuluko*. I realize now that conversion should happen in all the four levels.

**8.14 Appendix XIII*****NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL*****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview****Date:** 11 April 2001**Place:** Tsakani, Johannesburg**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko***Language:** Tsonga-Shangaan/Xitshwa**Conf/access:** Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee****Name:** Daniel Machava**Gender:** Male**Date of birth:** 1956**Place of birth:** Malindile**Residence:** Malindile and Tsakani**Religious convictions:** Christian (Assemblies of God)**Position in the religious group:** Deacon**Profession and occupation:** Informal trader**Category:** Christian practitioner**Address:** N/A**Tape identification:** Tape 1 B

MACHAVA, D

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR**

A ntumbuluko awu pfuna a vanhu va khale. Kambe ni lava aku vulavula hi ntumbuluko aku ule hehla kumbe ule hansi ka Ivangeli ke? A khale aka hina a ku ngahi na Ivangeli, ....kala onge hi ma 1950s [yingenile hi ma 1940s a Ivangeli] hikona yinga ngena a Ivangeli. Kambe hambi leswo, a hinge se tiva leswaku yi tlhamusela yini. A vanhu va tile vahi ka ntumbuluko, kambe sweswi hi humesiwa a ku hive ka Kreste. Sweswi loko ku fiwa va vitana Makreste...*[culture change process?]*.

Sweswi, a ntumbuluko hinga ka wona i *ntumbuluko* wa Kreste. Kambe ma hundzukela ya kona ma hi tikelaka....va n'wani aku hundzuka ka kona swi tlhela swi fana na wo ntumbuluko lowu wa khale. A ntumbuluko wu fumile va kokwani hi swi yila. Hina hi fanele ku hanya ka Kriste-kambe ufanele ku hlonipha kasi unga ti dyayi. Uhlonipha aku kufiwe laha mutini wa wena, u swi tiva leswaku ufanele aku u hanyisa kuyini leswaku a masiku ya hina matala-kambe, hi lava ku swi tiva leswaku a ntumbuluko lo wa khale na ntumbuluko lo wa Xikwembu hi wihi unga na matimba, unga hehla ka wu n'wani ke?

Xidoko- A ka Xidoko lomu ka 1996/1997 akuhi hava pfula. Va byeliwa kuya phahla a tiphangweni ta vona, kambe a pfula yinga ni. Se, ku vitaniwa hina Makreste aku hita khongela (vanyingi vanhu va biwe vaku hi vona va pfulaka a pfula). Hi vitana a Makreste hikwawo na vanhu hikwavo va tiko (na lava vanga khongeliki)-hikhongela, a pfula yi sungula a kuna, hi byala na yina. Hi dyile na hi byalile hi ntumbuluko wa Xikwembu. Kambe loko hi tsovele, a va kulukumba va tiko va khalile vaku hi lava ku heta ntumbuluko hi ma mahela lawo. A ntumbuluko wa Kriste wule hehla. Swi lava aku hita ngena ka wona, hi wu tirisa tani hi lowu hinga wu tirisa khale *[this is important since the other interviewee attributed good rain fall of the last few years including the flooding of 2000 as resultant of the reconstruction of places of worship*

*or shrines in the area-that was the same statement Chissano was reported to have made].*

## 8.15 Appendix XIII

*NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL*

## INTERVIEW RECORD

## Interview

Date: 31 July 2003

Place: Sociedade Biblica Unida de Mocambique, Maputo

Interviewer: Andre Jonas Chitlango

Topic: *Ntumbuluko*

Language: Portuguese

Conf/access: Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)

## Interviewee

Name: Victor Zefanias Mavulule and José Chamuce Nhagumbe

Gender: Males

Date of birth: Mavulule: 10 April 1952; Nhagumbe: 09 September 1954

Place of birth: Mavulula, Zavala (Inhambane); Nhagumbe:

Residence: Maputo

Religious convictions: Christians (United Methodist and Anglican Church)

Position in the religious group: Pastor and Priest

Profession and occupation: Bible Translators and lecturers

Category: Bible Translator

Address: sbmoz@emailmoz.com

Tape identification: N/A

## MAVULULE E NHAGUMBE

AC-Introdução: A entrevista investiga o uso da palavra ou conceito *ntumbuluko* nas traduções de Bíblia para as línguas Tsongas, Xitchopi e Gitonga no sul de Moçambique.

Sim, vamos começar com o Padre Nhagumbe, como indiquei ontem, uma observação da Bíblia em Tsonga ou antiga versão, indica um uso muito restrito do termo *ntumbuluko*, mas que a nova versão, “Mahungu la Manene” tem um uso prevalente do termo *ntumbuluko*. Também encontramos a mesma coisa com a velha e nova versões de Ronga e que os Novos Testamentos em Xitchopi e Gitonga, também usam o termo *ntumbuluko*; gostaria de ouvir do Sr. Pedre, sendo um tradutor, portanto uma pessoa sempre envolvida nestas discussões, que tipo de discussão dinâmica houve nesta mudança ou movimento de preferências de termos para traduzir certos conceitos?

JN-Muito obrigado, antes de eu entrar nesta questão gostaria de fazer entender que nós que estamos a tentar traduzir, temos um problema conosco. O problema que temos é que, talvez seja outra pessoa também que tenha, as nossas palavras, a linguagem que estamos a utilizar, é uma linguagem aprendida. Ou aprendemos na escola ou aprendemos na igreja, ou em qualquer outro lugar. Esta linguagem não nos permite expressar o nosso próprio pensamento. Temos esta luta dentro de nós mesmos e quando estamos aqui perante esta situação, tentamos encontrar a maneira de expressar o nosso próprio pensamento. E quem nos coloca nesta situação é o próprio Jesus que nós tentamos transmitir a mensagem dele na nossa língua. Ele toma a forma humana, toma a nossa natureza e então é a partir dessa natureza que ele consegue se comunicar conosco. E é a razão pela qual nós concluímos que afinal de contas, é necessário indicar esta razão da natureza. Usamos a nossa própria linguagem porque, em vez de usarmos aquelas palavras que usaram na Bíblia Hebraica e no Grego, eles usaram o corpo, enquanto eles querem definir a natureza humana – e é por isso que nós ... e não por causa do próprio homem em si, mas toda a natureza, e é por isso que Jesus vem e ele afecta tudo e todos. Nós usamos *ntumbuluko* para mostrar que é a partir desta natureza que Jesus quer comunicar.

AC-Então, está a indicar que a mudança foi uma tentativa de mudar palavras abstratas para usar palavras mais claras e expressivas que tem mais significado na língua e na cultura? JN-Yes, exactamente isso.

E, Pastor qual é a sua opinião ou explicação de mudança na tradução de uso muito restrito da palavra *ntumbuluko* na velha versão ao uso mais prevalente na nova?

VM-Muito obrigado. Na minha maneira de ver estas diversidades, precisam nos levar a uma unificação de entender o assunto. É constante que quando se usa o termo *ntumbuluko/ntumbunuko* conforme as línguas e as formas de escrever, tudo isso vai querer dizer a natureza, vai falar de originalidade das coisas então, daí vai-se então às outras acções e vão usar a palavra carne ou corpo para procurar dar o mesmo significado mas que do princípio, a natureza é que vai dar a originalidade da carne, do corpo e de outras coisas que depois aparecem que são criadas. No meu entender, quando se usa *ntumbuluko* está se falar daquilo que deu origem à tudo aquilo que existe.

[*Ntumbuluko* é] algo sobre a existência, as coisas vieram a existir por causa dessa pre-existência que deu coisas à existência, portanto vem da natureza, nasce e são feitas por aquela natureralidade, então vem aparecer completamente, isto e aquilo, mas tudo tendo a sua origem num início; uma naturalidade ou natureza como estamos usar o termo *ntumbuluko*. Agora, de facto há trez formas de dizer *ntumbuluko*, *mtumbunuko*, *tumbuluko*; nós os Chopes usamos *mtu*. Mas todas as ortografias Tsonga (Xitswa, Ronga e Changana) e Txopi assim como Gitonga referem-se a um mesma conceito.

AC-Iso quer dizer que *ntumbuluko* com *mtu* e *ntumbuluko* com *tu* não tem diferença é somente uma variação de ortografia?

VM-Sim significam a mesma coisa, não há diferença. E essas partes que usam tanto uma coisa ou outra das trez formas entendem-se sabem que trata-se duma mesma situação.

AC-Vamos voltar a uma coisa: O *ntumbuluko*, *ntumbunuko*, *mtumbunuko*, *tumbuluko/u* como indiquei ontem, os Txopis tem a origem Karanga, será que este conceito existiu?! Sim eu sei que existiu, mas o termo? Será que o termo existiu na língua ou foi uma adaptação da língua conceito Tsongas no pensamento Txopi? Ou em outras palavras, será que estamos a falar do mesmo conceito quando falamos deste termo entre os Txopis e Gitongas, Varonga, Vatswa and Changanas ou são diferentes. Será que estamos a falar da mesmo conceito?

JN-Acho que estamos falar do mesmo conceito porque o conceito da natureza é de todos, *ya*, então quando estão a falar desta situação natural, desta natureza, utilizamos este termo e entendemos que é o mesmo conceito que é a originalidade de tudo.

AC-Também há outro problema, quando vai no Velho Testamento, ainda não encontrei<sup>166</sup> o substantivo *ntumbuluko* da maneira que está no Novo Testamento; encontro *ntumbuluko* em forma de verbos e adjectivos. E o verbo dominante é o verbo criar, de tal maneira que Deus aparece no VT como *Mutumbuluxi* e dessa maneira fica associado com *ntumbuluko*. E já indiquei que em Rom 8:6,13 o termo *ntumbuluko* ou *mtumbunuko* é usado negativamente, mas ao mesmo tempo voltamos a encontrar o uso onde Deus é *Mutumbuluxi*. Como é que podemos resolver este problema, porque em Romanos e mais outros versiculos do NT tem outra maneira de tratar *ntumbuluko*, e é interecante que foi na mesma literatura Paulina, que usa-se *ntumbuluko* tanto no positivo assim como no negativo, e temos aqui Deus como *Mutumbuluxi*.

VM-Riso-exacto, está ver esta situação divergente mas que no fundo quando falamos de *ntumbuluko* estamos a falar da naturalidade e origem de alguma coisa que aparece ou é feita, é criada então; Deus criador chamamos de *Mutumbuluxi* porque ele ponha as coisas em existência, mas pode se falar do mesmo termo de facto de *ku tumbuluxa* na parte negativa porque é fulano que fez ou pôs à existência alguma situação má, fez mal um trabalho então; nós vimos aquela pessoa a começar fazer mal ou a dazer mal

<sup>166</sup> I have now found the substantive *ntumbuluko* in the Old Testament. It is in Ecc 7:24 (*Ntumbuluko hinkwawo in xihundla eka mina, swa wona swi entile ngopfu, swi nga hlamuseriwa hi mani ke?*-trans. The whole of *ntumbuluko* (wisdom) is a secret to me, its counsels are the most profound, and who can understand and explain it?) where it stands for "all or whole of wisdom" and since the Old Testament concept of wisdom is parallel to philosophy, we can also say that *ntumbuluko* means "the sum of wisdom and philosophy."

ao criar as coisas duma maneira que não aceitmos, quer dizer, de certo modo, a *tumbuluxile xa ku biha, a tumbuluxile swa ku biha*, isto quer dizer que ele deu origem a uma situação negativa. Então, geralmente Deus criou o ceu e a terra e tudo que existe e viu que tudo era bom. Quando nós lemos o primeiro livro da Bíblia, Genesis, no seu primeiro capitulo; ele cria e da certificados e no fim quando cria o Homem e vem que o Homem era uma criatura muito boa, ele disse que tudo era muito bom. Portanto tudo aquilo que ele pôs a existência, aquilo que criou, aquilo que *ntumbuluxou* nesse caso que poderíamos assim tratar, agora o que vai nos ajudar a qualificar aquilo que foi criado ou foi iniciado ou foi posto a existência é o adjectivo da qualidade daquilo que foi criado, mas tudo começa, tem sua origem, tem seu *ku tumbuluka*.

AC-Vamos agora ver outros usos do termo *ntumbuluko* na Bíblia usado nos outros autores para nao basearemos só nos livros de Paulo, vamos ver o uso em João. Em João 1:3 diz-se:

*Lava tswariweke, ku nga ri hi ndlela ya ntumbuluko, ku nga ri hi ku navela ka miri, ku nga ri hi ku randza ka wanuna, kambe ku ri hi Xikwembu.*

O que significa *ntumbuluko* aqui neste texto de João e em Romanos 1:26-27? Que diz:

*Hikwalaho ka swona, Xikwembu xi va nyiketile eku naveleni loku khomisaka tingana; vavasati va vona va tshikile mikhuva ya vona ya ntumbuluko, hi ku yi endla leyi lwaka ni ntumbuluko; hi mukhuva wolowo, na vona vavanuna, vatshikile ku hanya ni vasati va vona hi nawu wa ntumbuluko, kutani va hisiwa hi ku navelana hi xivona, hileswaku vavanuna va endla leswi khomisaka tingana ni vavanuna-kulobye, kutani va tivangela ku biwa loku ringanaka vu hunguki bya vona.*

Vamos também precisarmos de determinar o que *ntumbuluko* quer dizer em Romanos 8:6,13:

*V6 Ku anakanya swa ntumbuluko wa laha misaveni i rifu, kambe ku anakanya swa Moya i vutomi ni ku rhula.*

*V13 Loko mi hanya hi ku yingisa ntumbuluko wa n'wina, mi ta fa; kambe loko mi dlaya mikhuva leyo biha ya miri hi matimba ya Moya, mi ta hanya.*

Também vamos voltar a ver o que quer dizer *ntumbuluko* aqui. Aqui o Apóstolo Paulo diz que se viver pelo *ntumbuluko* vai morrer, mas aqui em 1 Co 11:14 ele diz:

*Xana na wona ntumbuluko a wu midyondzisi leswaku loko wanuna a ri ni misisi yo leha, swi n'wi nyika xisolo xana?*

Aquí Paulo está recorrer ao *ntumbuluko* (nossa tradição) para ganhar autoridade naquilo que quer dizer. Ele diz, vocês não precisam da minha crítica, vocês deviam saber que está errado porque é assim que *ntumbuluko* ensina. Mas doutro lado diz que não devem escutar *ntumbuluko*. E aquí está dizendo que deviam ter escutado o *ntumbuluko* e ele não iria ter que sofrer por ensiná-los se tivessem escutado o *ntumbuluko* – riso -.

Este uso aquí, todas as versões Tsongas: Ronga, Xitswa, Txopi e Gitonga concordam com Mahungu la Manene. Mas há um único versículo<sup>167</sup> que só o Mahungu la Manene atreveu que nao ha nenhuma versão em Tsonga hoje que teve a mesma coragem; é o versículo que vou ler agora, que e Heb 1:3:

*Hi yena loyi ku kwetsima ka Xikwembu ku ti kombaka eka yena, kutani u tekelele leswi Xikwembu xinga swona hi xiviri xa xona; naswona u tamele ntumbuluko hinkwawo hi rito la yena ra matimba. Loko a hlantswile swidyoho swa vanhu, u tsamile evokweni ra xinene ra Loyi a nga ni vukulu hinkwabyo, ehenhla matilweni.*

Não há nenhuma outra versão Changana, Ronga, Xitswa, Txixopi e Gitonga que usa *ntumbuluko* aquí, é só *Mahungu la Manene*. Aquilo que eu queria fazer, é tentar fazer a gente ver vários usos; bem aquí não se sabe quem é autor deste livro... mas os versículos que lemos estão a ilustrar que os tradutores colocam o uso do termo *ntumbuluko* numa situação muito complexa aquí. *Ntumbuluko* não está a ser usado numa única direcção, vai a direcções opostas. O mesmo *ntumbuluko* que deve se esquecer e que se pensar dele é morte ou vai morrer, aquí estamos sendo dito que Jesus está assegurar ou conservar e perservar o *ntumbuluko* com a sua palavra de poder. Então, em outras palavras, todo o paconte que chamamos o evangelho fica *ntumbuluko* quando seguir-se esta linha do uso (riso) e assim fica defícil para ver se podemos dizer que *ntumbuluko* é positivo ou é negativo. Oque acham? O que quer dizer *ntumbuluko* em João, Romanos 1 e 8, 1 Coríntios e em Hebrews? Quero ouvir comentários, vamos començar com o Pastor.

<sup>167</sup> As indicated above, I have discovered another verse not found in other Tsonga versions. The use of *ntumbuluko* in Ecc 7:24 is not found in other Tsonga versions or languages.

VM-Sim quando vejo aqui em João 1:13 nós encontramos “*ndlela ya ntumbuluko*” e em Xitswa diz-se “*hi ndlela ya nyama kutani hi tlhelo ya ka nyama*” então isso quer dizer que a forma sabida naturalmente da nascença dos Homens depois da criação, é naturalmente a união carnal das pessoas.

AC-Então, em João, *ntumbuluko* quer dizer “relações sexuais” entre homem e mulher?

VM-Sim, para pôr à existência començam no tempo da união sexual das pessoas, então tem um pouco dos porquês *ntumbuluko*, como havia dito, é antes da existência de tudo, então tudo vem a existência através de *ntumbuluko*, tudo é nascente do *ntumbuluko*, mas estas pessoas que vão dar origem a seus descendentes; nasceram do *ntumbuluko*. Só aquelas primeiras pessoas, não houve união para dar-se a origem deles, foram criados por *Mutumbunukise*. Mas depois foram lhes atribuída uma qualidade, uma situação de procriar e pôr à existência novas coisas, não naquela forma que Deus criou as coisas, mas unirem-se, então trabalharem para produzir isto e aquilo multiplicando.

Agora, quando olhamos para Romanos encontramos *ntumbuluko* como “*mikhuva ya ntumbuluko*” vai também tocar “*mikhuva ya ntumbuluko*” no sentido de união sexual ou então relações sexuais das pessoas. Mas quando fala-se de *mikhuva ya ntumbuluko* é também uma situação ambígua; pode estar a falar de usos e costumes tradicionais de um povo, e de sociedade humana geralmente como tal, assim como outro tipo de espécies de coisas. Agora quando vamos para 1 Co 11:14.

AC-Talvez antes de 1 Co, devia comentar de Romanos 8 porque tem uso diferente e gostaria de ouvir. Porque em Romanos é onde *ntumbuluko* e morte.

VM-Aí há uma situação ambígua entre aqueles versículos porque positivamente *ntumbuluko*, põe à existência, promove a vida, a saúde e toda a situação positiva e aceitável mas, quando não é seguido também parece que está a se explicar que quem não segue *ntumbuluko*, esse *ntumbuluko* vai lhe castigar. Vai lhe pôr numa situação de punição porque não cumpriu com aquele *ntumbuluko*; então tem que se ver aqui *ntumbuluko* vai produzir uma originalidade negativa que já está contrariar a

originalidade que era positiva, que era aceitável e pôs coisas a existência. Há uma contradição aqui.

AC-Só para acrescentar, em Romanos 1, Paulo está dizendo que Deus abandonou e está a castigar as pessoas que não seguiram *ntumbuluko*. E em Romanos 8 está dizer que seguir *ntumbuluko* é morte. Não estará Paulo aqui a falar de situações diferentes ou que o *ntumbuluko* significa coisas diferentes nestas passagens?

VM-A maneira humana de pensar e de fazer as coisa é que há momentos que não é fácil termos saída quando estamos numa situação difícil. E acaba se vendo que olha, já que as coisas estão assim, então vamos tomar esta posição. Por exemplo quando a gente fala da chamada lei de Moises. Então você tem que cumprir isto para conseguir aquilo; e se não cumpre isto, então vai ter aquela punição. Parece que está tudo predestinado a quem nao cumpre então tem que se lhe arastar para chegar a meta do castigo, em vez de se procurar salvaguardar a situação da pessoa, salvaguardar aquela parte positiva da lei. Então aí, esse *ntumbuluko* tem dois gumes; tem uma parte positiva para salvar e uma parte negativa ao mesmo tempo para castigar quem não observar bem o *ntumbuluko*. Mas há essa situação de *ntumbuluko* que seguido, as vezes entra em contradição com a situação que Deus quer que nós tenhamos e vai chocar então com aquela parte positiva. E nós perdemos então o benefício, o privilégio de gozar a parte positiva do *ntumbuluko*. Ou então seguimos *ntumbuluko* mesmo na parte negativa. Mas beneficiamos de castigo, de uma maldição, duma morte e prontos...

AC-Padre, parece que estamos numa situação em que irremediavelmente *ntumbuluko* tem um uso negativo e uso positivo, qual é a sua reação?

JN-Conforme eu disse no princípio, a razão do uso é porque nós começamos a pensar da natureza em si, há aqueles que consideram Deus como natureza, a natureza em si é aquela que precisa de ser considerada em todos. Que é a razão pela qual Jesus toma esta nossa natureza<sup>168</sup> para daí ganhar de novo aquele valor que a natureza tem. O facto de seguir a natureza é porque ele vem a pessoa do nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo

<sup>168</sup> Heb. 1:14 em Tsonga lê-se: 'Ele [Jesus] é da mesma natureza (*ntumbuluko*) com eles (seres humanos ou Tsongas).'

como aquele que supriu a morte. Então, enquanto nós estamos a tentar seguir a coisas como a nossa natureza, como somos não é fácil nós nos perdemos. Portanto temos uma direcção que é a pessoa de Jesus que dá, de novo, o valor a esta natureza.

AC-Mas em Romanos 8, a palavra traduzida *ntumbuluko* é a palavra que discreve a natureza pecaminosa, não a natureza humana como tal, mas aquela contaminada pelo pecado. E acha que esta mudança que está se verificar na tradução de uso privalente do termo *ntumbuluko*, é boa? Dá mais ou fala mais no coração do povo do sul de Moçambique; faz com que o evangelho quando é lido penetre profundamente no pensamento Moçambicano no sul?

JN-É exactamente isso porque o que acontece se nós usamos outros termos que vem de lá, das outas partes; que vem daquelas línguas originais lá, se nós utilizarmos aquelas formas, o conceito está vago, não penetra as pessoas porque as pessoas conhecem mais a natureza. Porque vivem na natureza e é exactamente até onde Jesus se assenta, na natureza e o evangelho que ele traz é práctico; renovou esta natureza que caiu por causa do pecado, e se usarmos outros termos, a coisa fica muito longe das pessoas, não penetra.

AC-Vomos agora voltar a questão da relação “Teologia e Tradução,” como eu indiquei, estou satisfeito que estão a endoçar o uso de *ntumbuluko*, eu também acho que *ntumbuluko* fala mais no coração do que as outras palavras alternativas que estavam na outra versão. Foi por causa disso que quando li nesta versão e ouvi o que se diz sobre *ntumbuluko* decidi investigar bem porque é minha base e mexeu a minha base, o meu *ntumbuluko*. Assim, o trabalho feito nesta casa (Sociedade Bíblica) ou outras casas como esta que fazem o trabalho de radução, profundamente falou no meu coração e no meu pensamento teológico. E comecei a pensar que, se *ntumbuluko* é morte, precisamos de entender bem o que é *ntumbuluko* porque usamos a palavra *ntumbuluko* todos os dias; quando há alguma coisa, dizemos, “*swa ntumbuluko*” e ninguém discute basta isso. Precisamos de saber que *ntumbuluko* a usar e que *ntumbuluko* é morte para não usar. A palavra *ntumbuluko* mesmo na Bíblia não é sempre negativa, há onde é usada positivamente. Então precisamos de desenvolver este tipo de uso e então, ou em outras palavras, fiquei profundamente influenciado

como teólogo com o trabalho da tradução, pelos tradutores. A tradução fez-me entender a teologia duma maneira diferente que sem esta tradução não podia entender.

E ninguém no mundo vai entender duma maneira que o Tsonga, ao ler este texto, vai. Disculpa dizer Tsonga porque Txopi e Gitonga está também lá, portanto esta é uma contribuição teológica que só pode sair do sul de Moçambique; por cause do trabalho feito pelos tradutores. Então eu queria que discutissemos mais esta relação teologia vs. tradução e tradução vs. teologia. Assim como indiquei que, também o tradutor quando chega numa situação onde há muitas escolhas (opções), um dos exemplos é a palavra *ruah*, que lutamos. Outras versões dizem "O vento fortíssimo que vem de Deus" outras "Espírito de Deus" outros "O vento" e ainda outras "ciclone." Como é que o tradutor escolhe termo ou palavra apropriada? Depende da teologia; da corrente teológica, do pensamento teológico que formou e que é a base do tradutor; e que vai informar o tradutor a escolher a palavra a colocar, mas aquela palavra que ele ou ela vai colocar, vai (por sua vez) influenciar uma (toda) geração de teólogos.

VM-Quanto a esta parte, eu não tenho muita coisa a dizer se não verificar que a teologia e a tradução, podemos dizer que, tem a ver com a cultura dum povo. Porque a teologia está de qualquer das maneiras, ligada a cultura, então isto quer dizer que quando nós vamos traduzir, vamos traduzir um texto bíblico, procuramos a entender a essência do texto original, mas temos que tentar entender a maneira natural nossa como tal, ser eu a entender e a receber essa mensagem e não ser ajudado a entender, procuramos receber a mensagem para entender originamente como tal mas na minha língua; na minha teologia; e na minha cultura porque não pode haver teologia sem cultura.

VM-Uma coisa está associada a outra, isso é que pode formar uma teologia que pode orientar melhor. Quer dizer, não devo me disligar da miha cultura e também para ser um teólogo, não devo deixar da minha cultura para ser teólogo ou então; dizer que eu vou permanecer na minha cultura para não ser teólogo, então tenho que buscar maneira de associar estas duas coisas para ter uma melhor orientação teológica que lá dentro trato de estudo sobre Deus, também dentro disso, ou desse estudo sobre Deus esta lá a ciência, está lá a cultura, está lá a teologia, todas as coisas estão aí associados; e não podem ser separados. Basta se conseguir distinguir isso, então, aí já

não há teologia, não há cultura. Uma cultura sem teologia e teologia sem cultura e tudo deixa de ser aquilo que é. Portanto há uma teologia natural porque nós originalmente e naturalmente vimos crendo, vimos tendo a nossa teologia; mas quando recebemos a palavra de Deus, a religião Cristã, então, é nos fácil engreçarmos nisso partindo da nossa cultura e da nossa teologia. Algumas coisas do *ntumbuluko* que existem na nossa teologia, numa forma negativa, nós procuramos afastar isso e extrair isso e selecionando, tomamos algo de positivo; e então associamos com a parte da teologia Cristã e assim formamos a nossa teologia que possa nos orintar melhor, então há estas duas partes distintas, a teologia e cultura mas que devem se associar para formar o pensamento teológico que possa nos orientar melhor.

**AC-E** Padre, qual é a sua idea sobre a relação teologia e tradução e tradução teologia?

**JN**-É verdade que, ... é lamentável que de forma como nos apareceu o Cristianismo, foi duma maneira (risos) – muito, muito (pausa) e muito defícil.

Veio o Cristianismo dentro dum pacote e temos o problema de avaliar o Cristianismo atravez deste pacote. E se tirarmos o Cristianismo, tiramos o evangelho daquele pacote, parece que já não é evangelho –risos- está ver? Então, nós temos isto na nossa consciência, e eu Africano que sou, tenho uma cultura. Esta cultura deve ser o pacote onde o evangelho asseta. E é aí que o evangelho vai mexer aquilo que é válido só, aquilo que não entereça, então é aquilo que cai. Então, equanto estamos a traduzir, temos isto na mente; que devemos exactamente trazer o evangelho dentro daquela nossa cultura em que o nosso próprio povo vai entender melhor.

**AC**-Pessoalmente tenho pensado que o trabalho da tradução, é um trabalho muito teológico, tal como pesquisas teológicas, como indiquei, a nossa teologia é influenciada por aquilo que as versões que lemos dizem. Se um versículo for mal entendido, uma teologia diseinformada vai se desenvolver. E se uma tradução resolve aquele enigma, também a teologia fica corrigida. Sem uma palavra que claramente indica que a salvação é pela graça, não pode haver uma teologia da salvação pela graça. Assim o tradutor dá elementos que vão penetrar no pensamento teológico e serem desenvolvidos. E essa relação, para mim, no desenvolvimento teológico Africano, gostaria de ver uma associação muito profunda entre teólogo e

tradutores; entre instituições de ensino [exactamente] e instituições de tradução [exactamente]. Porque a tradução que é feita naquela instituição influencia a teologia feita naquele seminário. Então, se estes trabalharem juntos no desenvolvimento teológico acho que vamos fazer um bom contributo – bom, não sei, qual e a vossa reação a isso?

JN-Mas de facto é que é isso mesmo. É preciso que lutemos de forma a criarmos as bases firmes para o assentamento do evangelho. O evangelho são as boas novas (risos), são as boas novas da salvação de facto. Então, se não criamos estas bases, dentro daquilo que nós escrevemos aí, o evangelho vai continuar sempre alheio. Nunca vai ter lugar em nós. E nós precisamos desta salvação que Jesus traz. E é preciso ser Africano, não permanecer ser Europeu, Ele [Jesus] não permanece Judeu, não. Nós vamos ver esta questão da natureza, o valor que ele dá, pelo facto que ele nasceu Judeu. É bom que ele nasceu Judeu porque isso indica que ele também nasce como um Machope. Está dar o valor da natureza. E é aí que devemos tentar mostrar este dever de dar uma continuidade muito forte. E nós é que devemos fazer isso. Porque uma vez que não existia a Bíblia em Chope; então equanto estamos a fazer esta Bíblia em Chope, devemos carregar dentro dela esta cultura de forma que seja aceite.

AC-Muito obrigado, agora voltemos ao problema de ontem sobre o *Xi*. Fiquei satisfeito ver que vocês estão a lutar com o mesmo problema *Txi* na vossa tradução da Bíblia na língua Txopi. Gostaria de saber como é que chegaram a descobrir aquele problema na língua Txopi? Como é que chegaram a conclusão de substituir *Txi* e qual é o tipo da reação que estão a receber de outros tradutores e pastores? Porque este é o mesmo problema de “*Xikwembu xite*” (*Txidzimu txiti*).

VM-Acho que aí temos uma grande deficiência em termos de ortografia e também a pronúncia porque em Txitxopi, nós não usamos *xi*, usamos *txi* no lugar de *xi*, então o nosso *xi* nós usamos *txi*. E quando dizemos *atxia*, nós estamos a dizer isto, ou *lexia* em Tsonga. Então há um problema aí porque nós temos termo *Txidzimu* em *Txitxopi* para dizermos Deus, e no prural *sidzimu* para dizer deuses, esses deuses tradicionais, então se nós dizemos *Txidzimu, txia*; então o *txia* é atenuado porque vem dum nome próprio que começa por *Txi, Txidzimu txia*.

AC-Então estamos obrigados a repetir *txi*?

VM-Sim, por causa do prefixo do nome *Txi*, mas quando dissemos, *txia* sabendo que é isto, nós estamos tratando dum objecto ou mesmo alguém numa forma desrespeitável já quer dizer reduzir alguém a um objecto que é insignificante; não tem validade nenhuma, então, dessa forma a nossa ortografia tem esse problema, tem “x” nós escrevemos *Txidzimu txia*, então quando é Senhor Deus, *Mukoma Txidzimu ati kene* (o Senhor Deus disse), já não vamos dizer *Mokoma Txidzimu txiti*, não porquê? Porque a palavra que predomina é a primeira palavra *Mukoma*, Senhor, e que vai influenciar o resto aí na frase nesse contexto que nós estamos aí a tratar.

AC-Em Tsonga também “*A Hosi Xikwembu ate*”

VM-Sim porque se não entendessemos esse quem sabe se uma das línguas ia escrever por exemplo, “*Hosi Xikwembu xite*” então isso para dizer que já abandonamos a primeira palavra e usamoso segundo elemento *Xikwembu xite* equanto temos a primeira forte a qual todo o texto deve depender; então nós fizmos isso, acho que é de interrogarmos as nossas línguas... cá no sul é que tem que entender e usar os termos que nao nos levam desprezar o nosso Deus; sem se tratar de *Xikwembu xite* como tal. Agora, em *Txitxopi* nós não usamos *Xikwembu*, mas usamos *Txidzimu* que ao memso tempo quando está no prural já tratamos daquele *xikwembu* que também podemos chamar nos outros lugares *vanungungulu*.

AC-Os Vatshwa não tem problema, *Nungungulu* é pessoa. “*Nungungulu ite, ite yena, ite ngalo.*” O problema está com os Changanas e Rongas que usam a palavra *Xikwembu*. E vocês também Txopis com *Txidzimu*. Gitangas usaram a palavra *Nungungulu* e assim não tem problema. O problema é particular não é todo o sul, mas Maputo e Gaza, mas também Inhambane porque também usam Bíblias em Changana e Txopi.

Será que é puramente linguístico o problema? Ou também temos o problema do conceito? O próprio conceito que a palavra *Xikwembu* e *Txidzimu* expressa? Ou tem deficiência e não é apropriado para ser usado para o criador. O que acham? Que tipo

de natureza do problema que estamos a enfrentar aqui? Os Txopi com *txi* e os Changanas e Rongas com *Xi*.

JN-Bom –risos- eu sempre tenho tido um problema muito sério com a palavra em si. E conforme eu disse no princípio a influência é doutros lugares, quer dizer, não deixamos expressar exactamente aquilo que nós queremos dizer.

AC-Então, está influenciado no processo de tradução como por exemplo Tsonga que é 90% feita na Africa do Sul?

JN-Bom, para eu vou falar do,... o Tsonga de facto quem influencia é a linguística. Porque este relacionamento *xi-xi*, *xi-xite*, está ver, este relacionamento é uma concordância, está ver. E nós temos o medo de quebrar esta concordância. E até tínhamos pensado nisso no nosso Txitxopi; para dizer: “*Txidzimu ati kene*,” está ver, exactamente, é esta concordância de facto e que sempre optei –riso- mas quando já andamos pelas regras da linguística –risos. Mas podíamos fazer concordar porque se nos concordamos assim, o povo então já vai ver exactamente [que] esta... [concordância e lógica]. Mesmo em Tsonga [podíamos dizer] *Xikwembu ate*.

AC-Sim, tenho exemplo da Zambia. Não se diz *wena Xikwembu* na língua Lamba, diz-se *n'wina (Aba Lesa?)*. Tem o plural do singular do tratamento de respeito e plural do número. É o plural do singular (*Elohim*). Tiveram a primeira Bíblia que tratou Deus no singular, mas que era desrespeito e fizeram outra versão que trata Deus no plural do singular.

JN-É isso, é exactament esta... nós também estamos ainda a fazer, acho que havemos de chega a uma concordância de facto. Porque só nós é que podemos dar este tratamento. Se nós não podemos dar este tratamento não há de vir outro alguém para vir dar esse tratamento.

AC-Outra questão que me chocou quando falamos desta Bíblia é ouvir que 90% da tradução se fez na Africa do Sul. Moçambique só foi consultado no último, mas o trabalho da tradução foi feito lá. Isso me choca. A Africa do Sul é minoria. Os Tsongas são originais daqui... O Tsonga [a língua Tsonga] está aqui. Então, uma

menoria pequena ficou a dominar um documento espiritual de todo um grupo grande de pessoas. O reitor Ngomane estava me dizer que este trabalho da tradução e feito na Valdezia, pela Igreja Presbiteriana. E ele indica Valdezia ser o limite com Venda e que o Tsonga de lá e de toda a zona de Gazankulu é dialeto de Tsonga. Não é a própria língua está misturada com outras línguas e tornou-se dialeto de Tsonga e não propriamente Tsonga. Mas é este que está a dominar. Por causa disso encontra-se expressões que não existem em Moçambique e que não dizem nada em Moçambique. Não sei se já notaram isso ou só eu só que estou ver isso?

VM-Acho que eu queria dizer alguma coisa porque este relacionamento com todos, não sei em Tsonga e outras línguas também. E esqueci-me de fazer referência à alguma coisa que queria tocar um pouco agora. E que em Txitxopi, no ano passado se teve um encontro com a Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, precisamente para sugerir e mesmo chamar a atenção às instituições altamente literárias, que estão a gerir a educação que, não pode estar lá no espaço, lá em cima a trabalhar sem ter nada a ver com a base, com as pessoas que usam uma e outra língua, isso atevendo a questão...

Isso para dizer que se um trabalho de tradução e feito por pessoas ou no terreno onde não predominam essencialmente a língua, bom vai sair o trabalho da vontade daquela pessoa que está lá, mas aquelas pessoas naturais, nativas não, e que deviam tomar uma boa parte do trabalho ou compartilhar com os outros; então perdemos um valor que aquelas pessoas tem e não se sentem valorizadas, a vontade; não se sentem satisfatoriamente. Talvez quem sabe em parte o facto desta, esta... versão não ter mais acesso as pessoas, segundo a informação que oscultmos, do que a versão anterior.

AC-Quero entender bem o que quer dizer com acesso, quer dizer as pessoas?

VM-Quero dizer que as pessoas não adere de facto a esta versão do que versão anterior aqui.

AC-Aqui em Moçambique?

**VM-Sim.** Aqui já temos essa informação. Isso quer dizer que algumas formas, alguns termos e alguma linguagem segundo mencionou o secretário Chamusse, então não alimentam verdadeiramente as pessoas que estão a esperar receber a mensagem numa língua própria. Então mesmo nós tradutores que traduzimos Txitxope estando aqui, temos feito visitas de serviço nas zonas próprias da língua e conversamos com pessoas. Nós somos filhos que nascemos, crescemos falando Txitxopi, mas já estamos por muito tempo fora da casa...

**AC-E a interação com outras línguas?**

**VM-Está** ver essa coisa também. Então nós temos em mente que alguma coisa perdemos a medida que o tempo vai, a medida que temos o desenvolvimento nisto e naquilo. E isso para podermos trabalharmos rasoavelmente e transmitirmos a mensagem necessária para o povo, temos que trabalhar tendo em conta o contacto, a comunicação [com o povo] onde o povo está, então é isso mais ou menos que posso mencionar.

**AC-É** muito interessante a questão que estava a abordar, eu não sabia que esta Bíblia está tendo um pouco de problema de aceitação. **VM-Já.**

**AC-Acho** que seria bom dar o Grego e Hebraico as pessoas que tem a língua no sangue e deixar eles trabalhar. Como está a acontecer com Chope, estou muito impressionado com o vosso trabalho. Vocês são vaTxopi, são teólogos e querem produzir uma coisa que vão utilizar ao pregar para o vosso povo entender a palavra de Deus, com toda a integridade. Não estou a desprezar o valor de estudar porque estou a estudar também, mas não devemos pensar que só porque alguém aprendeu a língua já conhece... precisamos linguagem comum, como o Grego do Novo Testamento, língua da estrada ou mercado, não é clássica.. não sei qual é a vossa reação.

**VM-Eu** queria assegurar que é melhor levar essa nossa mensagem que é sua e é nossa também; é uma grande preocupação que enquanto tradutores, enquanto teólogos, enquanto pastores, e enquanto pessoas que servimos ao povo duma e doutra maneira temos que ter em mente a busca de formas adequadas para transmitirmos especialmente e acessivelmente a palavra de Deus na língua do povo.

**8.16 Appendix XIII****NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview****Date:** 29 and 31 July 2003**Place:** Nkhovo and Hospital Central, Maputo**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko***Language:** Portuguese**Conf/access:** Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee****Name:** Simao Chamango**Gender:** Male**Date of birth:** 14 February 1935**Place of birth:** Manhica, Maputo**Residence:** Ricatla**Religious convictions:** Christian (Presbyterian-Swiss Mission)**Position in the religious group:** Pastor and ex-Sinodal president**Profession and occupation:** Lecturer at Ricatla United Seminary**Category:** Bible Translator**Address:** C P 21, Seminario Unido de Ricatla, Maputo**Tape identification:** N/A

## SIMAO CHAMANGO - TRADUÇÃO

### Pergunta obscura

SC- Ao que diz respeito ao conceito *xi* é certo que refere-se a alguma coisa, uma coisa desprezível, aí diz-se ou usa-se *xi*. Por exemplo se for uma pessoa simples, diz-se “*lexiya*” e isso é para desprezar essa coisa. Mas também pode não se falar em forma de desprezo, o *xi*, aquilo eu também não sei refere uma situação que é extraordinária. Se uma pessoa fizer alguma coisa que é de facto extraordinária, ali utiliza-se também esse conceito do *xi* que expressa que essa pessoa é mais do que uma pessoa normal.

Por exemplo uma pessoa joga a bola dum maneira que todos ficam surpreendidos, vão dizer, é pá *xi, xi*. O *xi* logo passa a não ser de desprezo, mas de admiração porque essa pessoa passa o que nós todos podemos imaginar.

Fica-se por saber porque se utiliza o termo *xi* para o *Xikwembu*, bem, aí nao é fácil mas não podemos dizer que é por causa de considerar *Xikwembu* como uma coisa, acho que há poucas probablidades que a coisa possa ser assim. Também não podemos dizer que se utiliza *xi* em forma de desprezar, acho que não pode ser assim, mas também não tenho um argumento para dizer que se utiliza *xi* para enaltecer a posição dum pessoa que de facto é extraordinária, é difícil dizer; sou estou dizer que existem duas ou trez maneiras de se utilizar o *xi*. O *xi* para uma coisa, o *xi* para uma coisa/pessoa desprezível e o *xi* extraordinário. Esses são os usos que conheço em relação ao *xi*.

AC- Quanto ao conceito *Xikwembu* e o conceito *Khubyanyani* nunca ouvi falar de *Khubyanyani* como deus criador, pode ser que seja um conceito popular numa zona ou que os idosos da minha zona podem saber algo do *Khubyanyani*, não sei.

SC- Bem, o Deus criador só conhecemos o termo agora popular *Xikwembu*, mas o Junod faz menção do *Tilo* que é o ceu, que havia essa crença popular sobre o *Tilo*, mas talvez isso estava ligado com o que o *tilo* oferece, por exemplo a chuva; portanto de que se não chover há fome e se chover é fartura. Portanto, talvez o *Tilo* estava

mais ligado com questões económicas. Não tenho outro termo sobre o criador que conheço.

## 2nd Parte

SC-Bem, tentei pensar no assunto e também encontrar alguém que é mais idoso, procurei do criador antes do uso do termo *Xikwembu* mas infelizmente ninguém sabe alguma coisa acerca disso.

Mas, quanto a tradução *ntumbuluko*, resulta da tradução da palavra Grega que é o *sarx*, e como sabemos a palavra *sarx* pode ter muitas traduções, e uma das traduções é “natureza” “carne” ou “natureza humana.” É por isso que entrou a tradução de *ntumbuluko*.

Verifiquei também outras traduções que existem na lingua Portuguesa que usam “carne” (*sarx*) mas as novas traduções em Inglês e Português começaram a introduzir a palavra “natureza” [humana]. Por exemplo tenho uma tradução que diz “mente controlada pela natureza humana” é por isso que a nova tradução em Tsonga passou a utilizar *ntumbuluko*. Para se referir a mesma palavra *sarx*, outras traduções ainda usam “*nyama*.” O grande problema é como uma pessoa Tsonga pode compreender o termo “*nyama*” – acho que essa é uma das razões que levou os tradutores a mudar um pouco o sentido, traduzindo o termo como *ntumbuluko*.

Mesmo assim, falando do *ntumbuluko*, a questão se coloca, como é que as pessoas compreendem esse termo *ntumbuluko*; a situação não é nada fácil. A dificuldade de tradução que estou ver é que não temos uma palavra que nos pode dar uma palavra compreensível. Tanto o termo “*nyama*” ou “*ntumbuluko*” requer uma explicação, sem essa explicação nada podemos compreender.

Bem, é certo que temos comentários que tentam explicar, por exemplo quando lí o comentário de Karl Bath, diz que a vida no espírito significa a submissão à vontade misericordiosa de Deus. O que quer dizer que a vida na carne é ao contrário da submissão à vontade de Deus. O Karl Bath diz que o espírito impura o homem a procurar a graça de Deus, o homem não pode começar por “eu” mas pode tomar o

ponto de partida, Jesus Cristo. É nesse sentido que Jesus Cristo enaugurou nessa pessoa alguma coisa nova. Isso quer dizer que a pessoa que vive na carne é contrária da pessoa que vive no espírito. É uma pessoa que se revolta contra o seu próprio Criador. É neste sentido que podemos compreender o sentido viver na carne.

Mas como encontrar uma palavra que pode precisamente levar o crente a resumir isso, neste texto de Romanos, aí é onde está o problema. Traduzir por "*anakanyo bya nyama*"(Ronga) isso bem, também é um problema, "*ku anakanya ka nyama*" (Tsonga), também precisa uma explicação, e "*ku landza a ntumbuluko*" ou "*ku anakanya ntumbuluko*" ou "*ku anakanya swa ntumbuluko*" porque *ntumbuluko* pode não ter sentido negativo pode ter um sentido positivo; e é daí que tudo requer uma explicação.

AC-Sim, desculpa interperer, mesmo na Bíblia encontramos que outros versículos usam a palavra *ntumbuluko* no positivo.

SC-Sim, mesmo carne não é tudo negativo. Há *sarx*, natureza humana, corpo humano que não são negativos mas há carne (*sarx*) que é natureza do pecado e isso e negativo.

AC-Antes de deixar este ponto, o que acha doutor Chamango, pensa que terá sido uma boa tentativa dos tradutores terem substituído "*nyama*" com "*ntumbuluko*" ou acha que não deviam ter feito isso, o que acha?

SC-É certo que, ou melhor, para aqueles que estavam envolvidos fizeram bem, a razão de se ter deixado "*nyama*" talvez acharam que é muito mais difícil se compreender o termo "*nyama*," só que também o termo *ntumbuluko* não resolve a questão. Para mim acho que bem, há razão porque acharam mudar o termo, mas para mim o termo *ntumbuluko* não resolve o problema.

AC-Há uma coisa que o dr. Mencionou aqui, será que foi também parte das discussões?

SC-Bem, apanhei o comboio em andamento, mas estava no comboio! –risos- sim nos últimos anos, quase trabalhei dois anos. Mas o projecto levou muitos anos e só participei nos últimos dois anos.

## RELAÇÃO TEOLOGIA E TRADUÇÃO

AC- A teologia pode influenciar a tradução assim como a tradução influenciar a teologia. Sempre há um encontro das duas e uma chega de incarnar a outra, isso não se pode negar, existe esta relação.

Sendo que há uma relação entre teologia e tradução, o que recomenda em termos de relacionamento do currículo ou desenvolvimento teológico e os tradutores? Colaboração de teólogos e tradutores?

SC-Devia existir sempre um diálogo no sentido de que bem, não se pode fazer o trabalho da tradução sem acompanhar aquilo que os crentes dizem. O Karl Bath disse que para ser teólogo é preciso ler Bíblia e jornal ... Os tradutores precisam saber o que dizem outros teólogos, é por isso que houve consultação em Moçambique e Afica do Sul na revisão que estivemos a falar dela...a tradução que havia era antiga, e encontrou-se que a nova geração não entendia algumas palavras e deviam mudar como o caso de “nyama” para “ntumbuluko.”

AC-Acha que o tradutor da Bíblia devia ser também um teólogo e não só um linguísta?

SC-Bem, acho que deve ser as duas coisas, precisamos de linguísta e teólogos. Na tradução que falei havia linguístas que davam a contribuição linguística, não eram teólogos. Não é preciso a pessoa ser teóloga e linguísta ao mesmo tempo, só é preciso haver uma cooperação ou colaboração.

Há tempos que um linguísta percebe coisas duma maneira diferente do ponto de vista dum teólogo. Aí requer-se precisamente uma discursão, mas também o teólogo pode ter uma visão/opinião que também fere ao linguísta... aí também é preciso uma discursão até chegar a um certo acordo.

## 8.17 Appendix XIII

**NTUMBULUKO AND THE GOSPEL****INTERVIEW RECORD****Interview****Date:** 30 July 2003**Place:** Seminario Unido de Ricatla, Ricatla**Interviewer:** Andre Jonas Chitlango**Topic:** *Ntumbuluko***Language:** Portuguese**Conf/access:** Open 

Permission

Restriction (period)

Names (in full / omitted/ modified)**Interviewee****Name:** Jonas Ngomane**Gender:** Male**Date of birth:** 1947**Place of birth:** Chibuto (Gaza)**Residence:** Ricatla**Religious convictions:** Christian (Presbyterian)**Position in the religious group:** Minister**Profession and occupation:** Rector and lecturer at Ricatla Seminary**Category:** Bible translator**Address:** Est. Nac. Km 24, C P 1057, Maputo**Tape identification:** N/A

NGOMANE, J

**Interview transcript**

**Type 2**

AC-(pergunta não clara)

JN-Falando das traduções, nós aqui em Ricatla continuamos a insistir no estudo do Grego e Hebraico. O nosso seminário não vacila nisso. Todas as escolas teológicas existentes em Moçambique, quase não estão fazer nada sobre o Grego e Hebraico. Elas só fazem para uma questão cosmética. Nós acreditamos que o conhecimento das línguas ajuda-nos [na] continuação das traduções. Sabe que em Moçambique há muitas línguas, o número das línguas parece 16 ou mais que isso...

Voltando ao seu problema da tradução da Bíblia *Mahungu la Manene*, em 1975 aqui em Ricatla eu era estudante do 3º ano. Houve uma conferência quase nos últimos anos da tradução de *Mahungu la Manene*. Foi aqui em Ricatla que pessoas, personalidades como D.C. Marivate<sup>169</sup> e outros da Africa do Sul vieram aqui para tentar consolidar a linguagem da Bíblia *Mahungu la Manene* com Moçambicanos, [mas] muitos Moçambicanos não dominavam Grego e Hebraico para conseguir lutar contra as influências. Eh!, antes de eu esquecer, penso que uma outra pessoa que esteve envolvida nesse trabalho é o Bispo Mandlate (Católico).

Nesta tradução, de *Mahungu la Manene*, uma pessoa que estava a frente do trabalho (na area do Novo Testamento) era Rev. Theo R Schneider<sup>170</sup> de Suíça e uma senhora; [ambos] considerados especialistas de Tsonga na Africa do Sul, mas sendo missionários. Ora nestas considerações todos, se você descubriu a palavra *ntumbuluko* pode se descobrir também outras discrepâncias dentro do texto. Isso deturpa um pouco.

*Ntumbuluko* em Tsonga diz muita coisa. *Ntumbuluko* também quer dizer coisa que alguém não consegue interpretar e com esta palavra *ntumbuluko* explicar aquilo que

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<sup>169</sup> Marivate is also indicated in the Bible Society documents as someone involved with the translation project.

<sup>170</sup> De facto, Schneider was the leader of the whole translation project.

não consegue explicar. Por isso não pode se traduzir a palavra carne como vem no Novo Testamento... [A palavra carne] significa carnidade, a carnidade e *ntumbuluko* parece não dá certo... Por isso as nossas traduções, por exemplo agora posso dar um exemplo, pegar o Novo Testamento Ronga; é da influência de pessoas não é Ronga. As complicações que existem na tradução Tsonga são poucas do que as que estão na tradução Ronga.

Por exemplo, se você está numa igreja Rongra doutro lado e ver, por exemplo, *Tinsimu swi Khongoto ....* vai ficar atrapalhado ver o Ronga que está aí e o que está no Novo Testamento. Uma composição da Bíblia em Ronga (antiga) e Novo Testamento, mesmo que não seja especialista vai ver que há um problema. (compare Velho Testamento, Catecismo e Novo Testamento).

O outro assunto é que as línguas nossas sofrem muitas influências externas como o caso de Tsonga sofreu muito das influências externas da África do Sul, o norte do Transvaal. O local da tradução de Tsonga na África do Sul é Valdezia, e não Gazankulu. É aqui onde se faz a tradução. O Tsonga de lá está muito perto de Venda, encostado na fronteira com Venda. Muitas palavras no nosso Tsonga [Bíblia] foram influenciadas com Venda porque o Tsonga de lá está misturado e ou adulterado com Venda.

Mas há outras pansagens que a antiga tradução não consegue bem mas que a nova tradução faz bom trabalho.... Por isso acho que há poucos erros na tradução Tsonga em relação à outras traduções. Não sei, não tenho muita ligação com a Sociedade Bíblica, mas eu gostaria; e gostaria de tirar um curso de tradução se a vista me permitir para estar envolvido na tradução depois da minha reforma.

AC-Uma das coisas importantes que saíram é: o domínio dos Tsongas da África do Sul e a indicação de que Valdezia está perto de Venda. E isso nos pode levar a dizer que o Tsonga de lá é quase um dialeto de Tsonga por causa de aproximação (mistura) com Venda. No meu ponto de vista, a língua e cultura ficam bem perservadas onde há grande maioria dum grupo etnolinguístico. O grande povo Tsonga está em Moçambique.

JN-O problema é da formação, se Moçambique tivesse formados iria reivindicar o seu direito....

AC-Também disse que *ntumbuluko* é usado para explicar o que não se pode explicar, o que quer dizer com isso?

JN-Por exemplo quando se trata de ética (corrigir), e aparece a exigência dos porquês, as pessoas dizem: “*i ntumbuluko wa hina*” – não se pode; é problema ético. Quando dizem *i ntumbuluko wa hina*, não se pode quebrar, se quebrar você está a ameaçar o centro da gravitação da vida.

Existe *ntumbuluko* de tudo. Quando se diz “*ntumbuluko wa hina va Tsonga*” querem dizer *lobolo* (apesar de ser uma instituição nova) mas vão dizem que se alguém não aceitar *lobolo* está a estragar *ntumbuluko* (a mulher não vai se sentir orgulhosa se não foi lobolada).

A defesa do *ntumbuluko* pode conduzir alguém ao fanatismo e morrer. Há pessoas que se suicidam e morrer para defender *ntumbuluko*. *Ntumbuluko wa hina* pode também indicar a tribo ou a família largada – há *ntumbuluko* da tribo, *ntumbuluko* da zona e *ntumbuluko* da região.

AC-E na reunião de 1975, terá havido uma discursão entre os Tsongas da Africa do Sul e Moçambicanos sobre a mudança de “*nyama*” para o uso de “*ntumbuluko*?”

JN-Sim, houve uma discursão. Houve uma abertura para os Moçambicanos fazer quaisquer mudanças. Havia também uma consciência entre os Sul Africanos de que o Tsonga está aqui, sabiam disso, só que Moçambicanos não tinham uma capacidade superior para dominar, é isso. Aquilo que é bom, uma parte daquilo que é bom no *Mahungu la Manene* foi o esforço Moçambicano. Mas tudo sub a hegemonia da Africa do Sul. É isso que eu disse, para eles mesmo agora quando chegam aqui pensam que aqui não existe o saber. Eles acham que o saber não se pode adquirir em Português (*munhu anga tiva hi Xiphutukezi?*). Está ver não é. Com a vossa presença lá començam ter pouco por respeito de Moçambique.