

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ISAIAH SHEMBE AND EMMANUEL MILINGO'S MINISTRIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY.

BY

SELLO EDGAR KAU

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in the School of Theology, University of Natal.**

SUPERVISOR: DR ANTHONY BALCOMB

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**Dedicated to the memory of my late father Letsoko Abram Kau and mother
Welheminah Tshimong Kau**



Isaiah Shembe



Emmanuel Milingo

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that with the exception of the sources specifically acknowledged in the text, this dissertation is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other University for assessment. I thus submit it for the first time in the School of Theology of the University of Natal for the degree of Master of Theology.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation looks into the ministries of Isaiah Shembe and Emmanuel Milingo to examine their contributions to African Christianity. It also seeks to investigate their endeavours at affirming African identity in the process of inculturating Christianity into the African culture. Their contexts are, respectively, South Africa and Zambia. The dissertation also seeks to find a model that could help the mainline churches refer to in the quest of assuming a true African church that addresses the questions of Africans within their world view.

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the study. The second and third chapters look into the profile of both Shembe and Milingo and also examine the context that influences their ministries. They also bring to the fore the neglect that has set in due to missionary teaching eventually leading to the current problems besetting the mainline churches owing to ignoring the African world view. The chapters four and five discuss the healing ministries of the two leaders and the patterns of inculturation emerging from their ministries. These chapters show how healing forms an integral part of the African society and cannot be ignored, and the essence of inculturation in the African church as demonstrated by Shembe and Milingo. The final chapter discusses a model of the church that emerges from Shembe and Milingo's ministries which can serve as something the main line churches can learn from in order to affirm their ministries.

PREFACE

The main line churches in the African society in South Africa have long had problems integrating Christianity with African culture in a way that positively addresses the African world view. This has led in most cases to members of these churches being seen as ambivalent in their Christian faith since there has not been any clear and definite way of handling cultural issues in these churches. This study traces factors that contribute to this ambivalence and brings the contribution of the two African Christian leaders - Isaiah Shembe and Emmanuel Milingo into the picture in the quest to find an appropriate model to address these problems.

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Professor Kwame Bediako planted the seed for the zeal to look at the life of Milingo. His theological mentorship offered prior to starting this work, and consequent encouragement, is much appreciated.

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The church in Africa has often neglected to honour its heroes of faith and acknowledging their contribution in the Christian faith. This is partly due to the influence of missionary teaching which has overtly conditioned most Africans to approve what they approve and reject what they don't approve. Unfortunately, some of the most important things the missionaries disapproved of were the ones they did not understand, or simply feared. The topic under proposal is to look at two important Christian leaders in the African Church and reflect on their contributions to African Christianity. The exercise will hopefully help us to learn things which we can readily use in the African Church today, especially the mainline churches, as we strive to be relevant and true to the gospel.

2. MOTIVATION

The reason for doing a comparative study between Isaiah Shembe and Emmanuel Milingo is that they both come from different backgrounds, South Africa - African independent church (AIC); and Zambia - Catholic church; yet there is a common purpose in their healing ministry. The first purpose is that of liberating their people from suffering caused by illness and other socio-cultural factors, and spiritual ignorance about the things of God. The other purpose is that of inculturating Christianity into the African Church. They both do this from a different perspective. Milingo (1984a), consciously does this seeing the needs of his people demanding such an initiative. But he also does this as an African theologian seeing a need for inculturation in the African church. Shembe is involved in inculturation more as a natural reaction emanating from a need to give expression to Christian faith within his own African cultural context (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1994, 1996). Their different church backgrounds is also a point of interest. Shembe is an AIC leader with little education and almost no theological training except for the hands-on experience acquired as a preacher and healer. On the other hand Milingo comes from a more sophisticated background with Catholic theological and pastoral training. He is exposed to western philosophy and yet subscribes to African philosophy in his approach to ministry in order to be relevant to his context and meet the needs of the people he serves (Milingo 1984a). It is out of this need to serve his people best that he is drawn

into the healing ministry, whereas Shembe receives his calling differently in a manner fashionable with AIC prophets' calling to ministry. That is, involving visions and sickness. They both have successful healing ministries drawing interest from many people in need of their help. It is from them we can see that the calling to healing ministry is not necessarily supposed to be the same for all people in order for one to have a legitimate and successful healing ministry. Hence the two encourage one to seek to draw a model from their example that can prove beneficial to the mainline churches and the African Church at large in the quest for a relevant healing ministry.

Secondly, the mainline churches have lagged behind the AICs in terms of addressing the needs of their African members for healing and inculturating Christianity in the church. There are no visible programmes in these churches that cater for the need for healing. As a result they have constantly been faced with a situation where their members go to their churches during the day, but seek help for healing at night in the AICs or even go to the African traditional healers (Jwara 1998). Also, the mainline churches have been slow to address the needs engendered by African traditional religion and culture within the church. This again leads to their members getting involved in traditional practices and rituals that seem contrary to sound Christian teaching and practice (Sibeko 1997). This makes it necessary to find an ideal model for healing and inculturation in order to address these vexed issues in the mainline churches. That is, churches traditionally started by missionaries from Europe and America e.g. the Methodist Church and Catholic Church. Moreover, healing is a central and important part of the ministry of Jesus Christ and cannot be left solely to the medical doctors or traditional healers. The church must be seen to have an answer for this particular need of the African people in order for it to grow in its ministry and remain relevant.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What is it that the mainline churches can learn from the ministries of Shembe and Milingo which can serve as a model for inculturation in the African Church?

3.1 SUB-PROBLEM

1. What is the nature of their calling to the healing ministry?

2. What needs shape their healing ministry?
3. What is their experience and perception of conversion?
4. What patterns of inculturation emerge from their ministries?

4. HYPOTHESIS

Shembe and Milingo's calling to healing ministry portray a holistic healing ministry affirming healing as an integral part of the Church's witness of the gospel. The nature of conversion reflected from their ministries could be perceived from within the liberative framework from sin and evil forces that hinder people from the true knowledge of God and assuming a meaningful purpose in life. Inculturation emerges as a process of enhancing African Christians to experience their Christian faith in their own right within their context. In Shembe and Milingo's ministries there is an example of how the African Church should work at meeting the needs of the African Christians and people in a holistic and relevant manner.

5. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES* - Churches that have been established by indigenous African communities.
2. *ANCESTORS* - The dead of up to five generations most of which can still be remembered by name, who qualify to be called ancestors because they died well, under natural causes, and they lived well, having contributed positively in the family and community. They are also referred to as the "living dead". They are still regarded as part of the family and community and are seen as still playing an important mediatory role as they understand the needs of the people and also have access to God (Mbiti 1969).
3. *CATHOLIC* - Roman Catholic Church
4. *CONVERSION* - It is the adoption of a new way of life corresponding with Christian beliefs and teachings (Mugambi 1989:106). It involves the realization by an individual of his sinful state and a turning away from his past life style to a new life style responding in repentant faith to Jesus Christ revealed as Saviour in the bible. It must be demonstrated in order to be recognized by the community, and is an ongoing process (Jacobs 1980).

5. *EBUHLENI* - A church village established by Amos Shembe after there was a division in the church caused by a leadership struggle after the death of Galilee Shembe in 1976. It serves as the church head-quarters for the section of the church currently led by Vimbeni Shembe, who is Amos' son. People with various problems and ailments come to the place to consult with the prophet. The annual July festival is also celebrated in this place.
6. *EKUPHAKAMENI* - The original church village founded by Isaiah Shembe which serves as the official head-quarters of the church. It serves the same functions as Ebuhleni for the other section of the church which was formerly led by Shembe's grandson, Londa Shembe. After Londa's death, the leadership was left to the elders of the church. It is now the weaker of the two groups.
7. *INCULTURATION* - It is as an effort to incarnate or give expression to the Gospel message into the African cultures and making it relevant to the context (Nyamiti 1998:17). It also involves disengaging supra cultural elements of the gospel from one culture and contextualising them within the cultural forms and social institutions of another with a degree of transformation of these forms and institutions (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1994).
8. *HEALING* - It is an act, event or process of restoring a person to a state of well being making it possible to live in harmony with fellow human beings, the environment and God. It involves the emotional, spiritual, social and physical aspects of a person's life. It is effected by direct intervention of God or his use of human agents like medical personnel employing their skills and medical knowledge of herbs, chemicals or surgery. It is relationship based and is effected through prayer (Morgan 1990:239).
9. *MAIN-LINE CHURCHES* - Churches which have been historically started by missionaries from Europe or America, for instance, the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran.
10. *MISSION CHURCHES* - The term is used interchangeably with "mainline churches", and carries the same meaning.
11. *NHLANGAKAZI* - It is a mountain near Tongaat, in Natal. The mountain was often used by Isaiah Shembe for fasting and prayer, and the celebration of the annual January festival. It is regarded as a holy place of pilgrimage by Shembe's Church. The members of the church

walk for 80 kilometres bare-footed to reach the summit in three days. The celebrations last for three weeks.

6. THEOLOGICAL METHOD

In our study we will use a method adopted by Stuart Bate which starts from experience or current praxis of a community of faith and returns to that praxis in order to propose the next step forward (Bate 1993:22). Bate incorporates three methods by Clodovis Boff (1987: xxv, xvi, xxi); Bernard Lonergan (1971: 7, 9); and Jesus Andres Vela (1984:142). Lonergan's is a *transcendental method* which emphasizes the importance of intentionality in theological method. Of particular concern in the method is the process from: *perception to intelligibility* and *reason to responsibility*. The four operations with their differing intentionalities form the basis of Bates' coping healing phenomenon in the church (Bate 1993:22). We will also adopt the method for our purposes as we try to understand the ministries and contexts of both Shembe and Milingo and their roles in healing and inculturation and their significance to African Christianity.

Boff's method looks at the *epistemological foundations* of liberation theology and reflects on theology and praxis. The concern of political theology is seen here as that of transforming the world in accordance with God's will. The inculturation and healing process could be seen as part of a political and spiritual transformation process of the African church as it disentangles itself from the relics of colonialism and Euro-American world views within the church. In this context, the political process should be understood theologically as a praxis or contextual experience in which Christians are involved (Bate 1993:23).

Vela's emphasis is on pastoral theology. He insists that pastoral action of the church forms the locus of theological process. Pastoral theology's role is not merely to apply the conclusions of dogmatic theology to particular situations but rather to develop a theology which leads to pastoral action based on a theological reflection rooted in a 'situated praxis'. This safeguards against the risk of theology becoming ideology. Both the social and cultural dimensions of the reality must be taken into account since both factors affect the reality of the situation (Bate 1993:23). Since the issue of healing and

inculturation is also a pastoral issue, it also serves us well to take heed of Vela's observations as we approach our subject.

7. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature that is of major interest to us is that of G.C. Oosthuizen (1967), *The Theology of a South African Messiah*; Irving Hexham (1994) *The Scriptures of the AmaNazaretha of Ekuphakameni*; Hexham and Oosthuizen (1996, 1999) *The Story of Isaiah Shembe* (Vol 1 and Vol 2); Vilakazi et al. (1986) *Shembe - The Revitalization of African Society*. The above material discusses all the necessary aspects of Shembe and his ministry and profile. Oosthuizen's *The Healer-Prophet in Afro-Christian Churches* (1992); Daneel's *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia* (1970); Kiernan's *The Production and Management of Therapeutic Power in Zionist Churches with a Zulu City* (1990); all help bring a vigorous discussion on the activities of the African Independent Churches of which Shembe is one of them and Milingo shows leanings towards them in his activities. Gerrie Ter Haar (1992) *Spirit of Africa - The Healing Ministry of Archbishop Milingo of Zambia*, Milingo (1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994), they all bring us to an understanding of the thinking behind Milingo's ministry and his personal profile. The books also help us to understand the world which shape his pastoral ministry. MacNutt *Healing* (1974), *Power to Heal* (1977), Guides us through a careful and intellectual discussion of healing from someone who is a member of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement like Milingo. He is also quoted by Milingo often in his books. MacNutt helps to removes the perception that faith healing is all emotional hype by charismatics and is sincere about cures and the failures. Siegfried Jwara (1998) and Mandla Sibeko (1997) separately show in their studies the need for the mainline churches to address the African traditional world view by bringing in a relevant inculturation programme and healing ministry.

8. DELIMITATION

As much as our study will be focused on the work of Shembe and Milingo, we will also briefly look into some elements of the AIC healing ministry which share some affinity to what Shembe and Milingo do in order to gain a broader understanding of our subject. However, our focus will essentially be on Shembe and Milingo's work showing that their general approach to healing is holistic taking into

consideration the physical, spiritual and social dimensions as the AICs do. The discussion will also try to show that every process they go through, as it will be consequently discussed, emerges from activities of their healing ministry and their attitude towards healing. We will, therefore, look more into the overall impact of their healing ministry on issues like inculturation, African Christian identity and conversion as we strive to find an ideal model for the mainline churches to follow.

9. METHODOLOGY

The study was essentially based on *literary sources*. This included books written by Milingo, and those written on Milingo; books written on Shembe; Journals and other archival material that could be found. A few informal interviews were done to get an impression of the legacy Shembe has left within his organization, and to get clarifications on some of the concepts raised in the literature on Shembe. Members of the church were interviewed. This included both the average members and members in the top leadership. For Milingo, informal interviews were conducted with Catholic priests to get an impression of how the Catholic system functions with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. This was done to gain a deeper understanding of the organization so that one could weigh objectively issues raised in the literature.

10. CONCLUSION

As we enter the new millennium the African Church needs to retrace its indigenous values in order to sustain itself as it faces new challenges of post-modernity. Our discussion, as it develops from chapter to chapter, will hopefully bring out some of these essential values that we seek to build on in order to have a stronger African Church in the new millennium. Hopefully, this will also inspire the oneness of the church. That is, the church engaging in a trans-denominational mission that seeks to share the gospel in a more vibrant manner sharing a common understanding of its African identity and asserting it effectively without betraying the basic ethos of the Gospel.

CHAPTER: 2 PROFILE OF SHEMBE AND MILINGO AND THEIR EMERGENCE INTO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

1. INTRODUCTION

Isaiah Shembe and Emmanuel Milingo have in most cases been ignored or their work put in a negative light. Some have accused them of using magic, others have been reluctant to even hear anything concerning their ministry. This has been in most instances due to ignorance. In other cases it has been due to missionary teachings which have encouraged people to condemn things they least understand for fear of being influenced. In this study we will unambiguously take a positive line in discussing Shembe and Milingo's work.

Our discussion on the ministries of Isaiah Shembe and Emmanuel Milingo must be seen in the light of what Vilakazi (1986:1) calls an African Reformation. Isaiah Shembe started his ministry at a time when missionary control and domination of the church was at its height. The surge of the independent African churches (AICs) was seen as an irritation and a scourge to the missionaries and their colonialists partners. Africans had to be under European control in all facets of their lives. The missions looked with suspicion at any signs of independence and African initiatives. To them it was a sign of Africans running away from discipline, and escaping to immorality. Some have even described it as a "disease in the Christian body", and "a back door to resurrecting paganism" (Vilakazi 1986:2-3).

On the other hand, Africans had come to realize that white mission churches were apostate, and under the guise of religion have been agents of Western imperialism, especially culturally. They realized that these missionaries have in fact introduced into Christianity elements which were not necessarily Christian, but were Western cultural traditions. Meanwhile the same missionaries were suppressing the African culture making themselves vanguards of true Christianity. As Vilakazi rightly points out, this was merely a continuation of a projection of Levy Bruhl's negative philosophy towards Africans and people other than Europeans as seen in his work "How Natives Think" (Vilakazi 1986:2).

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So Shembe and Milingo's emergence into the Christian ministry must be seen from that background of political, social, cultural and religious suppression by Europeans. Shembe stood out as one of the African leaders who challenged the status quo. The same can be said of Milingo even though he is of a different generation. He also came into ministry at a time when Africans in Zambia had a hangover of the same dynamics experienced by South Africans of Shembe's era, even though this time the government in Zambia was African. There were traces of white colonialist influence and conditioning over the affairs of the people. The Roman Catholic Church which according to its system, has control over the local church (church in Zambia), had a strong say on what goes on in its parishes. The expatriate missionaries in Zambia were the eyes and ears of the Vatican. Even though these ears and eyes would hear and see the wrong things since their perceptions were coloured by cultural and political prejudice. So Milingo's healing ministry and the way he assumed his Archbishop's office, was seen as an act of defiance. An act of challenging the status quo. He was, however, inspired by compassion as he saw the needs of his people not being properly met for lack of understanding by missionaries with misconceptions brought to bear by misplaced European world views and philosophy (Ter Haar 1982).

So in our study of the works of these two church leaders we will see how all these factors interplay and how they respond to the needs and challenges of the people. In this chapter we will look at the socio-political and cultural situation that evolved around the ministries of these leaders in order to grasp the foundations of their ministries, and be able to see a progression in their activities.

2. BACKGROUND TO SHEMBE

Isaiah Mdlwamafa Shembe was born in either 1867 or 1870. It is difficult to be sure of the date since most rural people then did not have any birth certificates or any other accurate means of recording the births¹. It is assumed that when he died in 1935 he was about 66 years. He came from a polygamous family, in Ntabamhlophe, in the Escourt district within the Drakensburg region. His father Mayekisa and mother Sitheya Hadebe, later moved the family to Ntabazwe in the Harrismith

¹ According to Sundkler Shembe was born in 1870 but Dube puts the date at 1867.

district in the Free State (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:1). Shembe's great grandfather is said to have lived in Zululand where he had a big homestead in the mountains of Babanago in Mzazela. He was an influential and successful diviner who healed many people. He was later forced to flee to Ntabazwe when the king of the area attempted to kill him after some jealous people alleged that he was a threat to his throne (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:1-2).

2.1 SHEMBE THE MAN

Shembe lost his father, Mayekisa, when he was 20 years old. The young Shembe had to take over the family responsibilities and look after the family. He worked as a farm hand and is said to have been good in handling horses and cattle. He was able to tame horses for riding, and oxen with great ease such that many people both black and white brought their animals to him to train them. Some people suspected that he was using magic for the animals to obey him, but this was not the case, since he just loved animals and they responded like wise (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:13). Later in life Shembe became one of the most influential African prophets. He had an intense influence over a large number of people. He is said to have had no parallel amongst his peers. A man with tremendous influence over people, yet with great charm of manner, benevolence and tolerance (Sundkler 1961:110). He had a great reputation as a healer and leader of people. He acquired an ever-increasing influence over Zulu chiefs, to an extent that some of the tribal chiefs were not shown as much respect as that bestowed on him. One Zulu chief was so fascinated by Shembe's charisma that even though he was not a member of Shembe's church, he went to Ekuphakameni just to study Shembe's way of imposing *inhlonipho* or respect, on his people (Sundkler 1961:111).

His boyhood and youth were characterized by serious moral conflicts and strange dreams. One day as a 12 year old he stole a beautiful belt belonging to one of the men who had come to visit his home. After they had vigorously searched for the belt in vain, the man left with his heart sore. Shembe felt great remorse and imagined seeing the man's red heart coming down from the clouds by a rope. He also perceived seeing tearful eyes on the heart and hearing a voice telling him that "this was the sorrowful heart of the man who had his belt stolen". Thereafter, all this disappeared but the words remained heavily in his heart (Hexham and Oosthuizen: 1996:8-9). As he grew up he became

very popular with girls, and was referred to as "*isoka*". Isoka, as Vilakazi (1986:24) explains it, is an ideal young man very much loved by the young girls, and generally very popular with his age-group. The idol of the village. Such a man would be skilled also in stick fighting, and would probably excel in song and dance. A coward would have very little chance of becoming *isoka*. However, he wasn't very happy even though he was an ideal young man in his community and no moral stigma was attached to his behaviour.

2.2 SHEMBE THE CONVERT AND PREACHER

Shembe continued to have unusual dreams and visions. He also developed a habit of praying at all times (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:10-12). On one occasion he had a vision whilst praying in a cattle kraal. There was a thunderstorm and a word appeared to be brought to him by lightning: "Cease from immorality!" On one occasion he had a dream when he had gone to pray on a mountain. He fell asleep and dreamed his disembodied soul was being transported to heaven. He then saw a crowd of people but could not reach them. A voice asked him to look down at his sleeping body and it was covered with filth. He remembered an earlier order to flee from fornication. He was further told that as long as he did not stop his unclean ways he could not join the heavenly crowd (Dube 1936:9; Vilakazi 1986:24; Sundkler 1976:110). This took place on a Saturday and for the rest of the day he did not work until the next day on a Sunday, for "he had seen Jehovah", he said (Sundkler 1976:110). This was his conversion experience. There is no evidence of him having met any missionaries before conversion. However, he consequently had contact with a missionary in the Wesleyan church after his conversion.

Shembe joined the Wesleyan Church from the day he was converted. He attended their services in skins and not trousers. One day during a church service near his home, after all the people had gathered, a white missionary stood up and declared, "Today the service will be led by Shembe". Shembe was stunned. He had not led a church service before. However, he stood up and sang one of the Wesleyan favourite hymns, "*You were torn for my sake, you eternal rock*". Immediately the Spirit of the Lord came over the congregation and those who were sick vomited their diseases, and were healed. Everybody was shocked. Since that time, Shembe started preaching and praying for the

sick. And many people were converted and became members of the Wesleyan Church (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:14-15).

Shembe preached on weekends whilst holding a job as a farm-hand during the week. He eventually was instructed on the Wesleyan catechism by a local minister in his church. However, he did not get baptized in the Wesleyan church (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:31). Even though Shembe was not able to have any education when he was young, he learned how to read and write whilst working in one of the towns as a migrant worker (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:33). He later left the Wesleyan church because of differences he had with the church's leadership owing to his literal reading of the bible. Firstly, he believed people were not supposed to worship with their sandals on. Secondly, he criticized their method of baptism (sprinkling instead of immersion), arguing that it was unbiblical. Thirdly, he was against the church building being used for concerts to raise funds. Lastly, he was against the holy communion being shared during the day instead of in the night as according to Matthew 26:20.

2.3 SHEMBE'S CALL TO BECOME A PROPHET

Shembe decided to get married in order to continue the family line as it was customary. His mother chose for him a maiden named Nomalayo Shabalala. The mother liked the girl very much but Shembe refused to marry her saying that the spirit of the Lord did not want him to take her for a wife. However, his mother's wish prevailed and he married the girl. He consequently got married to three other girls, Pikinini Sigasa, Notshwalane Ngwenya, and Koti Ncube (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:16-17).

Once when he was praying on a mountain near his home, he fell asleep and had a dream where he was commanded to leave his four wives. He was told to allow those who wanted to remarry, to do so, and those who desired to go back to their families to do likewise (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:17; Vilakazi 1986:25; and Sundkler 1976:110). Shembe took this very hard as he loved his wives dearly. He struggled to comply with this command, and consequently he started seeing his children dying mysteriously after a short illness. This caused him to almost commit suicide (Hexham

and Oosthuizen 1996: 22-28; Sundkler 1976:110; Vilakazi 1986:25).

One afternoon whilst he was at his employers farm, lightning flashed from the sky and struck his favourite ox, Kolberi. That day the ox had behaved indifferently refusing to be harnessed. The lightning also burned Shembe's thigh leaving a terrible scar. He heard a voice telling him to go and preach the gospel and obey the command to leave his mother and his wives. The voice also told him that he should not use any medicine to heal the wound, it would be healed by the word of God. Shembe was shaken, and he became ill for three weeks. When a traditional doctor came to attend to him, he thanked him for his concern and gave him a head of cattle, but told him he would be healed by God alone without any medicine (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:19-22). Shembe was eventually cured and left his mother and wives to become a roving preacher (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:19-22).

On leaving the Wesleyan Church, Shembe joined the Native Baptist Church which was led by William Leshega who eventually baptized him in a river. Leshega came from Boksburg, and baptized him in Harrismith. It was during his baptism that he received the name Isaiah. He continued preaching and praying for the sick. He later discovered after his baptism that he could also cast out demons. His ministry became successful and many people joined the Native Baptist Church. He worked together with Leshega for five years. In this period he was first appointed an evangelist and later became an ordained minister and issued with a preaching license by Leshega after he was impressed with his work (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:31-35, Sundkler 1976:164).

Again, owing to his literal interpretation of the Bible, differences arose between Shembe and Leshega. Shembe adopted a Nazarene way of life. He insisted on putting off shoes in worship, leaving the hair and beard uncut, abstaining from eating pork, celebrating holy communion at night including the foot washing ceremony, and refusing the use of medicines. After considering all this, Leshega responded by asking him to part with him amicably, and continue with his work by himself. Shembe started the Nazareth Baptist Church in 1911 (Sundkler 1976:167). Shembe pronounced that all verses in the Old Testament, referring to Nazarites, be applied to members of his church. He also

established a church village, called *Ekuphakameni*, or the High Place, near Durban in 1916. *Ekuphakameni* became the centre for the great annual July festival of the church where amongst other things, singing and traditional dancing took place. He also acquired another centre called Nhlankakazi, which is really a mountain, for the annual January festival (Sundkler 1961: 111). In the beginning Shembe worked during weekdays and preached on weekends. But when he came to Natal in 1908 and preached in the Ladysmith district, he gave up migrant work in the cities and became a full-time preacher and prophet.

2.4 SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO SHEMBE'S MINISTRY

Shembe started his ministry at a time when there was a growing spirit of African nationalism amongst the people. African people were dispossessed of their land by the white government's enactment of the Natives Land Act of 1913. This made sure that whites owned 87% of the land, while the majority Africans had a miserly 13% use of the land. One of Shembe's drive in ministry was to acquire land for his followers. He bought the land from willing owners and this gave some sort of security to members of his church in the midst of abject poverty and deprivation caused by the government and its policies (Gunner 1988:214).

Elizabeth Gunner (1988:214) makes note of the discomfort and unease that Shembe generated within government official circles and white church ministers especially between the years 1912 and 1922 from the kind of letters exchanged on "the vexed problem of Shembe". He irritated magistrates, supervisors, police commanders and priests, especially because "he was under no European control", and he was doing as he pleased and causing everyone of them apprehension. The other point of concern for them was the massive power and control he had over many Africans or "*natives*", as they were called. Shembe was also accused of being a "sheep stealer", taking people away from their churches. In 1921 his work and that of his preachers was particularly disturbing to the authorities to the extent that his church was put under police surveillance .

Gunner (1988:215) relates how the Secretary for Native Affairs, in Pretoria, wrote an impatient note to the Chief Native Commissioner in Pietermaritzburg reminding him of a report requested the

previous October on a religious sect styling itself, "the Nazarenes". In some official communication, Shembe was described as a "particularly tiresome and undesirable man". In other instances the authorities tried to gain control over him and frustrate his efforts at buying land. He was subjected to hostile questioning, warnings and several personal evictions and those of his followers.

Gunner (1988:216), points out interestingly, how missionaries' letters sent to magistrates and other state officials tended to be longer and more passionate on addressing the "problem Shembe". They felt threatened on seeing their congregations, which were the fruits of their missionary toil, being drawn away by an unknown charismatic African preacher whose methods and theological dispositions they did not understand. One particular missionary of the American Board, a Rev Bridgeman, wrote particularly "steaming" letters to magistrates at Inanda, Stanger and the Chief Magistrate in Durban, expressing his exasperation at Shembe's incessant preaching activities. He complained bitterly that Shembe was not taking much heed to warnings to stop "stealing his sheep" in the mission's reserves, and setting up his bases near them.

Consequently, Shembe and his followers also resorted to using the courts to defend themselves from their accusers. In one particular instance one of his preachers, Amos Mzobe, was accused by a Reverend Kessel in Port Shepstone, after being irked by the successes the Nazarites were making within his area of influence. He claimed that Mzobe was under no white missionary save a native called Shembe, and holding church services on private lands. In response Mzobe, through his lawyer, charged that he preaches to all Africans who choose to listen to him and does not move into any mission reserves or stations (Gunner 1988:217).

Women who had come under the influence of Shembe's ministry were also a problem to the mission authorities. One woman in particular, a wife to a man who was a member of a church in the reserves, invited Shembe and his preachers to hold services in their kraal on the reserve. This resulted in the man and his family being evicted from the mission reserve. In general, the white authorities regarded Shembe's movement as a disease. The members of the church saw it as a new source of power, redemption in both cultural and religious sense in the midst of hostile forces of the

authorities (Gunner 1988:218). Despite all this hostility, Shembe made many important conversions and founded a number of centres north of the Tugela, regarded as the boundary between the old Zulu kingdom and 'esilungwini', Natal. Some of the important converts he made were, Chief Mpukunoni Mkhwanazi of Mtubatuba; the Mthethwa chief north of Empangeni; and the Jadu chief of Mthunzini. His church presented a new possibility for pride and self-affirmation and the mention of 'our own Zululand' emphasized that new mental territory (Gunner 1988:220).

Shembe died in 1935 after a short illness. He was succeeded by his son Johannes Galilee Shembe who successfully led the church (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:249, Sundkler 1961:111). However, it was also during the leadership of Galilee that there were some dissenters who caused friction in the church. Ultimately the church was divided into two after Galilee's death. There was the group led by Londa Shembe, Galilee's son, and another was led by Amos, Galilee's brother. Londa was assassinated, and his group has since struggled. The Amos faction meanwhile grew from strength to strength and is now the biggest of the two with many followers. Its headquarters are called *Ebuhleni*, near Durban.

3. BACKGROUND TO MILINGO

Emmanuel Milingo was born on the 13th June 1930 in Mnu kwa village in the diocese of Chipata in the eastern province of Zambia. His father's name was Yakobe Milingo Chilumbu, and his mother Tomaida Lumbiwe Miti, the first wife of Milingo's father, who bore most of his children. Milingo was the third living child, and there were four other children after him. One died whilst he was already an Archbishop in Lusaka. Milingo is a descendent of the Ngoni, one of the Nguni peoples found in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia (Milingo 1984:1-4 and Ter Haar 1992:71). Their origins lie in South Africa where they fled in the nineteenth century during the "*difaqane*", triggered by king Shaka and his Zulu kingdom. The rise of the Zulu kingdom had led to massive upheavals and migrations as victims fled in search of refuge. Milingo's ancestors were among the peoples who fled from Shaka and kept moving on until they arrived in eastern Zambia in the wake of Zwangendaba's expeditions. Mpezeni I, became the first paramount chief of the Zambian Ngoni, a son of Zwangendaba. Milingo grew up under the reign of Mpezeni III, who was later succeeded by

Mpezeni IV. It appears that Milingo's background accounted for his outspokenness and strength of character. As a former warrior society, the Ngoni were known for their pugnacity, and their history is filled with long chapters of warfare. After the various battles against Shaka and the Zulus, and after the conquest of their later neighbours, the Zambian Ngoni waged war against the British in 1899. This was at the height of European colonial conquest of Africa, and the Ngoni land fell under British influence. Consequently, the Ngoni were defeated owing to British superior military power. They were robbed of their land which possessed rich mineral resources. The Ngoni were forcefully removed from their land to make way for a mining company. Some of their cattle were also forcefully taken away from them as punishment for their resistance. This somewhat destabilised the Ngoni social system. The Ngoni men were reduced to serfs, working for a wage in the land which they previously owned in order to feed their families. Some, like Milingo's father, had to work in tobacco plantations (Ter Haar 1992:72-74,77).

3.1 MILINGO'S EARLY EDUCATION

Milingo's father was a man of authority and a model for the sons in a patrilineal Ngoni society, however, his mother had a stronger influence upon him. She was the one responsible for his basic education which took place at home up to the age of eight. It was the mother who introduced him to the religious beliefs of the Ngoni and made him aware of their moral values. Ngoni religion was centred on reverence for the ancestors of the paramount chiefs who were responsible for the fertility of the land and the prosperity of the people. Cattle also held a central place in the ancestor cult. Milingo's mother held longer to the traditional religion than did his father, who was consequently baptized and confirmed at Kachebere mission in 1923. His mother was only baptized in 1938. His mother was a person of strong character, therefore, before adopting Christian beliefs she had to be convinced that this new religion was better. Milingo shared many characteristics with his mother and was very close to him (Ter Haar 1992:77).

Milingo herded his father's cattle until he was twelve years old. It was in 1942 when the Catholic missionaries called White Fathers established a presbyterial school near his village in the diocese of Chipata, at St Mary's. A presbyterial school was meant to be a junior seminary training boys

towards becoming future priests. Milingo had till then spent most of his time as a herd boy without any formal education. He learned about the opening of the school from a friend's father who was a Catholic catechist. Milingo and his friend, the catechist's son, decided to go and enrol at the school, which was about twenty to thirty miles from the village, without their parents' permission and knowledge. The school authorities were impressed by the determination shown by the two boys and they readily accepted them. The boys consequently got parental consent (Ter Haar 1993:81-82).

After initial difficulties caused partly by the fact that he was starting school late, Milingo eventually did well in the school completing a three year programme within two years and advancing to the next stage after being top of his class. The next years from 1944 to 1949 he studied at St. Teresa's Minor Seminary at Kasina, in Malawi, about 100 miles away from home. His mother died in 1947, and he could not attend her funeral. Milingo was deeply affected, and his spiritual advisor told him to seek spiritual solace in the cult of Mary, the mother of Jesus. In this way he was able to overcome his difficulties. He eventually completed his studies at Kasina in 1949, and went for further studies in Kachebere, which had a model seminar in the final preparation of priests. The years 1949 to 1958 in the seminary, were very enriching for Milingo. The seminary was also under the White Fathers. Milingo developed new interests such as debate, music writing, being a member of a choir. He started a magazine "*Spark*" with fellow students. The magazine was aimed at sharing information and promoting African culture. It carried articles on family life, marriage, local medicine, songs, and other topics of interest which generated debate. It tackled issues such as the African inferiority complex, and how best to instill confidence and assertiveness. As he was studying in Kachebere, he also enrolled privately to do a course on Catholic social doctrine. This exposed him to several ideologies including communism and he also learned about British trade unionism. Milingo did his final year of studies in 1956, and got ordained in 1958 after two years of probation (Ter Haar 1982:85-89).

3.2 MILINGO'S RISE WITHIN THE CHURCH

Milingo was twenty-eight years old when he became a qualified priest. He worked as assistant parish priest for two years with four other priests working in a mission station which served a village in

Petauke. He was later transferred to another mission station for a year, and eventually sent overseas to further his studies. He spent three years overseas, from 1961 to 1963, studying in Rome and Dublin, attaining diplomas in pastoral sociology and education respectively. Already Milingo was identified within the Church as a bright leadership prospect and accordingly groomed. However, he became also known for being head-strong. On returning to Zambia in 1963, he was appointed curate and then parish priest (administrator), in Chipata at St Ann's cathedral parish. Amongst his duties, he also taught religion at a secondary school. He spent two years in Chipata, starting amongst other things a literacy project and successfully raising funds for a school to be built. He also lobbied government, through the chief Mpenzi, to build a road (Ter Haar 1982: 89-91).

Milingo was later transferred to Lusaka where he served under the church's Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) as assistant secretary, and then secretary for the mass media department from 1966 to 1969. His main task was to produce radio programmes in facilities made available by government. He threw himself to the new challenge with enthusiasm and produced various kinds of programmes. These included prayers and short sermons, thoughts and reflections, and little seminars mixed with music. He also produced a popular social affairs programme which generated discussion. He attended a six months radio course in Kenya with broadcasters from other African countries, and later went to Dublin for a ten week training course at the Communications Centre. Whilst still working as a communicator, Milingo made time to do some community work. He established a volunteer organization, *Zambian Helpers' Society (ZHS)*, aimed at catering for the medical needs of people living in the shanty-towns of Lusaka. Government provided medicines and trained personnel to assist the volunteers. The organization arranged for its own transport for which Milingo was able to raise funds from overseas. He also managed to write a book in one of the widely-used indigenous languages, Nyanja. The book was titled, "*Amake Joni*", *Joni's Mother*, and dealt with family matters, and prepared young people for parenthood while preserving their family tradition. The book was later accepted by government for use in the schools (Ter Haar 1982: 90-94).

In 1969, shortly after returning from Dublin, Milingo was appointed the Archbishop of Lusaka. This was a demanding and prestigious office which included overseeing the church in the neighbouring

East African and Central African countries. Ordinarily the position would have been occupied by an older priest. However, it appears that Milingo had apparently attracted the attention of many people within the church with his work. He was initially one of the three candidates for the seat. He was apparently chosen for his intelligence, hardwork and being well-trained and well-educated. The previous Archbishop was Polish, and after fourteen years he decided to resign and give way to an African Archbishop in line with the new developments within the country which was now under African leadership. The country got independence in 1963, and Kenneth Kaunda was the president (Ter Haar 1994:95).

3.3 MILINGO'S CHALLENGES AS THE ARCHBISHOP

Milingo was consecrated Archbishop of Lusaka by Pope Paul VI, in Kampala, Uganda in 1969. Two weeks later he was enthroned in Lusaka. He was aged only thirty-nine and with very little experience within the priesthood. He still yearned for more experience as a priest, however, he took the new challenge in his stride. From the beginning of his tenure as the Archbishop of Lusaka, Milingo was intent on introducing African elements into the church and adopting an independent stance on social and political questions affecting the Zambian nation. Until then the archdiocese had been run by missionaries in a conventional way, but once Milingo took over he started organizing it according to his own views. He had assumed that the church hierarchy by entrusting the archdiocese of Lusaka to an African, was a sign of confidence on the church in that part of the continent, and that Africans were now ready to run its own affairs. It also implied that Africans had a contribution to make to church life. He also saw this conforming with the spirit of the Vatican Two (Ter Haar 1994:10).

Milingo started immediately the process of Africanizing the church. He Africanized liturgy, introduced drums, and formed the Pilot Liturgical Choir which dressed in traditional Zambian costumes and accompanied him on confirmation tours in the archdiocese. The choir which was formed in 1971 became popular, and a model for other choirs in the archdiocese. Milingo also composed hymns for it. He also founded a congregation called *Daughters of the Redeemer*. The congregation was based on the principle of being Catholic but indigenously Zambian. The idea of cultural expressiveness became a notable aspect of the congregation. They demonstrated their

national identity by wearing the *chitenge*, a traditional Zambian cloth instead of the usual nun's habit, in combination with a matching head-scarf and a white scarf. They also lived together as a family resembling a traditional life-style of the mothers. The Daughters worked as teachers, nurses, social workers and secretaries. However, they also grew their own food in their garden (Ter Haar 1982:11).

In 1970 Milingo as the new Archbishop, took on issues of social concern. He lambasted the Portuguese colonial governments in Angola and Mozambique for their inhuman laws which suppressed, and humiliated blacks living in these countries. He criticized the Catholic church for its policy of collaborating with these governments. He demanded that the systems of *patranado* and *assimilado* be immediately abolished and human dignity be restored. He compared these systems with the system of apartheid South Africa. Milingo also challenged the social ills in Zambia made to prevail by the educated elite (Ter Haar 1982:12).

3.4 MILINGO'S CALLING TO THE HEALING MINISTRY

Milingo first began to take serious interest in the sick from 1973. Before then he had preoccupied himself with governing the archdiocese of Lusaka, and implementing the various projects he had conceived. He had concentrated on inspiring the people on his vision of an African church. Encouraging all members of the church laity and clergy alike to participate in the ministry of the church. He had also embarked on a project of increasing the number of Zambian clergy, and stimulated the development of different councils for the laity generally, and for women and youth in particular. He also believed it to be the church's task to care for all in need, whether Christian or not. The healing ministry which he came to develop was also based on the same principles. In his view this constituted a higher form of help that Christians ought to give to the needy and which is implicit in the teaching of the gospel (Ter Haar 1982:13)

In April 1973 a woman came to his office desperate for help. The woman had suffered for five months. There were times when she spent long moments without eating, drinking only water and soft drinks. The woman was afraid of her child because she did not consider him a human being. She

constantly heard voices speaking to her. She had also been to a mental hospital for treatment to no avail. After explaining her problem to Milingo, he resolved that they pray together. She came later for another consultation. And this time Milingo stumbled into a technique that enabled him to speak to her soul, and prayed for her. After she had fell into a deep sleep. On waking up, she was healed (Ter Haar 1982:13-14). Reflecting on the incidence, Milingo realized that God was leading him to the healing of the disease common at the time called *mashave*. The disease could not be treated in any hospital. It needed the power of the Holy Spirit to break the spirit of possession in the woman to set her free from the illness. This event marked the beginning of a new mission for Milingo. That of providing a healing ministry with a legitimate place within the Church.

Previously he had known very little about the traditional background of *mashave*, a common type of spirit possession in Zambia, at the time. The sickness had come to be regarded in general terms as possession by evil spirits. Many ailments and complaints were attributed to it. Milingo conducted a private research into the issue searching its traditional roots. He came back confident that thousands of people could be now healed of this disease in the power of the Holy Spirit. He later made an open invitation in a church service at the cathedral in Lusaka, for people with this kind of disease to come forward to be prayed for. This was the beginning of his public healing ministry. He based his healing ministry on the mandate in Matthew 9:35; Matthew 10:7-9; and Luke 6:22. Many people came forward to be prayed for and news spread quickly about his healing gift such that people from many parts of the country and outside Zambia attended his church services in order to be healed. Some people even came to see him in his private residence (Ter Haar 1983:13-15).

In 1973 from October to December, Milingo attended a course organized by the *Better World Movement*, a Catholic organization, at Rocca Di Papai near Rome. He had an opportunity to study documents of the Second Vatican Council. During this time have had a vision which reassured him of the rightness of his course. As he was reading in bed, he saw something like a shadow approaching and covering him completely until he found himself in a form of changed state. He then heard a voice telling him to "preach the gospel!". He later interpreted the message as an instruction to go and use his healing gifts in the wide context of the gospel. This gave Milingo confidence in

his mission (Ter Haar 1982:16).

3.5 MILINGO'S PROBLEMS WITH THE CHURCH

The success of Milingo's healing ministry drew the attention of the Catholic church's hierarchy in Rome. In February 1974, he received a letter from the Vatican through the African *prelate*, (regional representative) urging him to stop healing people. The letter contained an outright condemnation of his work. The letter shocked Milingo and made him feel that he was stabbed in the back, since it came so soon without even an investigation by the Vatican of the matter. It became obvious to him that it was in fact the result of the work of missionaries in the archdiocese who had influence and personal contacts in the Vatican who did not accept his ministry. Nevertheless, Milingo tried to comply with Rome's request and ignored the sick. However, the sick followed him everywhere, at his home, office, and confirmation trips (Ter Haar 1982:17-18).

Milingo tried to consult with the Zambian clergy on this matter but got no support. He only got two priests, one a Zambian - Sylvester Mubengwa, and a Polish, Stanislaus Walczak, who supported his work and even assisted him during healing sessions. He soon could not cope with the numbers and opted for a structural solution of encouraging other priests in his diocese to also exorcize and heal the sick. But most priests were either unwilling or unable to involve themselves in this type of pastoral cares as they knew little about it.

Milingo had a vision a few days after the Vatican had given its directive to him to stop the healing activities. He had a strange dream where he heard Jesus saying to him, "If they do not believe that the powers you have are God given, you should take an egg, hold it for a time in your right hand till it warms up. You must then break it open and out of it will come a chicken". The conclusion he drew from this was that it is sometimes necessary to do things contrary to the laws of nature in order to convince people of God's power. The next day after this dream a women suffering from *mashave* came to see him. She had already lost three husbands who ran away from her because of her condition. She told Milingo that he was her only hope for healing. Milingo decided to take her along to a priests' meeting which was already scheduled to discuss the healing activities. He healed the

woman in front of the other priests. Some marvelled at what had happened, still others jeered and mocked. And the meeting turned chaotic. The outcome brought more confusion than the solution he had hoped for. Other priests accused him of indulging in hypnotism techniques. They felt that he was denigrating the dignity of the archbishop's office with this ministry. They claimed that his was not a divine but a natural power engaging hypnotism (Ter Haar 1982:19).

After feeling isolated and desperate, for a while, Milingo found solace in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He was invited to a two week leadership training course by a community in Ann Arbor in Michigan USA. The exposure gave him a breakthrough in his pastoral development, giving him a deeper understanding he had been seeking concerning the healing ministry. The trip also confirmed to him that the healing gift was indeed from God, and something to share with the church. A prophetic message by one of the brethren in the community, further confirmed his calling to this particular ministry. He had an opportunity to attend an annual convention attended by 28 000 people. It was at the convention where healing sessions were conducted that he was further convinced that he was doing the right thing back home (Ter Haar 1982:20).

After he had come back from the United States, Milingo established a number of charismatic groups in Zambia providing a structural base for his healing work, and widening the scope of his healing activities. This also gave rise to the birth of the *Divine Providence Community*. Its members were drawn from a prayer group Milingo had created in 1973. The formation of Divine providence Community was met with negative reactions from Zambian and expatriate priests. They felt uncomfortable with the Charismatic Renewal movement.

Milingo was summoned again by the Vatican to face charges on pamphlets he wrote on healing. A report was also demanded on his general activities. Rome was worried that his administrative duties might be suffering because of his pastoral engagements. He came back from Rome without any overt directive for him to stop the healing ministry. However, the local bishops were not happy with the way Milingo handled his episcopal duties. They advised him in a conference in November 1977 to stop his healing sessions. Milingo later made a compromise with the bishops to cease the healing

sessions except for once a month, when there was always a big healing meeting. He made the decision of the bishops known to the public, and made them aware that from henceforth he would only have one mass healing session in a month. However, the people made it difficult for him to honour this arrangement even after making it public. They wanted his attention and kept on seeing him.

Milingo tried his best to avoid them but it was not easy. The bishops were angry at him and accused him of not sticking to their earlier agreement. A new *pro-nuncio*, liaison person with the Vatican, made things even more difficult for Milingo. He sided with the expatriate priests, and they clashed on almost everything. Now the local Zambian priests were beginning to side with Milingo, accepting his ministry and giving him support in his healing sessions. After defining their stand in the dispute between Milingo and the other priests, they asked the new *pro-nuncio* George Zur, to convey their sentiments to the Vatican and seek council. However, Zur refused. (Ter Haar 1982:21-29). Things turned very ugly such that even the president of Zambia tried to get the priest to heal the rift between them. The differences had come into the open even the media was reporting on them. Milingo was in one instance even accused of impregnating a nun and trying to cover-up. But this was later found not to be true, and the priest who made the accusation decided to resign (Ter Haar 1982:34). On the other hand public unrest was growing as protests and demonstrations were carried out by people against the church's directive to stop Milingo from healing. The tension in the archdiocese became quite severe. The Zambian newspapers were scathing at the way the church was acting towards Milingo. News reached the Vatican and two senior African bishops from Kenya were sent to secretly investigate, and they left without a word. Milingo on the other hand generally felt that the *pro-nuncio* had treated him, the black sisters, the priests and the laity, with arrogance and contempt. There was a strong suspicion that Milingo had failed to become the "lap-dog" the expatriate priests had hoped he would become, and so they were retaliating by trying to get rid of him by all means.

Milingo was ultimately called to the Vatican where he was subjected to all sorts of tests. He was made to undergo several medical and psychological examinations. He also had to do some

theological studies and questioned from time to time to check the soundness of his doctrinal beliefs (Ter Haar 1982:38-39). Milingo passed all the tests but he was still refused permission to go back to Zambia. Meanwhile in Zambia an Apostolic administrator, Elias Mutale, who had been archbishop of Kasama, was appointed to oversee the archdiocese in Milingo's absence. Milingo meanwhile went through a state of acute discouragement and anguish. Several times he tried to get an audience with the Pope. He even made an offer to resign as Archbishop of Lusaka, if only he would be allowed to go back home and resume his pastoral ministry, but he was refused. He was granted audience with the Pope only after spending a year in limbo about his fate. Finally, in a meeting with the Pope, the Pope stated that his fellow-bishops insisted that he should not return to Lusaka because he would not be able to administer the archdiocese of Lusaka properly. The Pope added that it appeared that "his bent" was in the healing ministry so they had to discuss arrangements for his healing ministry in Rome. That is how Milingo was allowed to resume his healing ministry in Rome. Once a month he holds a public healing service in Rome, which is attended by large crowds, of people from all over the world (Ter Haar 1982:42).

Milingo also visits different countries where he is invited to preach and pray for the sick. He still writes and visits a congregation of sisters in Nairobi, Kenya.

4. COMPARISON BETWEEN SHEMBE AND MILINGO'S BACKGROUND

At face value it appears to be unreasonable to do a comparative study of Shembe and Milingo, however, a closer look show that there is a lot in common between the two leaders. As we continue with the discussion, we can briefly look at the following:

Firstly, Vilakazi talks of the movement of the AIC as akin to an African Reformation. A point which he stresses, that most missionary writers ignore because of their prejudice and distrust of Africans setting their own agendas. As we look at Shembe, we see that he was one of the AIC leaders who interpreted the bible literally and developed their church doctrine on this basis. He set a reformation in that he encouraged people to put on their traditional clothes when coming to church in the midst of a missionary culture which insisted on people wearing the European clothes as a symbol of being a Christian. He also in his own unassuming way led the people in traditional dancing, and

introducing traditional African rhythms in the church music.

His emphasis was on getting people to live an African Christianity. A type of Christianity they could identify with. This he did practically as a natural process for him as he sought to express himself as an African church leader conscious of his people's needs and seeing how the church can meet those needs. On the other hand, Milingo, being the more educated of the two, embarked on his campaign to Africanize the Zambian Roman Catholic Church as a conscious decision, from a theological and cultural point of view. He did this also as a felt need and a responsibility as an African theologian who has learned about the necessity of making Christianity relevant to the people. In his case he was even encouraged by the reading of a report of the Second Vatican Council which indicated that the Catholic church was now opening up for a process of antagonizing the local church. Milingo took these statements literally in good faith, not knowing the opposition he would face owing to old concretised perceptions of expatriate priests in his diocese.

Secondly, both Shembe and Milingo are of Ngoni stock, with Milingo's ancestors coming from South Africa in the Zululand region running away from King Shaka before they settled in Zambia. Shembe's grandfather, who was a traditional healer, also had to run away from a Zulu chief because of his popularity. One could attribute their head-strongness and fortitude in crisis to the Zulu warrior spirit they both share. However, this must not be seen in tribalistic terms. It must be seen rather in terms of a cultural temperament of the two leaders. Thirdly, Shembe and Milingo, had a tendency to see visions and have dreams which involved God's commands and guidance in their lives. With Shembe the dreams led him to repentance and the full-time preaching and healing ministry. With Milingo the dreams and vision were a confirmation of his healing gifts. Fourthly, they both stumble on their healing gifts. Shembe discovers his healing gift when he is asked to preach in a Wesleyan Church, and people start vomiting their sicknesses out and getting healed. Milingo discovers it when he was earnestly praying for a woman who was afraid of her child because of some evil spirits. And from then on they both started praying for sick.

The other thing that stands out is that whereas Shembe's calling to the healing ministry is typical of AIC prophets and healers, Milingo's healing gift came in his quest to find a solution for people who

were poor and sick and not being able to get any treatment for their sicknesses. The sicknesses could in any case not be healed through conventional medicine since they were believed to be caused by the manipulation of evil spirits. His concern was that instead of the people going out of the church to seek help where they could be exploited by maverick traditional healers, they should rather get it from within the church. So one could say it was a gift which came about out of a need to serve. Whereas with Shembe he was called from where he was in order to go out and use the gift.

Fifthly, Shembe had disagreements with leaders of the churches where he served. First, it was the Wesleyans, then the Baptists. Ultimately the Baptists told him to go his own way and start his ministry where he would be able to practice those things he saw as right according to the Scriptures. So Shembe left two churches before he formed the Nazareth Baptist Church. However, Milingo never left the Catholic Church even though he had some of the most unjust and depressing things happening to him which could have prompted him to go. He did not go as a matter of principle and stayed true to his vows as a priest. However, even Shembe formed his own church due to doctrinal differences caused by his literal interpretation of Scripture. If he had his concerns adequately addressed, it is possible that he could have also stayed on. He does not come across as a power mongerer. He seemed to be happy to serve under the leadership of other people. That is why he stayed longer with the Baptists. One can then make the conclusion that both Shembe and Milingo showed a healthy common respect for church authority.

Sixthly, Shembe and Milingo rose rapidly in the ranks of Churches they served in because of their hardwork and individual gifts of leadership. Shembe rose in rank from being an evangelist to a minister of the Baptist Church owing to the growing numbers of people who were converted under his ministry. Milingo on the other hand worked hard in his first mission station prompting his seniors to send him off to Europe for further training after noticing his talents. His social concern projects and other initiatives were a further indication of his devotion to his calling as a priest. This merited a further acknowledgment from the church hierarchy by appointing him an archbishop. Therefore, one can say that they both demonstrate strong leadership capabilities even though expressing them differently. Shembe is the quiet, unassuming, and less educated one, who however uses his natural

skills and charm to work easily and effectively with people. Milingo on the other hand is the overtly confrontational type, arguing his points and articulately seeking justice. Like Shembe, Milingo shows that from an early age at the seminary he was always popular with fellow students and he was regarded as a leader. He also in his own way commanded respect.

The seventh point, is that both suffer under authority. Shembe is persecuted by the South African government officials and their colonialist missionary cohorts, whereas Milingo is persecuted by expatriate priests in his own church. They both show a strong determination to overcome under difficult circumstances. Shembe is an irritation to the magistrates, police commissioners and missionaries. Milingo is an irritation to expatriate priests and to some extent the Vatican. He causes commotion in Lusaka with people protesting in front of the church's administration offices demanding his services. On the other hand he also does not want to be separated from the ministry of healing which is so close to his heart.

5. COMPARISONS BETWEEN SHEMBE AND MILINGO'S CALLING INTO HEALING MINISTRY

Milingo's calling into the healing ministry came as a result of his pastoral concern for the welfare of the people as part of his role as a Catholic priest. He earnestly wanted to see people healed and their problems solved. It is from this deep pastoral desire that he discovered his healing gift as a result of praying for a woman who was suffering from mental disturbances also fearing his child. On praying for her he ended up getting into a trance and "speaking into her soul", thereafter the woman got healed (Milingo 1993a: 1). Consequently, Milingo was able to heal many more ailments he never thought he could heal. The list includes barren women, demon possessed people, people crippled from accident, people in coma, bewitched people and a catholic sister with a defective heart (Milingo 1984: 68-80).

Shembe on the other hand received a calling akin to the AIC prophets. The AIC leaders' calling is characterised by illness, dreams, visions and instructions (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:19-26). Oosthuizen points out that all AIC prophets go through an experience of being ill as is the case with

the diviners called by ancestors. They see visions and dreams. They also see the role of ancestors in their calling and should they refuse the call this may result in grave consequences like having their children dying (Oosthuizen 1992:23, 28). Shembe qualifies more in this line of calling since he also got sick and lost his children when he resisted the call to leave his wives and his mother and go out to preach the gospel. (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:22-28). It is also possible that Shembe's calling involves ancestors since he also had his children dying when he resisted the call. Moreover his late grandfather was a prosperous diviner who also attended the royal family. So it is possible that this particular grandfather wanted Shembe to continue his line of work². The powers may have now been made to act in a way compatible with his Christian faith and work within that vein (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:1). This point is worth taking note of since Shembe had exceedingly supernatural influence than an average prophet of AIC. He could discern things that an average prophet would not discern. For instance when people came to him for help, especially those who were in need of children, he would confidently tell them that the baby is on the way, and this would happen. This happened even to those who were certified by doctors as not medically capable of conceiving children. He would even go to the extent of asking the said person whether they wanted a baby boy or a baby girl, as he did with his friend Dube who ultimately got children (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:103-106; 151-153).

We may point out that Milingo cannot be regarded as a prophet in exactly the same way as Shembe, even though he does qualify as one compared to other AIC prophets. His attitude is different to that of Shembe in that he leaves everything in God's hands and expects the best from God in faith, whereas Shembe seems to have control over things and makes bold predictions. He is also said to have raised many people who were believed to be dead (Milingo 1984:68-71; Hexham and Oosthuizen 1999:25-27). Gerrie Ter Haar points out that Milingo could be regarded as a prophet

² In Shembe's church people who come being possessed by spirits urging them to become traditional doctors, are baptized in order that the spirits are made compliant with the new Christian faith. In effect the spirits are also baptized to serve the purpose of the church. This is according to members of the church who were interviewed separately, Mr D Mthinyane and Mr T Ndlovu.

because of the charisma as given by the Holy Spirit. For instance like AIC prophets he could get into a trance during a healing session. However, in Shembe's case there is no record of him falling into a trance (Ter Haar 1992: 238-242).

Daneel points out that a prophet qualifies by showing proof of charismatic gifts in order to be regarded as a legitimate prophet. He must be seen to have the power to exorcise evil spirits and heal through the laying of hands (Daneel 1970:13).

According to Kiernan (1990:98), an AIC prophet must lay claim to the charismatic gift of prophecy to be regarded as legitimate. He must be able to elicit information from the patient while appearing to offer him answers, and evoke maximum response from the bare minimum lead. The prophet is seen to be always on trial to come to the right decision. Daneel concurs with this view adding that it is indeed important that from inception that the Zion prophet leader gain renown as a faith healer. For some this happens after baptism in the "Jordan" (a pool, the sea, or river)when the Holy Spirit takes hold of him. Sometimes this manifests after years of waiting (Daneel 1970:13).

Oosthuizen points out that most prophets do attest to the fact that they were called through a supernatural force. They are either called by an ancestor, or Holy Spirit in a dream. Some state that a grand mother told them to become a prophet. Such dreams are checked and evaluated in the church by a prophet or prophets, and when the prophet decides that the dreams are genuine the calling is accepted as official (Oosthuizen 1992:22-23).

Oosthuizen points out that the office of healer in the AIC fulfills a much felt need because of the traditional society's age-old role of the diviner and herbalist, for which the missionary or pastor in Christianity had no substitute (Oosthuizen 1989:75). Milingo calls his Christian healing as opposed to faith-healing. He sees faith-healing confusing in that it puts trust in a person or person's ideas whilst Christian healing, in his view, is based exclusively on the message of Christ, and the invocation of Christ's liberating power is a basic element in it (Milingo 1992:151).

6. CONCLUSION

We can see from our discussion that both Shembe and Milingo are regarded as prophets in their own right even though they have been called differently into their prophetic ministry. The most important thing is that they both attend to the needs of the people - the need to be healed. The way Milingo has been called to the healing ministry further shows that all priests, pastors and ministers of the Gospel, have a responsibility to get involved in the healing ministry. It is not a special preserve for people like Shembe only. It is an essential part of spreading the gospel which is relevant and necessary now as it was during Jesus' time of ministry. Milingo's insistence in referring to his ministry as "Christian healing" as opposed to "faith healing" shows that he is sensitive to avoid being seen to be drawing attention to himself. Interestingly, this is the reason why most ministers in the mainline churches would not want to get involved in any healing ministry. However, Milingo shows that this concern should not inhibit one from this ministry if they have the right focus, and also make people aware of it. The challenge then is for ministers from the different denominations to get out of their doctrinal cocoons and start getting involved in this essential ministry.

In the next chapter we will look into the context that shapes the ministries of both Shembe and Milingo in order to understand the approach and relevance of their ministries.

CHAPTER 3: THE AFRICAN CONTEXT THAT SHAPES SHEMBE AND MILINGO'S MINISTRIES

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the things the Catholic Church must do, is to Africanise the Church within the context of recognising cultural diversity. The church needs to shed its colonial past, allowing Africans to increasingly come to accept the church as their home, not as a colonial relic, as an imposition from the past but rather as a church that is alive, that embraces and dialogues with all the cultures and expresses Christ yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Buti Tlhagale (1999:3) said the above words as he was inaugurated as the Catholic Archbishop of Bloemfontein. His words indicate the continuing lack of transformation not only in the Catholic church, but also in other mainline churches despite these churches having been in the forefront of the struggle for liberation in South Africa. It shows that the main line churches are yet to under-go a cultural transformation that will make the ministry of the church more relevant to the congregants. Obviously some negative perceptions have been concretized over the years contributing to this state of affairs. Most people would be quick to point a finger at the missionaries and their disregard for African cultural values and having influenced and coerced Africans to take a similar attitude of seeing their cultural heritage as a draw back or something to be ashamed of. It is also interesting that what Tlhagale says here, is the same thing that Milingo was referring to some years back when he was inducted to the Catholic See of Lusaka.

Blaming missionaries for the lack of cultural and spiritual harmony in the Church is not always unfair. However, it appears now to be time to put our church house in order and stop playing the blaming game. The missionaries have had their fill. They have made some most positive contributions, and some not so positive. It is now time to get on with the work of reconstruction and stop breast beating which will only exhaust our energies much needed to bring the transformation.

In the following discussion we will be looking at the African context that shapes Shembe and

Milingo's healing ministries. This is a context that demonstrates African culture, world view, philosophy and spirituality. We will try to trace the causes that contributed to current attitudes that have inhibited the mainline churches from taking African culture seriously and using it readily to enhance African spirituality, and help the Church grow within the rich African cultural milieu. We will also look into how Shembe and Milingo are conscious of their African cultural context, and their efforts in responding to it as part of making their ministry meaningful and relevant. When we point out the errors of missionaries in this discussion, it will be only to trace the essential elements that contributed to the problems we have in the mainline churches and see how best they can be remedied. We will not be merely harping on the same note bewailing our helplessness.

2. EXPOSING MISSIONARY LEGACY THAT HAS DISCOURAGED CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN MAINLINE CHURCHES

John Mbiti poignantly captures the core of the problem when he relates that the problems started with the missionaries' superiority complex when they brought the Gospel to the Africans. They set their faces against all the "uncivilized" aspects of African culture whether it was strictly forbidden by the Scriptures or not. Terms like *heathen*, *pagans*, *primitives*, *wretched*, *savages*, *children of Ham*, *the lost souls*, were commonly used by missionaries and some of their African converts (Mbiti 1972:80-81). Milingo and his fellow students also used these terms during their student days at the Catholic seminary.

Their student magazine, *The Spark*, which was laced liberally with these terms showed that these attitudes prevailed for such a long time that even the students could not find anything wrong with them. They had been effectively conditioned to the missionary type of thinking (Ter Haar 1992:86). Mbiti further points out that even great theologians like Paul Tillich who should have known better carried over this attitude. Mbiti quotes Tillich suggesting in one of his articles that *primitive peoples* in the mission field should be treated the same as children in response to their questions (Mbiti 1972:80-81). Mbiti rightly feels indignant about this treatment of indigenous people as children, moreover this was said by a man regarded as one of the "theological giants" of the century. This therefore encouraged others to follow his lead.

Mbiti further points out that these African converts have become beggars of Christian spirituality, ideas, cash and personnel from their “superior” overseas missionaries, church boards and centres of church organizations. These missionaries made an impression of being regarded inadvertently as “omniscient” in all matters pertaining to the Christian faith, and “omnipotent” in church matters and decisions and “omni-opulent” in money and wealth. On the other hand Africans have come to be omni-ignorant, omni-weak, and omni-poor. Local talent was inhibited in terms of cultural heritage or personnel (Mbiti 1972:81). This is one of the reasons which forced people like Tile to start their independent Churches where they would be able to exercise their leadership freely without the many unnecessary obstacles put on them by missionaries in the mission churches (mainline churches). Milingo saw this clearly when he took over as Archbishop of Lusaka. The expatriate priests felt uncomfortable with his leadership and they would try to manipulate the situation to undermine his authority and render him impotent when they realised that he would not pander to their whims (Milingo 1992: 172-175;182-185). Shembe on the other hand experienced this closely when the missionaries tried to curb the growth of his church by using government legislation insisting that his church was under no European authority (Gunner 1988:214-215).

Mbiti further points out that the missionary actions have led to them gaining a false sense of cultural superiority and the church in Africa developing into a context of a false cultural inferiority. Most Africans saw the whole movement not only as an effort to proclaim the gospel, but also as a promotion of foreign culture as part of the package (Mbiti 1972:81).

Byang Kato concurs with this position saying that the problem is due to the fact that some missionaries and white people have given the impression that their culture is superior to any other. They have hence gone out of their way to impose their “superior culture” upon the rest of the world, not caring about the sometimes detrimental effects of such actions. He further says that some well meaning Christians have gone as far as perceiving western culture and or western civilization as synonymous with Christianity. In spreading western civilization they considered their actions as akin to spreading the kingdom of God. However, as Kato insists, no one culture has yet become entirely Christian neither has the European culture ever been a Christian culture (Kato 1976:33).

Mbiti further points out the faulty evangelism approach of the missionaries that in many parts of Africa, the first Christians were called “readers” a term which is still in use today in some areas. They were “Readers” rather than “Christians” because evangelism went hand in hand with the art of reading and writing and school education. “Reading the Faith” perhaps rather than “accepting” the faith, was the decisive habit. The former a purely cultural transformation the latter a more specifically evangelistic one. The result was that African converts were drawn away from their own cultural rooting. Hence, their conversion took place largely outside of their cultural context. The subsequent Church growth and development occurred also largely outside of their cultural grounding. Mbiti rightly identifies this as being at the heart of the prevalent cultural impoverishment in the African mainline churches (Mbiti 1972:82). So as a way forward we would have to go back to understanding the African culture and world view in order to understand what needs to be brought back and change perceptions. We will in the process look at this within the context of that which shape Shembe and Milingo’s ministries.

3. AFRICAN CULTURE AND WORLD-VIEW

Shembe and Milingo’s ministries are shaped by African culture and world-view. To appreciate their approach to this, we must go on an exercise of defining culture and world-view. Thereafter, we will look at how Shembe and Mbiti inter-act with them in their contexts. We will start with elements common to most African communities and then go to Shembe and Milingo’s contexts. We must once more point out that Shembe and Milingo’s cultural contexts which are Zulu and Ngoni, respectively, share a lot of similarities. This as pointed out earlier in our discussion is due to their historical affinity. That is, amongst other things, they are essentially one people, with the latter migrating further north from Zululand (Ter Haar 1992:71-74, 77).

3.1 CULTURE

Byang Kato says that culture is the life style of a society, and covers every aspect of a society’s life in their effort to deal with their environment and with one another. It covers physical, sociological, and ideational elements within a society. They are all inter-related (Kato 1976:13). Kraft supports this position as he says that humans are understood to be totally, inextricably immersed in culture. Each

human individual is born into a particular socio-cultural context. From that point on persons are conditioned by the members of their society in countless largely unconscious, ways to accept as natural and to follow rather uncritically the cultural patterns for that society. Each of us is thus shaped in the non-biological portion of our being by the culture into which we are born. We are shaped by a culture transmitted to us by the adults in our life. Human beings may thus be regarded as culture shaped and culture transmitting beings. They are not only shaped by and participate in the transmission of culture, they also influence it and contribute to its reshaping (Kraft 1979:46-47). This implies that people have to make contributions into a new culture because culture is people based and is collective. Modern missionaries in Africa undermined this reality of consulting with Africans to enable them to make a meaningful contribution to the new culture with Christianity. The inevitable result is a dichotomy which an African is not used to and which creates problems of assimilation of Christianity in an appropriate way within the African context.

Kato further points out that the basic philosophy of society which gives meaning to the outward manifestations is also part of the culture of that society. This he says includes religion, arts, clothing, music and dancing (Kato 1976:8). He also points out that to bring about a change in any aspect of culture, possible reactions must be taken into consideration. Since Africans accepted Christianity the life-style is bound to be changed (Kato 1976:11). So when Shembe and Milingo dance and sing with the people in the indigenous languages in the church, it is part of entering their world. It indicates that they are one with them. They rejoice and celebrate with them, and this gives them a right to even mourn with them. The people in turn are able to accept them as those who can feel their pain, since they have earned their right to console them. They also earn a right to counsel with them. This is an important point which the expatriate priests in Milingo's church could not understand. They misinterpreted his actions to be a move back to "heathen dancing" and misleading he people.

3. 2 AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW

Kraft describes world view as the central systematization of the conception of reality to which the members of the culture assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their value system. The world view has at the very heart of culture, touching, interacting with, and strongly influencing every

other aspect of the culture. The world view of any given culture presumably originate in a series of agreements by the members of the original group concerning their perception of reality and how they should regard and react towards that reality (1979:53). In this regard a world view functions as a basic model of reality. It explains how and why things got to be as they are and how and why they continue or change. It becomes the basic assumption concerning ultimate things on which they base their lives. It serves to judge and validate according to the values and goals of a society and sanctions actions and behaviour compatible with these values and goals. It also provides a psychological reinforcement for a particular group. At points of anxiety or crisis in life it is to one's conceptual system that one turns for the encouragement to continue or the stimulus to take other action. These may be deaths or illnesses. It may even be transition times like, marriage, puberty, planting or harvest times (Kraft 1979:54-55).

The world view of a people serves an integrating function. It systematizes and orders for them their perceptions of reality into an overall design. In terms of this integrated and integrating perspective, then a people conceptualizes what reality should be like and understands and interprets the multifarious events to which they are exposed. Kraft also points out that a world view does not necessarily determine the perception of all its members at all times. Some people do shift in their perceptions of reality. They then end up altering their world view slightly or drastically (Kraft 1979:56).

It must be pointed out that the African world view includes African spirituality, philosophy and religion. To understand the African world view, Imasogie gives us a helpful explanation when he discusses it under four concepts. These are: earth, man, man's place on earth, and his utilization of divinely ordained provisions for coping with the uncertainties of life (Imasogie 1993:53).

Firstly, *the Earth*. He says that the earth is seen as a reality created by God. It is the arena in which man is to live out his life in preparation for a fuller life in heaven. As a reality, the earth is multidimensional. It has the physical dimension and the spiritual dimensions. There is "vital force" or "psychic force" accessible to people like diviners, traditional doctors and witches, who can use it for good or for ill (Imasogie 1993:54-55). Man is perceived to live in a world pervaded by evil

spirits and ghosts and constantly exposed to danger. Hence they need to protect themselves. Items like armlets, wrist bands and waist bands are ritually prepared by traditional doctors and diviners as armour to thwart these forces. Ancestral spirits also considered to be valuable allies (Imasogie 1993:55-56).

Secondly, *Man*. He is seen as a complex psycho-physical being as mysterious as the earth in which he lives. His psyche is open to God, the spirits, as well as the “vital force” on the earth. He is capable of entering into relationship with these entities for good or ill. He is also able to manipulate the power spirits and the neutral force, all of which can harm him if he is careless and does not protect himself against them. He has what Imasogie calls a tripartite soul consisting of *life-force*, *personality* and *alter-ego*, sometimes called “*guardian genius*”. *Life force* is given by God at conception and it is the part of the soul that animates the physical body. This aspect of the soul can be harmed by metaphysical forces as represented by spirits, divinities and witches. It can also be destroyed by human and natural agents in the form of murder, poison, disease and violence (Imasogie 1993:56)

Personality Soul is the aspect of the soul that does not die. It is believed to be created by God prior to the physical body. It is responsible for man’s destiny and character and does not perish with the body when the life force is destroyed. Man is responsible to God by means of this aspect of his soul (Imasogie 1993:56).

Guardian genius or *Alter-ego* is the third aspect of the soul which is a duplication of the “personality soul” in heaven during the earthly pilgrimage of the individual. Its main duty is to take charge of man’s destiny and to ensure that it is actualized. Although the “alter ego” being purely spiritual, lives in heaven, yet it is immanent on earth hidden in the individual’s head where the individual’s destiny is coded. It is possible for malevolent spirits, witches, and divinities, to make conditions difficult for a person to fulfill his destiny. Man constantly seeks the aid of his “alter-ego”, ancestral spirits, and divinities, to ensure that the unfolding of his chosen destiny is not frustrated by any force. This suggests that a person’s destiny is not a predestination but rather a blueprint which requires efforts, human and supernatural to bring it to fruition (Imasogie 1993:57).

Thirdly, *Man's Place*. At death the personality constituent of the soul returns to heaven. But it is not always the case under certain conditions such as premature death. Should death come before the allotted time, the personality-soul lingers around as a ghost for some time until the life-span originally given him is completed. In the case of a person who dies at the right time elaborate funerary rites are performed to ensure his incorporation into the ancestral spirit-world. Thus death has not dissolved the relationship between the deceased and his family as he can now be invoked at the family shrine (Imasogie 1993:57-59).

As a *provision for coping with life uncertainties*, divination becomes a great help. This is because an African sees life as a mystery to be lived out on a mysterious earth ruled by spiritual forces of good and evil. There is no event without a spiritual or metaphysical cause. Hence man must look beyond physical events to their spiritual etiology. Each man may have a chosen destiny to actualize, but this may be thwarted by malevolent forces which operate either as evil spirits or through witches and sorcerers who are in alliance with them (Imasogie 1993:59-60).

The above concepts of the African world view are shared by many ethnic groups in Africa at different levels. In this case they apply directly in the contexts of both Shembe and Milingo. The many cultural rites and rituals people in these communities undertake demonstrate this thinking. For instance the discussion about *man's place* by Imasogie (1993:57-59), explains why in Zulu culture they hold the ritual of *ukubuyiswa* to invite the living dead relative back into the family.

Imasogie points out that lack of empathy for an African self understanding was complicated by the missionary's preconceived idea that Africans were so primitive that they did not even have a concept of God. This presupposition made the missionary insensitive to the self-understanding of the African within his world view. Coming from such a quasi-scientific world view the missionary could not perceive spiritual realities in the same way as the Africans he encountered did. His perception of the Africans was that they must be living in a dream world to believe the things they did. Since the concept of God in the African's world view differed significantly from that in the missionary's world view, he was convinced that the African had no concept of God (Imasogie 1993:65).

3.2.1 AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Commenting on African philosophy John Mbiti (1969:2) says that philosophy of one kind or another is behind the thinking and actions of every people, and a study of traditional religions brings us into those areas of African life where, through word and action we may be able to discern the philosophy behind the rituals and acts. Philosophical systems of different African people have not yet been formulated, but some areas where they may be found are in the religion, proverbs, oral traditions, ethics and morals of the society concerned. In traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life, Mbiti insists, is to be out of the whole picture. For instance Milingo found himself in a position where he had to be “the people’s priest”. He had to get involved in their everyday life, suffering, struggles and aspirations and find solutions to their troubles, and healing for their illnesses. To do otherwise, as he could have easily done owing to his western training, would have made him look and feel artificial. An agent of the extension of a foreign culture, religion and philosophy. This is the reason also why many people got involved in Shembe’s ministry. He understood the way they felt, and knew their aspirations and yearning. So he chose to become an agent of hope, and fulfilment of those aspirations within a Christian framework in his context. Martey (1993:73) says that African philosophy is an integral part of African culture. Therefore, a philosophical formulation genuinely takes place within a cultural experience and a socio-historical context.

3.2.2 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

This is a religion which identifies at the centre of its function: God, spirits, ancestors, man and nature. Discussing the nature of traditional African religion, Kwame Gyekye, points out that in African life thought, the religious is not distinguished from the nonreligious. The sacred is not distinguished from the secular, the spiritual from the material. Religious life, is then not an individual but a communal

affair, woven into the culture of the people (Gyekye 1996:4; Olowola 1993:21-23). There is also belief in mystical powers which can be tapped by those who have knowledge to do so for good or ill. These powers are attributed to the spirits and ancestors (Gyekye 1996:60). Vilakazi points out that in Zulu culture ancestors play a very important role in the family as they are seen as providers and protectors (Vilakazi 1986:11,13). Divination is also part of Zulu religion and a diviner is seen as one who has special favour with the ancestral spirits (Vilakazi 1986:14-15). This is why in Zulu culture there are many rituals that involve the invoking of ancestors. That is why Shembe accommodated these rituals in the church.

At this point it must be stressed that African culture and religion are inseparably related, and with African philosophy, all these elements contribute to the African world-view. Religion emerges into the African context as an aspect of culture. Religion and culture are intertwined and enter every fabric and marrow of social life of the Africans in politics, economics, commerce or education (Nwigbo: 1996:191). That is why Shembe's ministry was appealing to the people whilst the missionaries were perplexed that their long investments in ministry had yielded very little compared to what Shembe was achieving in a very short time. He appealed through his ministry to the heart of what the people needed. Similarly with Milingo, his ministry was all embracing, ensuring healing: physically and spiritually, and socially and politically. He also pushed for the betterment of the people through education and other projects that were aimed at empowering people. African culture is then essentially that which makes Africans distinct from other groups like Europeans, Asians or Arabs. Hence this distinction is expressed in beliefs, music, dance, art, and even indigenous religion. So in ministering to their African context, Shembe and Milingo had to take into consideration the cultural norms and values of Africans so that they may be able to respond to their concerns, anxieties and also meet their aspirations as ministers of the Gospel. This is because it is the world view that informs the culture around which the people mobilize themselves around.

4. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES INTRODUCED BY SHEMBE IN THE CHURCH

Shembe demonstrated Christianity to his followers. He covered many kilometres on foot preaching the gospel, and in most cases not knowing where he would sleep. As a result several times he slept

in the open veld or in caves whilst on his numerous journeys to evangelize. He openly talked with those who cared to ask him questions about his faith. His life was marked by simplicity, piety and hard work. He encouraged his followers to work hard. The drinking of the local sorghum beer was not allowed since he viewed the whole activity of drinking as a waste of food and time. At certain times of the year he led a pilgrimage to the mountains to pray for rain, and for crops to prosper. At these pilgrimages he fasted and prayed with his followers (Payne 1930). Shembe understood the people's need and directly sought ways of meeting them. He knew that without rain people would starve. He did not wait for traditional medicine doctors to take the lead and claim victory for their powers. He instead went out to pray so that people could see that the God to whom Shembe prayed cares and provides rain.

Shembe acquired land in 1914 and built a church and founded a village of the Nazarites at Ekuphakameni. This became the head-quarters of the Church. People from all over the country came to the place to be healed of disease and have demons exorcised. Many women came to be prayed for by him, so that they might have children. After he had prayed for them they did have children (Vilakazi 1986:43). Shembe insisted on respect for elders, and on traditional patterns of respect between men and woman and between parents and children. He insisted on proper marriage customs and practices according to Zulu tradition. He forbade premarital sex and upheld chastity as an ideal for both men and women. Traditional Zulu dress was encouraged, and these colourful dresses were to be worn especially on ceremonial occasions. He brought in the festival, dancing, singing that were compatible with the Zulu way of life and people could easily relate with. He brought in beautiful traditional garb for men, women, maidens and young men, which they could take pride in during the festivals as they sing and dance. The festivals are reminiscent of the Zulu traditional festivals of yore, some of which are still held like the "Reed dance", where the king selects his prospective wife. Even at these festivals it is a time for members of his church to choose their prospective partners. Shembe appealed a lot more to rural people and those with strong traditional leanings because of the cultural traditions which he introduced to the church (Vilakazi 1986:45).

The church served an essential need by being a cultural and spiritual home for many Zulus who had

lost their bearing in the new emergent Zulu society. He opened a school at Ekuphakameni which taught basic literacy such as reading and writing. Shembe encouraged technical education for Africans and a strong work ethic. In Shembe's church people found that old values were still respected, polygamy recognised as a form of marriage, and old men could still find wives (Vilakazi 1986:53).

Shembe's combination of Christian and basic traditional Zulu religious elements such as accommodating customs of *ukubuyisa*¹, proper burial according to Zulu custom, special rites of passage, preserved harmony between the living and the dead (Oosthuizen 1994: xxx-xxviii). Oosthuizen correctly asserts that the above activities are different from the mission churches which sought to only westernize their flock. These have in the process made them strangers to their traditional kith and kin, by discarding traditions which they should have been proud. Oosthuizen further points out that Shembe sanctified Zulu royal ancestry which missionary Christianity rejected. Through Shembe, he says, Jehovah sanctified and accepted them (Oosthuizen 1994: xxvii). This is similar to Milingo's practice of praying on particular days for the dead who died not having been Christians.

4.1 SINGING AND DANCING

Shembe introduced indigenous singing and dancing in his church. He composed the songs which were in line with traditional Zulu singing and dancing but introduced his own style. Oosthuizen points out that the rhythm of the *Izihlabelelo* (hymn book) expresses itself in the sacred dance. For the pre-Christian Zulu Rhythm is the pure expression of vital force and in rhythm the word finds its full expression. Spontaneity and gaiety are the significant characteristics of Zulu religion (Oosthuizen 1967:129). Vilakazi commenting on the music of Shembe, says that two hundred and eighteen songs of Shembe were published in 1940, and these are not all, since some were omitted in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation with the state. Others were not added in order to accommodate other ethnic

¹ *Ukubuyisa*, is a rite performed by Zulus to invite the living dead back to the family. This usually happens after a few weeks after burial.

groups which had become part of the church, for instance, Xhosa, Swazi, Shangane and Indian (Vilakazi 1986:138-139). The hymns had Zulu traditional music forms like *isigekle* which introduced religious dance *ukusina* or *ukugida* in the church. *Isigekle* introduces cyclical song that the beginning and the ending are not clear. The dance phases also reflect the song by their lack of beginning or ending. His musical style also included parts where members would sing along, *ukuvuma*, or chant. Vilakazi points out that *isigekle* is fundamentally pentatonic with some falling semitones and micrones as found in some eastern music. The melodies are sometimes difficult to sing for unaccustomed African singers because of their choice of scale which is speech-dominated, they don't conform to a particular scale (Vilakazi 1986: 141-146).

Vilakazi points out that whilst dancing as a religious form was not Shembe's unique idea among the Zulu, songs of worship in Zulu culture were accompanied by the respective dance forms. Shembe was unique in his courage to take what was looked upon by missionaries as evil heathen dances and incorporating them into the ritual of Christian worship. Shembe also personally taught his church members how to do the dancing as they were singing along. Consequently, the *ukusina* styles varied amongst men, married women, maidens and young men. The divisions are deeply rooted in Zulu culture. Shembe also introduced different *ukusina* uniforms for all the different groups. These were worn during the *ukusina* ceremonies like the annual festivals in January and July (Vilakazi 1986:147-148).

Shembe also encouraged purity in living amongst church members. Boys and girls were kept separate. Any girl who defaulted by having a child outside marriage would not be allowed to take part in any dance group. This was in line with Zulu custom of ostracising the girl to set an example for others not to follow her lead. He also encouraged women to preach during their festivals (women festivals). The preaching usually followed singing accompanied by drums and horns. All women who formed part of the dancing group would be allowed to preach as the Spirit led them (Oosthuizen 1967:xxxii). We will then next see how Milingo responds to his African context.

5. MILINGO'S ACTIVITIES WITHIN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF AFRICAN WORLD-

VIEW

For his role Milingo in his writings decries the Western world view imposed by expatriate missionaries on Africans thereby seeking to bequeath a superficial spirituality foreign to their living conditions and environment, as they understand them. He maintains that there is an African spirituality, which has been ignored and overlaid by Western rationality, and the ignorance and contempt for African thought is a cause for spiritual tension. This he says in his observation and experience with expatriate missionaries and priests in the Catholic church of Zambia (Milingo 1984:73).

He pointed out how unsuitable it was for Westerners to be at the forefront in the field of African liturgy adaptation, teaching Africans accepted gestures, movements and drums. In some cases he saw how they blatantly incited Africans to condemn their own traditional values supposed to be included in the liturgy. They gave the impression that there was nothing pure and sacred in all that is African whilst posing before Africans as the ones who were sacred and pure. They further implied that they were the ones capable of discerning genuine African values worthy to be included in the liturgy. He discouraged this kind of attitude which inadvertently gave the impression that what they do not like the Africans must give up, and what they approve the Africans must approve (Milingo 1984:73).

Milingo is aware of the African world-view filled with belief in the spirit world. Every death, disease or failure had a spiritual cause, and failure for the church to address this world view resulted in the church members losing confidence in their priests and seeking help from traditional healers. Milingo's objective was to make it possible for the church to address the needs of the people as a whole avoid having them going outside to seek help where they may come out worse off. Even the initiative to heal the most dreaded disease of *mashave* which had claimed a number of lives was taken with this in mind (Milingo 1984:15). Milingo saw the negative reactions from expatriate missionaries as a continuation of an attitude to undermine the African efforts to address needs within their world-view, while projecting the European world-view and culture as superior (Ter Haar 1992:73).

Milingo warned that the church was engaged in spiritual warfare, and this is important for them to acknowledge so that they can take the necessary measures to confront the enemy and not be lulled by irrelevant arguments which did not apply to the situation. This is similar to what the Lausanne covenant theologians and missionaries state in their proclamation:

We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the church and frustrate its task of world evangelization. We know our need to equip ourselves with God's armour and to fight this battle with the spiritual weapons of truth and prayer (Stott 1996:44).

He pointed out that the sickness in the world was caused by the devil in society, the witches and spiritualists who bring curses and make claims to heal. However, their aim was to destroy and enslave. He warned that it was wise for the church to move away from its illusion of a rationalistic Western mind set and recognise this rather than deny it. In any event the denial had led to an ambivalent Christianity amongst the church members, and this was what he was trying to stop. He insisted on a need for unsuspecting people to be protected from being lured into the devil's camp through promises of wealth, power and prosperity, and ending up dehumanised by possession spirits after signing a pact with the devil (Milingo 1984:31; and Milingo 1991:52-54). Milingo further insisted that the church must be seen to rely on the authority of Jesus Christ to overcome the principalities and set people free from bondage, dominance, torture and possession by the evil powers (Milingo 1991:59).

The above comments showed that Milingo had analysed the needs of his society and he was championing a new cause that would make people get to grips with the real issues. This is a sign of a man in touch with his context.

5.1 SPIRITUALITY

Milingo also advocated for the church to have a genuine dialogue with people about elements of African spirituality to avoid finding themselves leading an ambivalent type of Christianity. He stressed that unless people were properly instructed on the compatibility of Christianity and their culture, they would continue to engage in improper activities (Milingo 1984:76). This is also what

Salala rightfully points out as the cause for ambivalence amongst the African Christian converts. He insists that Christianity has to penetrate the African religious soul, and address the deepest needs and fears of the people. This will then help to prevent most African Christians from resorting to some of the incompatible practices and beliefs of traditional religion in times of crisis (Salala 1988:133). Of course this does not mean that all practices in African traditional religion are necessarily incompatible, nor does it mean that Milingo is totally against them. However, he encourages Christians to make informed and discerning decisions as they are helped and guided by the church.

Milingo insists that Jesus fits in well into the African understanding of ancestor. He adds that Jesus has to be seen as the foremost Ancestor. This implies that Jesus is an elder in the community, and intercessor between God and the community. He is also the possessor of the ethereal powers which enables him to commune with the world above and with the earth. In so doing he is able to be a citizen of both worlds (Milingo 1984:78). Milingo further points out that until people see the role of Jesus as being in the hierarchy of the spirit-world as an ancestor, it will be hard to uproot them completely from their beliefs (Milingo 1984:78).

In agreement with this line of thinking, Bediako (1993:55) makes an important point when he says that:

African theological thinkers now share in the inheritance of the Gospel as the apostle Paul proclaimed it, the Gospel that set the early gentile Christians free from Jewish Christian attempts to impose upon them the regulations of the Jewish Law. Paul grasped firmly the universality of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah, and by insisting that the Gospel includes all people without reserve, gave gentile Christians the essential tools for assessing their own cultural heritage, for making their own contribution to Christian life and thought and for testing the genuineness and Christian character of that contribution.

Bediako further adds that the spiritual dimensions of human existence, and the reflection about Christ, must speak to the question posed by such a world view. He says the needs of the African world require a view of Christ that meets those needs. And so who Jesus is in the African spiritual universe must not be separated from what he does and can do in that world. Therefore the way in which Jesus relates to the importance and function of the “spirit fathers” or ancestors is crucial

(Bediako 1993:58).

Milingo makes a distinction between good spirits and evil spirits. He understands good spirits to be those of the ancestors, and others which provide personal protection and give guidance to the community as a whole. They derive their powers directly from God. Evil spirits on the other hand are all seen as allied with the devil, the personification of evil. They are responsible for causing disorder in people's lives. Although ancestor spirits are also considered capable of causing evil, for instance in the form of illness, they are perceived to do so only to alert their descendants to their faults, and thus adjust their behaviour. The illness they cause is seen as a sign of their care and consideration containing a warning that the health of the relationship between individuals and the ancestor spirits who are believed to watch over them is in jeopardy. Evil spirits or demons live hidden among people. They hide through various ailments and diseases where they try to make life as difficult as they can. They also possess a person in order to dominate him and subject him to humiliation. These spirits, he adds, also use spells to influence a person and intimidate him (Ter Haar 1992:142).

Milingo got involved in a healing ministry which was aimed at removing these evil spirits. He recognized that the church had made a profound pastoral and mission mistake by neglecting the *mashave* problem. Yet he believed the solution could be found within the church itself, if only it was willing to make use of its inherent powers. The key, as he saw it, was the church's belief in the power of Christ and the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit (Ter Haar 1992:150).

Milingo argues that God has to be presented to Africans as a Father who responds in times of crisis. Otherwise, this leads to the artificiality of people who go to church on Sunday praying for "decent problems" fit to be presented to an upper class god who does not have time for petty African problems. An African who does not know the proper language to speak to him and therefore doubts whether he will ever hear his voice in response to his requests, ends up being disillusioned. So it is easy for him to leave this god in the church on Sunday and ask his ancestors to accompany him for the rest of the week (Milingo 1984:77).

6. CONCLUSION

Milingo approaches the context as a theologian critiquing it and also using his tools as a social scientist. But he also engages with it practically as a pastor offering practical help in solving the problems. His healing ministry and other practical initiatives like contribution in music and making people aware of their culture and appreciating it, stems from this desire to see his people empowered in all aspects compatible with African world view and culture.

Shembe on the other hand, deals with the same context as a preacher of the gospel and emphatically as a leader and prophet. He sets an example to his followers. His grandson Londa Shembe, says that Shembe “showed people God on two feet”. This indicates that he modelled Christianity from an African perspective. Whereas missionaries preached a Christianity which was aimed at making people passive and content with their worst lot, conniving with the colonialist rulers. Shembe demonstrated a Christianity that was assertive and resisted injustice. He could also be gentle and tolerant to the people. This however, showed his strength as a leader rather than his weakness.

We may not always agree with all that Shembe has done in his efforts at harmonizing Christianity with African culture. However, this must be seen within the context that Shembe did not have the necessary theological skills to make a more careful assessment. However, what is more important for our purpose is to pick up the principle at work. We need to engage with the context and not look at it passively when things go out of hand, as it has been the case with the mainline churches.

Milingo brings to the fore an important aspect of the power game the church is engaged in with principalities. People need to be empowered so that they can move away from their fears. In order to move away from these fears they have to be convinced that Christ indeed has the power to take on the spirits and witches which strike fear in their hearts. For people to forego any negative beliefs passed on to them since birth, they need a stronger force as a substitute. The new faith has to be seen to be working. The fact that Shembe and Milingo appreciate African culture and world view is very important as an example to the African church. However, as Mbiti points out, it is not everything in ATR that can be usefully brought into the life of the Christian and the church. Some elements are

demonic and should be discarded, but the best can be preserved and used for enrichment of life (Mbiti 1978:310).

There are helpful aspects that may be used as educational aids in the communication of the faith. Others help in understanding the bible within the African background, and others help in understanding pastoral problems. These according to Mbiti, are for instance: beliefs that relate to the concepts of God, spirits, human life, death and the hereafter; practices like prayers, symbols, artistic expressions, ceremonies and rituals connected with birth, adolescence, marriage, procreation and death; ways of celebrating life; traditional prayers; morals and values. Mbiti also points out that one could consider the values and services of religious leaders in ATR like priests, ritual elders, rainmakers medicine men and diviners and the role they can play in the church. Their role in the church can only be defined after they have been converted to the Christian faith. They will need to have a new understanding of the nature of their work as part of their calling by God (Mbiti 1978:311-312).

The challenge for the mainline churches is to guide their members on what is to be accepted and what to be discarded. Shembe and Milingo's efforts at this were not necessarily perfect. However, they somehow set an example.

CHAPTER 4: UNDERSTANDING SHEMBE AND MILINGO'S HEALING MINISTRIES

1. INTRODUCTION

I never knew *boloi bo teng* until recently. The problem is that I do not personally know *ditlhare*. If I start now, then one may ask, where is your faith? Where is the faith you have lived by as a Christian all these years?¹

This is the dilemma of Mr John Khomo a devoted Christian in the Methodist church who has come to believe that his swollen feet and ill health are the result of his neighbours bewitching him. The suspicion came as a result of antagonistic behaviour from the neighbours and strange things happening in the yard at night. The discovery of strange objects left in the gate and in the yard also added to the suspicion. Mr Khomo has been relatively successful in his life and owns a beautiful big house in the township where his neighbours live in “match boxes”, the small four room and two room houses. He finds himself helpless to counter these activities as a Christian since he cannot consult a traditional doctor for help. On the other hand, his church does not address such issues. He may be regarded as superstitious or lacking in faith if he were to raise the issue. His suffering is regarded as part of being a Christian. He is expected to courageously accept his plight, if the medical doctors do not succeed in helping him. Yet he knows that he could readily get the necessary help from a traditional doctor or an AIC prophet. However, he dare not go to these sources for help since he will be regarded as a “two faced believer”.

Mr Khomo's dilemma is experienced by many other Africans in the mainline churches. This is also one of the problems which Shembe and Milingo seek to address in their healing ministries. Francis MacNutt explains such attitudes to healing as expressed by Mr Khomo as characteristic of mainline churches. This he says stems from the thinking that, “sickness is a cross sent by God”; “We want nothing to do with faith healing”, or “We don't need signs and wonders

¹ Words from Mr J Khomo on meeting him in a supermarket complaining about his swollen feet. The meeting took place in November 1999, he was about fifty-five years old. He has been a staunch Methodist in Soweto since youth. He has amongst other things been a former leader in a vibrant church youth guild. His late father was a Methodist minister and he grew up in the church traditions. *Boteng boloi* - means witchcraft exists; *ditlhare* - means herbs, usually traditional medicines to protect oneself from witches or hit back at them.

anymore, we have faith”; or “Miracles do not take place, they only represent a primitive way of expressing reality”. According to MacNutt, these are the attitudes that discourages faith healing to take place in the mainline churches (MacNutt 1974:39-44). As we continue with our discussion we will try to look at the things that motivate Shembe and Milingo to be involved in faith healing.

2. THE ETHNIC BACKGROUND THAT SHAPES SHEMBE AND MILINGO’S PERCEPTION OF ILLNESS

Shembe and Milingo’s perception of illness is shaped respectively by their Zulu and Ngoni backgrounds, which as discussed earlier share the same sentiments. In these communities illness is perceived as a result of sorcery, witchcraft, spirit possession, pollution, neglect of or disobedience to the ancestors. Aggrieved relatives are also seen as possible causes of illness, but so is the person’s own wrong doing affecting community and environment. In this former instance, restoring social relationships implies healing both the physical and psychical (Oosthuizen 1998:75, Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:232-233).

Shembe and Milingo also share the belief that illness is caused by the devil who spreads many diseases. Milingo states that the devil is causing harm in the world through his agents and witches. Many people are tempted to become healers whilst he himself inflicts many people with diseases. The devil does not heal, he only deceives people, by giving something like a sedative. The spiritual sedatives he uses are the temporal release from one spot which was diseased, which continues to give the same pain somewhere else. The victim then believes he is healed whilst giving the agent lots of money (Milingo 1993a :21).

Shembe who most of the time uses metaphorical language, in one of his healing services directly rebukes diseases and threatens to “kill them” referring to them as agents intending to kill “people of my father”. This means that he also recognises that diseases are caused by the devil. At one stage he instructs a sick Wesleyan pastor with his swollen feet, to move away from the house he was occupying at the time since an evil spirit from the dead former pastor who occupied the house was causing the sickness (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1999:172-173). Shembe was able to discern when a particular disease was caused by promiscuity. In such cases he gave the people

concerned an opportunity to confess their sins before he could pray for them. He also knew when one was bewitched. In one instance he told a member of his church to build his house in a new place because he was being bewitched by his neighbours wanting to see whether he would go back to using *muti*, traditional medicine, to protect himself from his enemies (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1999:39-40).

3. DEFINING ILLNESS

At this stage we need to ask the question: "What is illness?" In trying to respond to this question, Stuart Bate takes a rather technical line of explanation. He points out that illness is a *psycho-cultural phenomenon* concerned with the perception of unwellness. It is only when a person perceives that something is wrong that illness occurs. He makes an example with Aids, pointing out that people catch the disease long before they become ill and even before a medical test indicate that they have it. Once the virus is inside the person, the process of biological malfunction begins and the person has the disease. Illness then follows as the person perceives that he or she is not well (Bate 1995:5). According to Kleinman 1980:72, as quoted by Bate, the medical doctors describe the relationship of illness and disease as follows:

Disease refers to the malfunctioning of biological and/or psychological processes, while the term illness refers to the psychological experience and meaning of perceived disease. Illness involves processes of attention, perception, affective response, cognition, and valuation directed at the disease and its manifestations (i.e., symptoms, role impairment, etc.). But also included in the idea of illness are communication and interpersonal interaction, particularly within the context of the family and social network. Viewed from this perspective, illness is the shaping of disease into behaviour and experience. It is created by personal, social, and cultural reactions to disease. Constructing illness from disease is a central function of health care systems (a coping function) and the first stage of healing.

Bate further states that the mistake of most westerners is to reduce illness to disease and healing to curing. This reduction occurs as a result of the empiricist/rationalist bias of modern Western culture. This bias has led to the emergence of the medical model as the main form of dealing with illness in the West. However, he stresses that it is wrong for one to absolutize this model of healing and to say that healing can only work through this procedure of empirically verified cures (Bate 1995:5). This is essentially the concept of illness that was given more attention in the mainline churches as missionaries started hospitals and schools and initiated Africans into the

western mode of thinking. However, the problem has always remained that from childhood Africans are instructed in African beliefs and customs which condition them to resort to African traditional means to deal with crisis.

In contrast to the Western understanding of illness, we find that in the African context illness implies that a person has fallen out of balance. That is, he is not in harmony either with the environment, his fellow man or with the ancestors, as it should be. The cause is often associated with either the breaking of a taboo or a malevolent evil spirit (Appia-Kubi 1993:98). Jean Mpolo adds that illness leading to the untimely death of a child, a young person or an active adult, is often explained in terms of the result of an offense against the ancestors or a result of witchcraft (Mpolo 1994:19). People responsible for witchcraft could be one's enemies, an aggrieved relative employing the services of a sorcerer, or even a witch. Ndiokwere points out that some of the illnesses are brought to bare by psychological conditions caused by superstition, anxiety and negative beliefs - like a strong belief in the existence of evil spirits. It may also be a belief in *muti*, herbs used for evil purposes to harm enemies or for poisoning (Ndiokwere 1981:116).

Ndiokwere further points out that the poison could be made adding herbs with various other materials like nails and human hair. It could then be deposited or administered on anything belonging to the enemy like his clothing, and the person would be affected on contact. Sometimes it could also be put into a drink or transmitted by shaking hands (Ndiokwere 1981:117). Allan adds that illness is also caused by misfortune. According to Allan, misfortune does not always come about due to the presence of evil. It is most often brought about by the lack of good. It is a state experienced when good fortune is deflected. The thing responsible for deflecting good fortune may not in itself be bad. Misfortune manifests itself in a variety of ways ranging from physical complaints to difficulty in gaining employment. In such a case the well-being of the person could be effected by removing the obstacle which prevents the person from receiving good fortune (Allan 1995:84). Milingo has had instances where he had to pray for people who were struggling to find jobs, who believed that it was out of misfortune that they could not find jobs (Milingo 1992: 102).

In effect we find that the mainline church cannot ignore this view of illness and concentrate on

the western view. Most people who came to Milingo and Shembe for healing were affected by illnesses understood within the African perspective. That is, *izinto zabantu*². These conditions may sometimes degenerate into other serious physical and psychological manifestations if neglected for long. A case in point is that of a woman who could not eat any solid foods for five months, relying on water and soft porridge. Whenever she looked at her child she saw only a monster. This caused her to fear the child. She constantly also heard strange voices. Treatment at the hospitals could not help her. When she came to Milingo for help she had exhausted all avenues. Milingo held confession mass and prayer for her, but this also could not help (Milingo 1993:1). To some extent this shows how desperate some cases can be, in that even prayer and confession offered in mainline churches may seem not enough.

This challenge for Milingo led to him finding an alternative way of dealing with the problem in a creative way as guided by the Holy Spirit. He instructed the woman to look at him three times intently in his eyes. He in turn looked three times intently into hers. He then told her to close her eyes and sleep. After this, Milingo states that he was able to talk to her soul as he prayed eventually getting into a trance. The woman got well, and Milingo was off to a charged beginning of a healing ministry he did not plan for (Milingo 1993:1). To this effect it shows that it does not take one to first believe they have a special gift of healing before they can take the challenge of praying for the sick as responsible Christians. The gift comes along in action, as one earnestly searches for solutions to help others get well as part of the ministry of Christ.

Commenting further on illness, Bate says that theologians recognise physical, emotional and psychological etiologies of illness whose treatment may benefit from physical, emotional and psychological remedies. However, they identify sin and evil as the major cause of illness. Evil is often expressed as demons, evil spirits or Satan. For instance, an evil spirit in a person could be caused by personal sin; emotional sickness could be caused by disease or accidents; demonic oppression can cause any of the above (Bate 1995:10-11).

² *Izinto zabantu* - illnesses caused by malevolent people which cannot be cured through Western medicine.

According to Dube, illness can also be induced when the spirits stop playing their protective role. This may happen when the spirits are angered by failure to observe certain rituals and taboos. It could also be because of failure to fulfil certain obligations which are meant to stabilize and formalize relationships (Dube 1989:14). Oosthuizen points out that evil spirits are also considered to be responsible for the type of illness which Western trained medical doctors fail to detect. Such illness includes that type of physical, mental and psychical discomfort which is seldom related to insanity. He adds that spirit possession may increase when tension intensifies as a result of transition from the traditional to the modern way of life and its different world-view. Hence AICs take their members to pools, rivers, dams, and beaches to seek purification through immersion. Such baptism has largely become a purification rite and a healing procedure in the AIC (Oosthuizen 1998:77). They symbolize, as Oosthuizen notes, the reaction to change as well as the vicissitudes of the new situation, which force them to question the traditional way of life and beliefs. The ensuing deep psychological tensions are often hypostatized in foreign spirits (Oosthuizen 1998:77).

As a practical illustration, Dube points out that notions of ritual impurity and sorcery underline much of the insecurity associated with life in the urban and peri-urban areas. People settled in townships may not be in a position to choose their neighbours. This may in some instances result in hostile neighbours who use dangerous medicines, and are sometimes jealous of others. The result is that health is always in jeopardy, human relationships are in most cases enforced by means of mystical powers. Ill-health attributed to ritual pollution or sorcery then manifests itself in a number of ways which include: sour relations; family tensions and quarrels; children becoming wayward and uncontrollable; prostitution and drunkenness; barrenness and lack of good fortune. All these, Dube points out, are interpreted as states of ill-health which result from mystical causation (Dube 1989:114-115). These are again cases which Shembe and Milingo have had to deal with constantly in their ministries. Their understanding of the background to such problems, has helped them to give a sympathetic ear to those affected. This has also led them to come up with prayerful and practical solutions. In mainline churches such problems would have been dismissed as merely problems for social workers and no further help would be forthcoming (Ten Haar 1992:108-112; Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:179).

4. SHEMBE AND MILINGO'S APPROACH TO HEALING

Shembe and Milingo see healing as a comprehensive concept, not limited to a physical cure but concerned with all aspects of human suffering, including those which affect moral and the spiritual life of the sufferer. They share this view from their different perspectives. For them healing does not limit itself to the individual, but also affects the life of the community and society at large (Milingo 1992:150-151; Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996: 103-106; 179). Of course their approach is once more influenced by their African world view. Concurring with this view, Appia-Kubi states that the African approach to healing is holistic. When a person is sick, the whole person is sick, and not part of him. The African may even go to the extent that if one person is ill, everybody else around him is considered to be ill. Therefore healing in this case is to be regarded as comprehensive covering the entirety of the individual, his or her family and community (Appia-Kubi 1993:99).

Mukanda Malemfu also adds that in the Manianga society in Zaire, healing is the affair of the whole community, implying that the solution to the problem lies in the community itself. The members would search for the cause of the illness and they would know together with the medical specialists the procedure and the means to cure the disease (Malemfu 1993: 22). As Moyo states, any one-sided approach to healing, would then be considered incomplete. That is why the AICs are always trying to make the gospel relevant within the African culture by expressing it in images familiar to the African people. They try to respond concretely to their needs and aspirations by approaching healing in a holistic way (Moyo 1996:33). For instance Shembe always had a group of people in one building when conducting his healing sessions. This was meant to bring the sense of community in defeating disease.

4. HEALING AS LIBERATION

Milingo stresses that healing is a basic act of liberation. It is the continuation of the liberating work of Christ. The healing ministry then brings the gospel back to the heart of the church. It restores the presence of Christ to that central place. It also restores a person to his or her original wholeness and dignity. This implies taking away every form of oppression and disturbance in life which prevents one from being their true self. It means releasing people from any obstacles on the road to human fulfilment (Milingo 1992:151). This is demonstrated clearly in the

exorcism which Milingo and Shembe have had to carry out in their respective ministries. Milingo relates that a woman came to him after her first husband left her for not being able to have children. She was now afraid that the new husband would also leave her. On praying for her, the evil spirits started roaring and the woman started crawling like an animal. This showed that the woman was oppressed by demons all the time preventing her from being pregnant. Milingo ordered the demons to leave her and she suddenly collapsed. He further prayed for her and woke her up, and she subsequently got healed and was able to have children (Milingo 1993a:4-5).

Shembe also prayed for several people who were regarded to be mad. This included even a white child who was brought by her father. After much prayer the girl's sanity was restored and she was able to get on with her life (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:67-69). The other case is that of a healthy trainee teacher who suddenly took ill and became paralysed. The hospitals could not diagnose the cause of his paralysed hands and feet. The traditional doctors could not help him either. They eventually brought him to Milingo who prayed for him. After the third healing session he started showing signs of getting better, and he eventually recovered enough to resume his studies and even start his career as a teacher (Milingo 1984:52).

These cases show that healing is indeed liberation from evil spiritual forces that inhibit the prosperity of a person and can manifest themselves in different ways. From this point it is justified to look at healing as a total liberating activity and not merely as recovery from a physical ailment.

Appiah-Kubi adds that healing should not be conceived as simply getting a malfunctioning organ to work well again, but as a question of dealing with the total person. Healing cannot take place without going into the deep root of the disorder as well as getting in touch with the spiritual world. He points out that in the case of the AICs, they "provide a release of tension through a cathartic ritual and beliefs that heighten the hope of their members". Thus the healing ceremonies of these churches involve a union of the patient, his or her family, the larger group, and the supernatural world. They achieve this by means of a dramatic, emotionally charged, and aesthetically rich ceremony that expresses and reinforces shared beliefs. The success of the

prophet-healers in these churches rests on their ability to evoke the patients expectancy of help. The personal magnetism of the healers is strengthened by their own faith in what they do. They believe their powers come from God manifested in the Holy Spirit. Their belief is not only “God is with us” but, even more, “God is in us” (Appiah-Kubi 1981:81-83).

Appia-Kubi’s view is affirmed by the great influence Shembe had on a number of people. His confidence in the power of God to heal was so awe inspiring such that most people got healed in the first healing meeting. People went to him confident that they would get healed and they got healed. This was more out of the level of expectancy and faith in the gift God has given him. Milingo equally enjoyed the respect and confidence of the people even if it took several healing sessions for some people to be healed (Milingo 1984:52).

Shembe and Milingo’s approach to healing must also be seen as a demonstration of African Christian identity. Their approach of being sensitive to the African world view and needs in dealing with people’s problem and exercising the sense of African community in their ministry shows the way as to how the healing ministry must be carried out. It shows reason why the mainline churches must divest themselves from missionary heritage in terms of looking at Christian ministry.

Dube concurs with this position pointing out that for instance to the Zionist, healing can be seen as a search for both African identity and salvation. Dube quotes Becken (1971:15) who observes that Zionist services enable those who attend them to experience life by acknowledging each other as human beings in their African identity. When they are in the service they experience healing which is something more than just being cured from a certain disease.

5. HEALING METHODS

A common healing method used by both Shembe and Milingo is that of laying hands on the sick and praying for them. They both also pray for water to be used for healing. However, generally their methods vary from situation to situation. But the over-riding factor for both is that they are both confident that God uses anything they feel led to use at that particular time as an instrument of healing.

For instance, Milingo blesses water, tea, cod liver oil and candles. He gives them to the sick to use and they later get healed³. This makes him confident to use anything he blesses as medicine to heal different ailments. This also proves that the power of God turns anything into medicine if it is coupled with prayer (Milingo 1993: 2, 14). Milingo also uses his right hand which he says radiates healing power. Once when he used his healing hand in church after mass, some people with the *mashawe* disease shouted and got healed. One person who could not walk was also healed (1993:2).

Shembe's healing methods included the use of a special cloth to ward off sickness, and a staff. He in some instances insisted on confession before he could pray. In some cases he just told the said person that they were now healed. At times he would go to the particular place of danger and remove the cause of danger (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:179).

6. RITUAL

Madge Karecki (1997:172-173), states that ritual is important since human beings in their very nature are ritual beings. He further says that it is important for shaping identity and building group solidarity and cohesion. It becomes a means of communication in a public gathering through the use of symbolic patterns and gestures of behaviour. For example he says playing has its roots in the limbic system of the brain, ritual is concerned with the realm of possibility. It avails an opportunity for people to act out their hopes, and is therefore enriched by the use of symbols. The symbols focalize attention and evoke memory, they do not merely leave people with religious ideas or political statements that constitute their meaning. They provide participants in a ritual with vision and meaning for their lives, if the rituals are done well.

Shembe and Milingo also got engaged in rituals in some of their healing services. This varied from place to place as the situation demanded. Milingo (1993a:32-35), explains that his healing ritual has three parts, these are: *prayer of praise*; *calling of the diseases*; and *healing prayer*. The *Prayer of praise* is a praise, thanksgiving and adoration session. It becomes a time to thank

³ Note that evidence to corroborate that the actual healing took place is also found in Gerrie Ten Haar's biography on Milingo. She found letters written to Milingo which confirmed the healings and showed appreciation for Milingo's help. Other evidence she got in interviews.

God for his provision as Father. It is also a time of acknowledging the presence of God in the service. This also involves the calling of angels and saints. He invites angels because he believes they disturb the presence of the evil spirits, and they are also part of a healing team that fights evil spirits. He believes that saints are familiar with the sicknesses of the patients so it makes it easier to identify the diseases with them. They also form part of the healing team (Milingo 1993a:32-33).

The second part of the *Calling of diseases* involves identifying diseases of those who are sick so that they can be properly dealt with. He says that some people come to the meetings not knowing the nature of their diseases, so in this session the Holy Spirit helps the healing team to identify the individual diseases and helps to pray with a sharper focus. The last part of the *Healing prayer*, is the actual part of praying directly for healing. Diseases are called by name and those which cannot be identified by name are also referred to Christ to deal with them. *Holy water*⁴ is sprinkled on the people, and this is followed by the laying of hands. The Holy Spirit is then called to complete the work of healing and to increase faith, hope and charity. The crucifix is raised and Christ is asked to seal his work of healing through his blood, and the session is closed with a prayer of thanksgiving (Milingo 1993a:33-35).

In most of Shembe's healing services the healing ritual involved a lot of singing followed by the preaching of the word, then the sick would be called forward to be prayed for and hands would be laid on them. He would also use his kerchief or staff to point away the diseases. In some cases during singing, some people would just vomit and get healed in the process, those with evil spirits would shout and struggle as the spirits wrestle to break free (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:59-60;103-106;144-145).

The two annual festivals which take place in July and January where there is a lot of dancing and singing, also offer opportunities for healing in Shembe's church. Moreover, healing is seen as

⁴ *Holy Water* - this is water prayed for by the prophet, in this case Milingo. It is provided by most AICs, including the Shembe church. It is used for drinking in order to cure various ailments. It may be added to the bath water to effect ritual purity. It may even be sprinkled on a person for protection against enemies, or to effect good fortune in all endeavours.

an ongoing process in the AICs since a person may be unwell emotionally or spiritually and the harmony of well being needs to be maintained at all times. The singing and dancing effects the empowerment of people with numinous power that protects them from enemies, and enables them to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and recover from sickness if they are not well (Oosthuizen 1967: 111-114). Oosthuizen points out that for Shembe holy communion is a ritual which serves as a purification rite. Holy water is drawn in the mountains from a secret source known only to a few top leaders of the church. The water is used instead of wine, and is served with unleavened bread at night after a feet washing session (Oosthuizen 1967:114-115).

Most African Independent churches also use baptism as a ritual for healing. Oosthuizen points out that the symbolism used in baptism is related to the reality of the situation. It is not acknowledged with the mind in the first instance but in a psychical experience. It represents a complex reality which reaches out far beyond every expression in words. He says this is particularly true concerning the attitude to baptism in all its connotations at the sea. It becomes a symbol that gives orientation and meaning. It changes chaotic situations in life into harmony. In the immediate environment, work situation, and living conditions found in the sometimes foreign, secularized and impersonal world, baptism effects the much needed inner equilibrium. In this sense it becomes a normalizing act as it brings both great psychiatric and physical value (Oosthuizen 1989:140).

7. THE ANCESTORS' ROLE AND HEALING

Oosthuizen (1992: 29-30), points out that at times ancestors are seen as mediators for the Holy Spirit to call a person to the office of prophet and thereby the healing ministry. A prophet could thus be called by 'the Spirit' through the ancestors. If a person does not heed the call to become a prophet, all kinds of misfortune may follow. They may become sick to death or even mysteriously become paralysed. According to Oosthuizen, most prophets attest to having had some of these strange experiences (Oosthuizen 1992: 29). It is possible that Shembe was also called in this way since two of his children mysteriously died after being sick for a short while. He also got partly struck by lightning which caused him to be seriously ill (Hexham and Oosthuizen 1996:19-22; 25-26). There is, however, no clear record of Milingo being called in a similar fashion. He actually seems to down play the role of ancestors in his ministry. He refers

to them only when he talks about angels as part of the healing team. Milingo refers to some ancestral spirits as playing a role of guardian spirits in the healing activity. On one occasion when he was struggling to cast out some demons, he discovered that amongst the spirits possessing the person there were guardian spirits which had helped the person from being severely hurt (Milingo 1993b: 36).

He compares the African guardian spirits to Catholic spirits of the saints like St Theresa of Avila, and Mary the mother of Jesus. He adds that guardian spirits could be referred to as spirit guides (Milingo 1993a: 37). As stated above, it is possible that Shembe was called by the ancestors and the Holy Spirit if we follow Oosthuizen's argument closely. However, it not easy to accept this even though we know that the spirit world is complex and very much still a closed book. We cannot off-hand dismiss any connection between ancestral spirits and the Holy Spirit, in calling a prophet to ministry because God's ways are not always easy to understand.

8. HEALING AND CONVERSION

According to Becken, in Shembe's church, and most other AICs, they do not regard their salvation, *ukusindiswa* as static, rather they see it as a dynamic process. He says it is not illogical for members of the church to report that they were healed today and healthy and in the same breath tell of another disease from which they were saved. Salvation, he has come to understand, does not immunize Christians, rather they are always in need of forgiveness and healing (Becken 1989:233). Some people are healed in their dreams. They see Shembe coming to them taking their sickness away and they get healed. Others get healed through baptism, and still others get healed through confession of sin. These people end up joining the church as converts out of appreciation, and also feeling a new sense of security in the church (Becken 1989:234-235). In Milingo's case conversion seems to take effect when people believe in God because of the power of healing demonstrated. He sees conversion from a Catholic perspective as an ongoing process that happens through more teaching and preaching and taking part in the church's sacraments.

9. CONCLUSION

Shembe and Milingo show that the Church in Africa cannot ignore the importance of the healing ministry as there is a great need for it. The society we are living in is tarnished by sin, and this

makes it impossible for most people to realise their full potential. People are generally inhibited by things that could be traced to sin. Hence people need to be helped especially spiritually to deal with spiritual imbalances that contribute to their unwellness.

The challenge is that as we seek to understand the spirit world and understand healing in the ministry of the AIC we are not supposed to be judgmental. That is, we are not supposed to look down on their ways of doing things, because in doing so we will not be able to learn. Also, we are not supposed to romanticize everything they do as good Africanization of Christianity in order to serve our theological agendas. We have to evaluate their role in a sober manner that will help us get to the truth and benefit the church. Milingo serves as an example of how a healing ministry can start in a mainline church, out of pastoral concern. It was just unfortunate that at the time the Catholic Church in Zambia was not ready for it.

There is also the matter with ancestors to deal with. How does one realistically get ancestors involved in a healing ministry? Unless we get more light on this, it is safe to concentrate on the Holy Spirit as the guide in the healing ministry. People like Milingo need to be used more by the church to explain further the difficult concepts of the spirit world which could richly benefit the church. Since Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the mediator between man and God it creates problems when African Christians still have to cling to their ancestors as mediators, this appears to undermine the role of Christ. This implies that Africans Christians must find another role for their ancestors which is not seen to be challenging the role of Christ as mediator.

The other challenge is that people still continue to have the same problems their progenitors had of the African world view. Stories like that of Mr Khomo and many others experiencing similar problems are proof to this fact. They come off with diseases which Western medicine cannot cure or understand. It is only through traditional African medicinal intervention and rituals that they are healed. Alternatively it is through the intervention of the prophets in African indigenous churches who are well versed in the African cosmology and world view that they get help. The church needs to give an intelligent and informed response to these issues without compromising the gospel.

In Milingo we have a good example of one who tries to address these problems. We may be tempted to discard the problematic ancestor issue until we have more information on it. However, as a good start, Milingo gives us a good model to begin with. In Shembe, we learn the dynamics of a good Christian healer who is confident of the power of God to make things happen and give ready answers to situations. However, Shembe's power seems to be too awesome for any one person. We may question some of the things said about him as somewhat slightly over-zealous expressions to stress a point. However, between the lines we can still pick up the fact that he was no ordinary man. The question then lies with his power. Where did he really get his power? Is it from God, the ancestors, or God and the ancestors? One need not forget that Shembe's grandfather was a famous and successful traditional doctor and the calling to this office is usually passed on in the family. Hence, this may indicate why Shembe had such awesome power. It may be that the gift of his grandfather was passed on to him, only now working within the confines of the Christian faith and the Church. It is not unusual in Shembe's church for a person with such a gift to be baptised so that the gift works within the confines of the Christian church⁵.

Milingo poignantly points out that we need to see Christ addressing the African world view as effectively as it was addressed through traditional healers before the Gospel became known in Africa, therein lies the challenge for the African church.

⁵ This came out in my discussion with Mr D Mthinyane, a member of Shembe's Church, and it was also corroborated by Mr S Ndlovu in a separate interview.

CHAPTER 5: PATTERNS OF INCULTURATION EMERGING FROM SHEMBE AND MILINGO'S MINISTRIES

1. INTRODUCTION

In the following discussion we will try to look at patterns of inculturation that emerge from Shembe and Milingo's ministries. We will first start by addressing the question of why there is a need for inculturation in the Church. We will then examine how inculturation serves as a process of affirmation of African Christian identity in the church and as seen in Shembe and Milingo's ministries. We will also look at: the historical development of the usage of the word inculturation; inculturation and liberation; inculturation and hermeneutics; inculturation and the necessity for education; inculturation and women issues.

2. THE NEED FOR INCULTURATION

As pointed out elsewhere in our discussion, the need for inculturation in the African church should be seen as an overall reaction to restoring African dignity and identity in response to the missionaries and colonialists' negative attitude to Africans even in the church. Part of this negative attitude was the view insisting that there is only one history and one civilization, namely that of Europe. Added to this was their disregard for African cultures, seeing them as inferior, and Africans as savages. This in turn led to a quest to civilize Africans and absorb them into the European culture and way of life. In the process they ended up destroying the local cultures or making them subservient to their own (Keteyi and Maluleke 1998:23, Bediako 1992: 225-237). In South Africa the African independent churches started chiefly for two reasons: Firstly, the notion of exclusion of deserving black ministers from influential positions of leadership within the church, effectively barring them from important decision making forums. This led to educated African leaders starting indigenous churches meant to fulfill African aspirations for leadership growth and spirituality. That is precisely what led to the first South African independent African church - the *Tembu Church* also known at the time as the *Native Separatist Church* under the leadership of Nehemia Tile in

1883 (Mosala 1989:9). The second reason was that of asserting African national identity in the face of disempowerment under colonial forces which threatened total destruction of African pride and nationhood (Vilakazi et al 1986:17-19). Hence churches at the time deliberately projected particular nationalistic identities like the Tembu Church, for the Xhosa. Even Shembe's church promoted Zulu culture and identity. When Shembe started his church in 1911, he also found out that missionaries were collaborating with authorities by keeping African ministers under white supervision thereby emphasizing their subservient position. They tried to make the scheme attractive by exempting those who cooperated from carrying *pass books* (Sundkler 1976:165-166). The white ministers and missionaries also jealously guarded their influence within areas they apportioned to themselves as mission reserves (Gunner 1998:216). Hence Shembe's emergence into the picture was problematic to the prevailing status quo. He did not subscribe totally to the set norms governing the control of African ministers. He did things his own way. The authorities could not ignore him since he was very influential amongst many Africans as his ministry gained more and more recognition. It became apparent through the many converts he was making that he was addressing the most fundamental needs of the people as even people from the said mission stations ended up joining his church. He also proved to be well organized as far as the leadership of his church was concerned dispelling the myth that Africans could not be efficient leaders. This became a serious problem to the white ministers and the authorities and they set out to harass him and his church members (Gunner 1998:214-218). So Shembe's efforts at inculturation should be seen beyond addressing cultural issues. His ministry should also be seen in the light of the broad liberation struggle.

Milingo on the other hand became archbishop in 1969 about five years after Zambia got its independence. This was a period in which the process of "Zambianisation" had set in since independence. The fact that he was installed archbishop aged only thirty nine, for lack of any other suitable candidate should be seen as an indication that the church hierarchy had expected to guide him gradually within the ranks (Ter Haar 1992:94-95). They did not expect a radical person who would bring immediate changes. Thus his efforts at inculturation were

to some extent deliberately seen as an act of one who was still inexperienced or rather imprudent due to his age. And his fellow priests made efforts to frustrate him and even get rid of him. However, seen in the true light, Milingo sought to make the Gospel relevant to every African within and without the church's sphere of influence and in the process his mission led him to lock horns with some intransigent priests within the church. Hence his role at inculturation must also be seen within the overall liberation struggle. As we continue with our discussion we will need to define the term inculturation so that we can have a common understanding.

3. DEFINING INCULTURATION AND THE HISTORY BEHIND THE TERM

Roest Crollius points out that the term inculturation is borrowed from anthropology and has an original meaning describing the process by which the church becomes inserted in a given culture (Crollius 1986:35). He describes inculturation as the dynamic relationship between the local church and its own culture. This is demonstrated by individual local churches being intimately built up of people, their aspirations, riches, limitations, ways of praying, loving, world view, and having the task of assimilating the essence of the gospel message and of transposing it, without the slightest betrayal of its essential truth into the language that these particular people understand (Crollius 1986:38).

John Mary Waliggo (1986:11-12), traces the history of inculturation, pointing out that although the term may be of recent origin in Christian theology and language, the reality it signifies has been present in various degrees in the church since its foundation. He says there has been a noticeable development from one term to another. First, the term *Adaptation* was used. This did not go far enough to express the reality of an indissoluble marriage between Christianity and each local culture. It implied a selection within Christian rituals where there was an apparent similarity. Secondly, the usage of the term *Indigenization* followed. It referred to the same process but underlined the necessity for promoting indigenous church ministers in every locality. Thirdly, the Second Vatican Council stressed *reformulation* of the Christian doctrine in the thought and language that are understood by contemporary

persons. Soon after the council the term *Incarnation* of the Christian message came into general use. The term is quiet expressive and theologically sound. It means that as Christ himself chose to become man in order to save humanity, the Church has no alternative but to do the same in every culture and time in order to continue the salvation brought by Christ. *Inculturation* then came to express that same reality while underlining the importance of cultures as the instrument and the means for realizing the *incarnation* process of the Christian religion. It further came to imply the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation more clearly understood by people of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the thought patterns of each people. In the African context its purpose is to ensure that Christianity becomes truly African. It makes the Christian ideas to be part of the African way of thinking. The Christian vision of life is then able to fulfill their own needs, and the Christian world view becomes part of truly African aspirations.

So as we continue with our discussion concerning Shembe and Milingo's activities as far as inculturation goes, we must have the above ideas in mind to help us see how far they have gone in their endeavours.

4. THE SCOPE OF INCULTURATION

Waliggo points out that the scope of inculturation must go beyond activities such as, adapting liturgical rites and ceremonies into local cultures; adapting church music into local melodies, allowing Christian art to be inspired by local conceptions and sense of beauty; and encouraging the use of local vestments and instruments for celebration of mass. He says it must actually extend to the totality of Christian life and doctrine. The Christian doctrine as it has developed, the Christian liturgy, spirituality, ministry and ministries need to relate to the cultural aspirations of each people (Waliggo 1986:19). Michael Mateka also adds that we need to inculturate the African spirit and mentality on the one hand and the gospel expression and terminology, structures of governance in the church, exercise of authority and style of leadership, community involvement, and channels and methods of consultation on the other

hand (Mateka 1995:16). To this effect we can say that Milingo indeed was on a mission of going beyond mere cosmetic changes. He inspired people to share in the vision of an African church. He started a project to increase the number of Zambian clergy, and stimulated the development of different councils for the laity in general. He also earmarked women and youth in particular to get more involved in the work of the church. The healing ministry was based on the principles of getting the church meet the needs of all in need whether Christians or non-Christians (Ter Haar 1994:13-14). Milingo influenced changes in leadership style, authority and priorities in his diocese as suggested by Mateka and Waliggo. His aim was a total Christian ministry that relates to all aspects of the people's lives.

The same could be said of Shembe. Amongst other things, Shembe's church music incorporated indigenous local cultural trends which he inimitably shaped to give a unique identity to the church. The instruments used are traditional drums and horns which retains a strong cultural feel. The church doctrines which adapted the Nazareth way of purity in living and temperance, upheld cultural aspirations discouraging promiscuous living especially among the young people. His style of church governance is fashioned along the lines of the traditional Zulu structure of leadership¹.

Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz add another dimension to the understanding of executing the mandate of inculturation. They say that the challenge is to go beyond the rules and regulations of the Bible to a complete transformation in the Christian life (Healey and Syberts 1996:18). They further say that it is not a matter of taking the traditional customs of African culture and making the best ones fit into Christianity. Neither is it a matter of African cultural values being mediated through Western culture and thought patterns. Rather it is to start from the reality of the African context and see how the gospel message can

¹ Views from personal observations and interviews made during a visit to Ebuhleni church head quarters during the July festival. See Karen Brown, 1992:97-98. See also Sundkler 1976:170, 178-179.

become a "leaven" to it. The priority they say, is to be an African Christian rather than a Christian African (Healey and Syberts 1996:19-20). Again here one can add that this is what one observes when one enters the premises of Ebuhleni. There is that spirit of being African and Christian. The environment is such that one feels the environmental change². Through a deeper inculturation people are challenged to discover the richness of African Christianity and to share this with other peoples and cultures in the world Church. The encounter of African culture with Christianity brings a newness, a freshness, an originality, a difference like a spice that brings a new taste to food (Healey and Sybertz 1996: 19-20). Deep African values, such as community, hospitality, the living dead, patient endurance in adversity, and holistic healing bring something new and truly enrich world Christianity and the world Church (Healey and Sybertz 1996:20).

5. FACTORS HINDERING PROGRESS IN INCULTURATION

To understand the reason behind some of Milingo's problems as far as implementing his brand of inculturation is concerned, one could take note of Peter Sarpong and John Waliggo's observations. Sarpong points out that a majority of the clergy are not interested in the process of inculturation, and many are indifferent. He sites the example of the Catholic church in Ghana. Few people participate when the whole congregation is waving handkerchiefs or dancing. He says that many Catholics believe that what they have received from the early missionaries is what Catholicism is about. Any deviation from that is regarded as unorthodox. Some even question dancing before the blessed sacrament (Sarpong 1999:118). Waliggo on the other hand points out that some people are opposed to inculturation simply because they feel that the aim of inculturation is that of creating a different type of Christianity, a faulty Christianity. They fear that the central doctrine of faith will be dismantled and Christian standards lowered. They suspect it would divert Christian growth by introducing superstitions long condemned, elements of paganism long forgotten, and create a syncretistic Christianity. Some even fear that the movement may bring divisions

² View from my observation on a visit to Ebuhleni.

in the church, create an unhealthy imbalance between the local and the universal church and perhaps lead to some schisms (Waliggo 1986:14).

Looking back at the brief ministry of Milingo as the archbishop of Lusaka, the observations of the two above commentators are accurate. Milingo started work in the new office assuming that his election meant a sign of confidence on the part of the church that Africans have a contribution to make in the life of the church. He further considered it to be in line with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. He introduced drums during services; formed a pilot liturgical choir for which he composed songs; and promoted the wearing of traditional Zambian dress. Milingo also established a community of nuns called *Daughters of the Redeemer* which upheld and promoted African values. He gave lectures on African culture and values in relation to Christianity. The healing ministry was also part of the inculturation programme (Ter Haar 1992:10-11). In starting all these activities, Milingo believed he was on the right track in implementing an inculturation programme.

However, Milingo's early attempts at inculturation were met with resistance from both the white and black priests. The black priests were not used to such a forthright approach. The whites on the other hand were resistant to change because they were not yet ready for the sudden reversal of roles which Milingo encouraged. For instance, his participation in traditional dancing at church ceremonies made him popular with the people, but put him at odds with the church as it was considered to be out of line with his office's dignity. The healing ministry which attended to the needs of even the most poor who could not afford, or access medical aid was also seen as a problem. His public comments against social and political injustice within the country and the sub-region were seen as too radical. The latter measure made the white priests even more uncomfortable as they felt left out of decision making and could not exercise their power to censor Milingo's "utterances", thereby feeling their power base eroded. They also felt he was dividing the church as he was chiding its involvement with immoral governments in the region which oppressed the poor. This led to him being called to the Vatican and strongly reprimanded (Ter Haar 1992:11-12).

In evaluating Milingo's initiatives, we may at face value say that he appeared to be a bit rash in the way he handled the process. Considering the inherent autocratic culture within his church, one might say that he perhaps should have been more cautious. However, he was driven by a strong and noble conviction to restore African identity within the church. He knew that he had to immediately change the course of events in order to make Christianity meaningful and relevant to the African people in his land. So the struggle, pain and errors were inevitable in the quest to realize this objective even though one may choose to differ with some of his strategies. Again one could argue that as a pioneer he had to be more aggressive and even confrontational in order to challenge the expatriate priests out of their complacency in order to change the status quo.

Looking at the ministry of Shembe, the people who were against his ministry were white missionaries, people in the established mainline churches and even some AIC leaders who did not want to be associated with him. Concerning the AIC leaders who did not want to be associated with Shembe, Sundkler has this to say:

They are, of course, aware of the power and attraction of Shembe; but they probably try all the more to convince the European inquirer that Shembe is not sufficiently "Biblical" or "Christian". ... In short, they feel embarrassed by being classified with Shembe's AmaNazaretha, which they generally regard as misguided (Sundkler 1976:161).

Shembe on the other hand regarded himself as biblical in everything he did, but he also considered the biblical in line with what was relevant to his cultural context. Mainline churches looked down on his church just as they do with most AIC churches. The reason for this is that most of the leaders and followers in these churches are least educated and are regarded as backward as they still uphold some of the African rituals and traditions which have been flushed out by missionaries in the mainline churches (Oosthuizen). Missionaries and white ministers saw him as a "sheep stealer", a competitor who was destabilizing their work. They tried to use the government's racist laws to disbar him from preaching in what they called "native reserves". They regarded his teachings with suspicion and sometimes with sheer disdain since he was not under control or supervision of any of the white

missionaries (Gunner 1988:216-217). However, one must point out that the exercise of inculturation is not necessarily smooth without any dangers. We must now look into what these dangers are.

6. DANGERS INHERENT IN INCULTURATION

Peter Sarpong points out that there is always the danger of falling into antiquarianism, which has to do with undue glorification of the past without discernment, and neo-paganism. He further says that pure inculturation should seek beyond the symbols of culture abiding principles. For example behind death ceremonies there is always the idea of the immortality of the soul and the idea of retribution for the wicked and reward for the good. He says with liturgy, there is the further danger of syncretism, and also warns that care should be taken that inculturation does not land us in the territory of anachronism (Sarpong 1999:107). The other issue is that of signification. He points out that it is not because something is cultural and good that it should be introduced in the liturgy. It is essential that it is understood exactly what the church wants to express before looking for the cultural symbol through which to expressed the concept. Also it should be assessed whether it is proper for the Church to insist on what it wants to express at a particular point even if it does not make an impression on worshipers. Sarpong finally insists that for inculturation to be helpful and effective, expertise is needed in the social life of the people, culture, concepts, thought patterns, myths and rituals, in theology, in the liturgy, in sacred music and in sacred Scriptures (Sarpong 1999:107-108).

Looking at Milingo's ministry, we find that he was accused of neo-paganism by his fellow priests. They claimed that the power he was using to heal the people was not necessarily of God, it was just magic. In line with Waliggo's argument that inculturation must be based by an understanding of Christianity and the local cultures, Milingo came to his conclusion of emphasizing African spiritual identity having involved himself in participatory research as a pastor about the spiritual dynamics in the Zambian society and the presence of evil. He then looked into ways of combating evil. It also involves the understanding of the cosmology

of the people (Ter Haar 1992: 139). What appeared to be one of the most worrisome areas for most of the priests was that Milingo did not believe that traditional doctors operate under the influence of the devil. On the contrary, not only did he exclude traditional doctors from his judgment, he also showed great respect for spirit healers who are believed to derive their spiritual power from God through the ancestors or other guardian spirits. All that such healers say on behalf of the spirit is done for the welfare and benefit of the community. Spirit mediums of this kind are, in Milingo's view, clean, simple and religious. He implies that they lead a religious life based on the beliefs which direct the life of the community (Ter Haar 1992:148).

Milingo's view on the spirit mediums is difficult to accept, especially in the light of missionary teachings which have emphasized in the past that spirit mediums and traditional doctors are indiscriminately demonic. Even Milingo's fellow African priests who shared his background found this difficult to accept. They were taught, including Milingo, to regard such views as promoting paganism. So this made it easy for his critics to suspect his healing and dismiss it as part of neo-paganism. He was in effect seen as one of the said traditional healers masquerading in Christian religious cloth (Ter Haar 1992:149; Milingo 1986:7).

Milingo further states that the integrity of the spirit healer is determined by the possessing spirit, and this can be identified from the spirit's behaviour. He adds that misbehaviour and rough language of the possessed medium immediately reveal that he or she is under the control of the devil. It is through actions then that one can distinguish the nature of a medium, whether he is acting for evil or for good (Ter Haar 1992:149). Milingo's claims cannot be dismissed off-hand since even Michael Singleton, a Catholic priest working in Tanzania, came to the same conclusions in his investigation on exorcism and the local spirit mediums (Singleton 1978:471-478).

The other problematic area is that of Milingo's concept of "the world-in-between". It sounds more like just another "mumbo-jumbo", until one realizes that indeed from time immemorial

Africans have been accessing this world. Specialists such as traditional doctors, spirit mediums, and other specially gifted people, have a been able to directly access this area. African independent churches have for a long time been familiar with the secrets of this area. However, very few people have been prepared to learn from them since they have been dismissed in most cases as "neo-paganists". However, the mainline church needs to investigate further these spiritual issues in order to be able to address fully the spiritual needs of the African. There is nothing antiquarian or anachronistic about Milingo's views, actually such an attitude towards his views should be seen as a silly attempt to hide behind religious purity in order to avoid the responsibility of dealing with real African questions.

Regarding Shembe, his concept of bringing ancestors into the church is quite innovative. This is in line with Mbiti's suggestion that Africans should adapt useful and important concepts and items into the church to create a meaningful environment of worship (Mbiti 1976:311-312). Shembe does this through the ritual he conducts during one of the annual festivals in his church. Members of his church go to the burial sites to put flowers on the graves and pray. Oosthuizen (1994: xxx), states that this becomes a time for spiritual empowerment for members of the church as they get into contact with the spirits of the ancestors. In some quarters this may be regarded as the neo-paganism referred to by Sarpong. However, looking at it from another perspective, one should see it as an appropriate act of continuity between Christianity and traditional religion.

We can now try to see to what extend inculturation is an aspect of liberation in Shembe and Milingo's ministries.

7. INCULTURATION AND LIBERATION

Waliggo argues that in its basic aim of making Christianity relevant to the existing situation, inculturation must incorporate liberation theology. Christianity must speak meaningfully to each people in their socio-economic and political situation which in Africa is seen in suffering from poverty, disease, exploitation, war, dictatorship, hunger, underdevelopment

and economic inequalities, amongst others. It is inculturated Christianity that can attempt to give an answer of hope to the anxieties and anguishes of the people when addressing itself to such realities (Waliggo 1986:24).

As regards Shembe it is not easy to label him an activist against injustice nor to regard him as a collaborator with the status quo. The reason behind this is that Shembe comes out as a pragmatist who weighed issues to determine what an expedient action would be under the circumstances. According to Oosthuizen (1994: xxv), who had an interview with his grandson Londa, one of the leaders of the church after his father Galilee Shembe's death, Shembe referred to Jesus as Liberator and Redeemer, as seen in the church's hymn book (Hymn 2:4). Londa, who was a trained lawyer, saw his grandfather's theology in the context of the whole South African situation and its enslavement under an apartheid ideology, and not only the liberation of the Zulus. On the other hand, Robert Papini points out another side of Shembe that seems to show him as a collaborator with the status quo. He says that at one instance when Shembe sought permission from the authorities to hold a church service, he declared, "I teach my followers to obey the authorities placed over them, and to pay their taxes cheerfully" (Papini 1999:250). After this, the magistrate reasoned that Shembe, "fully understands his position and is anxious to remain submissive to Law and order". Permission was granted, and the black constable sent to accompany the pilgrimage reported that, "The whole following was well behaved during the whole time and there was nothing we could take exception to" (Papini 1999:250).

Papini goes further to say,

Over the troubled decade of the 1920s it grew into a recognition that the heretofore irksome land buying prophet, whose Commandments to his following cited *Romans 13:7* as affirmation that 'in particular, we must keep the laws concerning earthly rulers', in fact rightly belonged within the establishment laager, as part of the bulwark against new and volatile social forces (Papini 1999:250).

However, it becomes clearer when one reads Elizabeth Gunner's account that Shembe only played along with the authorities in order to avoid any unnecessary hindrances to his church plans in acquiring land and other necessities for his ministry. Whenever, the authorities

seemed to over-play their hand in exercising control over him, he proved to be more than a match for them. Gunner points out that the early encounters with the authorities were recorded in Shembe's *izibongo* as metaphors in reciting the conflict against the opposition and the victories of Shembe (Gunner 1988:214-219). A further reading of Papini also shows that the authorities ended up bowing to pressure from Shembe's demands since they feared that he wielded much influence over the Africans he was leading. They did not needlessly want to allow him to have a grievance against them since he was regarded as "unbalanced" (Papini 1999:250-251). Shembe's eccentricism proved to be a pro-active device to counter the government's control. Papini states that he was referred to in different names such as, 'enigmatic personage', 'the madman, son of Mayekisa', 'the remarkable Zulu native faith doctor'. He even drew the attention of the English press which reported widely about the festivals of the church (Papini 1999:251-252).

On the other hand Milingo got involved in condemning social injustice as part of a conscious programme of inculturation which took into cognizance the importance of speaking up for justice in order for Christianity to be seen to be relevant (Ter Haar 1992:11-12).

Mutiso-Mbinda points out that part of the agenda for inculturation must be liberation from everything that oppresses people. The church in Africa, to be seen to be credible, must show genuine concern for the oppressed people. It must be concerned about the social, economic, and political life of the people. It must bring hope to those who are hopeless and joy to those who are in sorrow. It must refuse to accept the condition where people are poor, ignorant, superstitious, fearful, oppressed and wretched, and make people realize that the kingdom of God is among them (Mutiso-Mbinda 1986:79-81). Milingo was within his rights when he condemned the church for its compliant part with oppressive governments of Angola, Mozambique and South Africa since he could not ignore them. However, his fellow bishops, who were mostly white or "white tokens", felt personally under attack since these governments were white and protecting white privileges. They distanced themselves from his statements since they did not have the best interests of the African people at heart. They

instead wanted to protect the interest of the universal Catholic Church, at the expense of the local church in these countries by keeping quiet when injustice continued (Ter Haar 1992:11-12).

Smangaliso Mkhathshwa (1994:28), quoting Jean-Marc Ela, states that for inculturation in Africa to be possible, even successful Africans must take control of their lives and destinies. Inculturation should not be the work of outsiders. Africans cannot carry out inculturation as long as they are in cultural and socio-economic bondage to non-Africans. In line with this thinking we see Milingo's berating of the Church's collaboration with oppressive governments as a necessary measure. However, knowing that those in power seldom forfeit their position without a fight, the confrontation was inevitable. Perhaps the church could have been more tolerant if the initiative was led by a white liberal priest. However, Milingo being an indigenous African, created power problems for the church.

Milingo's theology of liberation is influenced, amongst other things, by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians' (EATWOT), third world theology. This is the type of theology that breaks with traditional theology because it is community based, contextual, interdisciplinary and ecumenical in character. The theology is based on personal experiences of members of the church. It does not accept the separation of the spiritual and the material, the religious and the profane. It is in constant communication with the surrounding world, and acknowledges the primacy of praxis. Christian faith is seen not as a doctrine to be accepted but as a road to be followed (Ter Haar 1992: 157-158). Milingo is convinced that liberation starts with the individual but it is not just the individual who has to be freed from evil and sin in order to be healed. The need for liberation applies to all sectors of society, including the church, whose credibility, according to Milingo, has suffered as a result of the personal shortcomings of its leaders. He points out that the church in Africa often sided with ruling elites and has not distinguished itself enough. It has not done enough in challenging oppression, exploitation and injustice. On the contrary it has lived at peace with perpetrators of oppression and injustice. He further points out that the church taught Africans to practice

certain values which itself has failed to live up to in its own doctrines (Ter Haar 1992:158).

As pointed out by Oosthuizen (1994: xxvii), Shembe's mission seemed to have been that of restoring the dignity of the Zulu nation and the independence of the Zulus who suffered greatly when they resisted the invasions of their country by first the Boers, then the British. Through his combination of Christianity and Zulu religious elements he was able to bring his followers to meet Jehovah and their ancestors on the holy mountain of Nhlankakazi where they had a covenant with Jehovah and felt themselves asserted as Zulus proud of their heritage (Oosthuizen 1994: xxx). This is what Mbiti suggests in his African theology, when he insists that Africans must bring their ancestors to church. However, Shembe does this practically without being aware of any smart theological postulations to this effect. He introduced a church leadership structure compatible with Zulu society's kingship patterns and its system of rank. He emphasized religious conceptions and ritual institutions of kingship which fulfilled critical integrative functions. This includes the recognition of *Nhlankakazi*, the annual pilgrimage and the July festival which reach back to Zulu religion and ancestry (Oosthuizen 1994: xxvii-xxx).

8. INCULTURATION AND THE WOMEN'S ISSUES

Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike (1994:47), is concerned that despite African theologians having seriously advocated the theology of inculturation on a theoretical level, they have been silent on the issue of women (especially in the church). She decries the attempt by some African scholars to dismiss questions raised by African women concerning their traditional roles limited and restricted by culture and society. She is against scholars who insinuate that these questions are foreign, and emanate and originate in Western ideology, and are therefore, not relevant to the African context.

She argues:

We do believe that Africans and non-Africans share the same basic human nature and it is culture that makes us have different world views. I hope, nevertheless, the awareness of the women's reality as being completely shackled is present in every culture and especially in the Church (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1994:47).

She however points out that despite the seeming indifference, there is a growing force among African women scholars, which is shaking up traditional virtues and predeterminations in every sphere of religious and cultural life. Quoting Mercy Oduyoye, she points out that woman awareness focuses on the wholeness of the human community in which male-humanity and female humanity shape a balanced community within which the humanity of each and every person experiences a fullness of being. To exclude women from inculturational theology, she says, is the same as omitting one pole of Hegel's dialectical system. There can be no synthesis (Nasimiyu-Wasike 94:47).

Nasimiyu-Wasike further says that this new force is focused on value change, respects cooperation rather than competition, mutuality rather than hierarchical decision making, and integration rather than dualism. It demands that women's experiences should become an integral part of the definition of being human. She says that womanhood awareness is a call to authentic Christian living which allows for all people to develop to full personhood, that all human talents, gifts, rights, and imperfections are not divided along sex lines. Therefore a fundamental role of all human beings is to actualize all their talents and faculties to the full and contribute to the development of humanity in as complete a manner as possible (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1994:47-48). Nasimiyu-Wasike further says that Jesus denounced whatever enslaved the people and rejected anything that kept people from appreciating their fundamental human dignity and worth. He denounced the degrading and segregating systems created by people to promote and foster the status quo, as exemplified in the story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-41); the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) and the story of Jesus and Zacheas (Luke 19:1-10). She further charges that women's awareness is calling for denouncement of the very evil forces that Christ denounced. This denouncement, she says, was a threat to the women who depended on such systems for the legitimization of the exploitation of others in order to preserve their own privileged status, prestige, power and control, which simply put is evil (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1994:49).

Generally it could be said that Shembe was against oppression of any kind. He even went to the extent of protecting animals against abuse. However, he preserved Zulu traditions which emphasized different roles for men and women. He did not go out of his way to oppress women or suppress their talents in any way. In fact the church grew rapidly because of the active role women played in the church. The women themselves did not necessarily see themselves as oppressed as they prescribed to the social mores of Zulu tradition. If he suppressed women in the church in any way, it would be by default rather than as an overt act of malice. The fact that he took long to leave his mother and wives to go full-time into ministry points to how much he respected women and would not let them suffer. Shembe acknowledged the contribution of women in the church by charging them with many other responsibilities. He also, in his peripatetic ministry, went with a troupe of girls. These girls are fought side by side with him once when Shembe was attacked in a village. Women preachers were also found in his church, and they started many home churches in different places. It is these women who invited him to their home churches.

Milingo on the other hand was trapped in the Roman Catholic Church culture. There was not much he could do. All he could do was to develop the women within the prevailing cultural constraints of the church. His lectures to *Daughters of the Redeemer* are an example of this. Indeed his major challenge was to shake the status quo as far as the whole question of Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism is concerned and induce a power shift. At this time this was his major preoccupation. If he were to tamper with the pre-ordained church structures at this time it would have been quiet imprudent on his part. Considering that he was preoccupied with the issue of inculturation in the church, upsetting the hierarchy further on gender issues would have been worthless. Even today things are still stagnant in the Catholic church concerning the issue of the advancement of women's roles in the church. There wasn't much that could be done by Milingo alone to influence change in the church.

With Shembe the stagnancy on the advancement of women's role in the church is caused by the fact that the church is inherently steeped in Zulu culture. It only needs a charismatic

leader like himself to shift their thinking. The greatest weakness in the AICs and in most churches, is to find it easy to traditionalize everything that has worked well in the past. This leaves very little room for change and improvement. The women still need to be empowered in Shembe's church today the same as they need to be empowered in the Catholic church. Traditions must be altered to accommodate new aspirations and needs within the church community.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion we must point out that inculturation must be seen as an ongoing process since culture is a dynamic and continuous process of change. Therefore changes that take place in the local culture, in its customs and values, represent new choices for the Church. Crollius points out that this is especially evident when it is considered that acculturative processes take place between various cultures. Societies could face a crisis of identity if the process is not well handled (Crollius 1986:38). For instance, in urban areas people are affected by various cultures sometimes resulting in confusion and loss of identity. In most cases AICs have helped respond to this crisis. We must also agree with Crollius (1986:39) when he asserts that inculturation must not only take place in the formative period of a local church, but throughout its existence. This is also important amongst churches that have been long established the need for inculturation is always there. Inculturation must effectively affect all facets of church life and the community.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

At this point of our discussion we would like to make a summary of how Shembe and Milingo contribute to African Christianity and also try to depict a model from their ministries which can be useful to the mainline churches.

The contribution of Shembe and Mbiti to African Christianity must be seen within the overall response by African Christians to the theological problems resulting from the ethnocentric presuppositions and actions by the modern missionary enterprise in their humanitarian quest to "civilise" the "savage" and "primitive" in African and elsewhere (Bediako 1992:239). This is the problem that made John Mbiti lament, as quoted by Bediako (1992:237),

Mission Christianity was not from the start prepared to face a serious encounter with the traditional religions and philosophy or the modern changes taking place... the Church in Africa now finds itself in the situation of having to exist without a theology.

In Shembe and Milingo's ministries we see efforts that are part of an African movement to create that theology. It is a theology that revisits values found in the primal religions as answers are sought to help African Christians adjust to post-modern challenges. In them we further see efforts to genuinely address the need for healing in African communities, and the inherent desire to be protected from evil forces and eventually prevail against them. We see bold attempts to make Christianity real and relevant and own up to its role to perfect what Africans have had in their primal religions, in this case African traditional religion (Mbiti 1970:432). Mbiti poignantly explains this issue of perfecting, or fulfilment of primal religions when he says,

The task of fulfilment does not mean saying only "yes": it also says, "no". In order to preserve it may be necessary to prune as well; and African Traditional Religions need a lot of pruning, if their best values are to be preserved and taken up in Christianity. Christian fulfilment means, in effect, a universalizing act, and what cannot measure up to that height is not worth fulfilling (Mbiti 1970:436).

Accepting that African traditional religions have limitations and have served as preparation for evangelism, the challenge that follows then is for the main line churches to boldly grapple with the reality that ATR can and does indeed enrich Christianity (Mbiti 436-437). In the process they will also have to find creative ways of isolating that which is not acceptable and compatible with Christianity. In Shembe and Milingo we see their efforts of owning up to this challenge.

We also see efforts to address African questions that missionaries have in the past successfully attempted to shy away from.

Shembe and Milingo's efforts at inculturation can be seen also as a quest to affirm African Christian identity. They give us an example of what Bediako refers to as a struggle that forces the theologian to become in himself or herself the point of intersection of the struggle for integration through an inner dialogue which becomes infinitely personal and intense (Bediako 1995:256). Both Shembe and Milingo engage in this inner dialogue which prompts them to take measures which strive to assert African identity at different levels.

As regards their model of ministry, firstly, we may say that the church is seen as a **healing community**. Nthamburi points out that one cannot be spiritually healthy when one is sick physically. Independent churches have set an example in their endeavours to capture the African ethos of wholeness. Sickness is directly dealt with and the assistance of supernatural powers is invoked. Malevolent spirits are dealt with (Nthamburi 1990:45-47). Both Shembe and Milingo get engaged in preaching in their ministries as part of effecting spiritual healing. A way of getting people healed from the effects of sin, and to get them to be reconciled to God and their fellow man. Consequently physical healing comes as a continuation of the overall, holistic healing exercise. It also comes as a by-product of fighting the evil spirits that hinder the well being of a person. So essentially the church becomes a healing community, and everything else follows. The challenge for the mainline church as brought to bear by Shembe and Milingo's ministry is then to appreciate that healing is a fundamental ministry of the church, especially in Africa.

Secondly, they show an example of a **dynam. : church**. Waruta describes a dynamic church as one that constantly face challenges of growth and accommodates the voice of dissent as part of the growth process. This is against the static church that is preoccupied with traditions and doctrinal purity that may not necessarily be addressing the new challenges. He makes mention of the so-called heretics in church history. Arius, Nestorius, Donatus, Euthyches and Luther as examples of people who helped the church redefine itself as a result of dissenting from the rest (Waruta 1990: 31-33). Shembe, as part of the AIC movement, was definitely a dissenting voice against the dictates of missionary Christianity. A necessary movement in the quest to assert

African identity and realise African aspirations within the African Christian idiom. Milingo's actions were on the other hand seen by the church as representing a dissenting voice that was threatening to divide it. It also brought to the fore how impatient a big institution like Milingo's church can be, with dissenting individuals. This calls for caution on embarking on a large scale programme of change and carefully evaluate all the necessary factors. Milingo also demonstrates that as a champion for change, one has to bare the brunt courageously, but also be much prudent lest the programme be unnecessarily jeopardised. Waruta points out that it is possible for the church to move from being a static mainline church to a vibrant and popular church addressing the needs of the people, and getting people to be active participants in church life (Waruta 1990:34-38). To some extent this is what Shembe has achieved in his church, and Milingo was in the process of achieving before he was summarily sent off to the Vatican.

Thirdly, there is the model of the church as a *worshipping community*. Here Nyamiti points out that independent churches are known to be lively places of worship where there is clapping, stamping, dancing, and swinging as they praise the Lord. Traditional instruments are also used to enhance the rhythm and spontaneity. But part of a worshipping community involves earnest prayer which is characterised by free expression and corporate reverence. A move away from formalised liturgy that may at the end not mean anything to the people involved, reduced to mere ritual that is empty. Indigenous language is also used to encourage this free expression in prayer (Nthamburi 1990: 47-48). In Shembe's church this free worship is expressed within the distinctive worship culture within the church. The annual church festivals become the climax of the expression of this free worship. Different forms of singing signify different moods and hence involvement in prayer and worship¹. Milingo introduced traditional melodies for worship and even composed music to this effect. He also encouraged the use of indigenous language during mass so that people can be involved throughout the service. The mainline churches need to eagerly address this problem of free worship. The missionaries introduced the staid form of worship which was compatible with their culture. Africans have to move away from this culture since it makes it hard for people to truly worship God whilst simulating a sobriety that is not

¹ This is according to observations made during the annual July festival attended in July 1999.

compatible with their temperament as Africans.

Having said all this we do not see Shembe and Milingo as totally perfect in their efforts. Inculturation is a continuous search for perfection which also takes into account experimentation. So their efforts are only contributions towards achieving a vibrant and relevant African Christian ministry within their different contexts. The fact that they address the need for healing in the church and encourage a vibrant worship environment characterised by songs sung in local musical idioms, should encourage the mainline churches which are lagging behind. The way forward for the mainline churches is to take a leaf from Shembe and Milingo's ministries and learn what they can to enhance the church's ministry. They must also start asking relevant questions about the spirit world and explore ways to give guidance to members of the church in order to avoid them going outside the church to seek advice and risk the danger of being misled.

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