The meaning of healing in the Gospel of Mark vs the testimony of Hadebe: A correlation and comparison

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DECLARATION

I, **MATTHIAS PHEKO THINANE**, declare that:

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As the supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission.

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DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to my late mother Annah Thinane and father Johannes Thinane for their love, support, encouragement and sacrifices they made in supporting me to further my education and learning.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis compares and correlates the function of healing in the Gospel of Mark (8:22–26) and in Gunner (2002:189c–191a). Healing, an important discourse in the Gospel of Mark and regarded as the cornerstone of Shembe's Church in Gunner (2002), and the growth of Shembe's church among the African Initiated Churches (AICs), is inclined to have many functions, both literary and symbolic. The type of healing referred to in these two religions are namely the illnesses that affect African people (*ukufa kwabantu)* and somatisation, an expression of psychological or emotional factors manifesting as physical (somatic) symptoms; stress can cause some people to develop headaches, chest pains, backache, nausea and fatigue, similar to the illnesses researched in the Gospel of Mark. The thesis discourses on this symbolism – particularly in (Mk 8:22–26, exposing its function in the healing narratives. The texts that discuss the cases of illness in the Gospel of Mark are discussed and compared with those found in the AICs from the early twentieth-century *isiZulu* setting. However, due to the influence of the bible and the African Traditional Religions on the AICs, the study intends to investigate the degree of the presence of these influences in the healing system as per the testimony of Hadebe in Gunner (2002). Similarly, the influence of other healing traditions of the first-century Mediterranean region in the Gospel of Mark is also reviewed. The literature review on the anthropological and socio-cultural illness and traditional healer-physician distinctions leads the discussion to a comparison between Jesus and Shembe as belonging to the same sect in the traditional healers' enclave, particularly where Jesus is compared to a [Galilean] Shaman. A verse-by-verse exegesis of Mark's healing of blindness is presented where the similarities between symbolic illness and the characters in other texts in the Gospel are examined. The two-stage attempts of Jesus in healing blindness with saliva and prayer and its symbolic meaning are also debated on. The symbolic nature of the narrative presented in (Mk 8:22-26) promotes the search for and insight into the comparative significance of the tourniquet, song and dance in the testimony of Hadebe. (Gunner, 2002:189c-191a). A pursuit of the notion of the function of healing, where the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26) is discussed, compared and correlated with that of Shembe's healing of Mqhanganyi, a young woman who was bitten by snake in Hadebe's narrative in Gunner (2002:189c- 191a). The study presents an analysis of the appropriation of Scripture by both Mark and Hadebe, providing the reader with an in-depth

understanding of the structure of the work of both authors in relation to their theology. The study concludes with a comparison on the conversion of candidates in both Shembe and Mark churches.
Key terms: healings, symbolism, narratives, illnesses, two-stage healing, conversions, songs and dancing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

ABHA	Overtures to Biblical Theology (Philadelphia)
AGNT	Analytical Greek New Testament
AIC	African Initiated/Institute/ Independent/Indigenous Churches
ATR	African Traditional Religion[s]
AUETSA	Association of University English Teachers of South Africa
BDB	F, Brown, S. R. Driver, and C A Briggs, The Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (rev. ed.; Oxford 1952)
BHS	labelled WTT: *Biblia Hebraica* Stuttgartensia BHS [labelled WTT]
BZXI	*Biblische Zeitschrift* XI
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
GK	*Gereformeerde* (*Dopper*) *Kerk*
GNT	Greek New Testament
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
Isl	*Isihlabelelo* (a hymn); (*Izl* plural form).
KJV	King James Version
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LXX	*Septuagint*, (A) *Codex Alexandrinus* (B) *Vaticanus*, (C) Sinaiticus
NBC	Nazarite Baptist Church
NGK	*Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*
NHK	*Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk*
NRS	New Revised Standard Version
NRSV	The New Revised Standard Version
NTD	*Das Neue Testament Deutsch*
OBT Phl	Oral Bible Translation
Ori	Orientalia
Orita	Origen
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
S	One Shilling, an early South African silver coin equivalent to today's ten cents
S.T.L	The Licentiate in Sacred Theology
SCM	Student Christian Movement
Sir	Sirach
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UKPND	United Kingdom Pound Sterling. (Currency)
WUNT	*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*
ZCC	Zion Christian Church

GLOSSARY

Abantu abamhlophe	White people or people with a gift of healing, such a concept is often used by IsiXhosa-speaking people
AmaNazaretha	The Nazarites or members of the Nazarite Baptist Church
AmaXhosa	The Xhosa people
AmaZulu	the Zulu people
Ibandla	the congregation
Inhlwathi.	Python
Isangoma	a diviner
Isithutha	a (particular) ancestral spirit
imiteto	Laws, customs, and traditions of the people
Ibandla lamaNazaretha	the name of the church established by Isaiah Shembe
Izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha	the hymns of the Nazarite Baptist Church
Matombo emuteuro	a pebble
Mbiya	a clay pot or social interaction
Svimbo yemutarara	wooden rod
Itshitshi	a young woman approaching puberty
Ukuthwasa	The process of initiation to become isangoma (diviner)
uMajola	a spirit snake associated with AmaMpondomise
Ditaola	bones used in divination
Badimo	Ancestors in SeSotho and SeTswana
Bagolo	Elders or those who came before us
Διδάσκων	of teaching
εὐθὺς	immediately– a common phrase used in Marks' Gospel
τὰ ἔθνη	the nations
ephphatha	be opened
hamraaz	lay people
kerygma	proclamation or to cry out
Spoudean	conflict between two heroes
sui generis	of its own kind
Talitha cumi	arise, little girl

CHAPTER 1:

THE MEANING OF HEALING IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK AND THE HADEBE NARRATIVES

1.1 Introduction and Background

Over the years, there has been a proliferation of faith-healing churches in South Africa, some purporting to be able to heal various ailments, including TB and HIV AIDs. Many of these churches have claimed that diseases such as the above-mentioned could be healed through spiritual interventions. However, the problem is not so much the prowess of these pastors to effect true healing, but rather, that the boundaries and nature of faith healing have been expanded beyond their known parameters. In the past faith healing was primarily confined to illnesses that mostly affected people sociologically, psychologically, culturally and historically. This study centres on a comparison between the healing accomplishments of Jesus as documented in the Gospel according to Mark and Hadebe's testimony on the acts of healing undertaken by Isaiah Shembe, a central figure underpinning this thesis.

Isaiah Mloyiswa Mdliwamafa Shembe (circa 1869 -1935) was born to an amaZulu family at Ntabamhlophe in the Estcourt area, KZN. At some stage in the 1880s, the family moved to Harrismith (Hexham & Oosthuizen, 1996) and lived among the Basotho people of the Free State Province, his father was Mayekisa and his mother Sethiya Mlindi (Mzizi, 2004:191). After his birth, his uncle Nhliziyo, gave him the name Shembe and his father named him Mudliwamafa meaning 'my inheritor. 'He spent most of his youth in Harrismith at the foot of the Ntabazwe Mountain (Platberg in Afrikaans and Thabatsho in Sesotho). He resided with his family on a farm at Buwelshoek belonging to Coenraad Grabe. The Anglo-Boer (1899-1902) disrupted the existence of families in South Africa and this affected the people around the Buwelshoek area. (Gunner, 2002:17).

While at Buwelshoek Shembe attended the Wesleyan Church led by a missionary and the African Baptist Church led by Rev. William Leshega. Rev. Leshega impressed Shembe with the baptisms of immersion by which a baptismal candidate was wholly immersed underwater during the process

of baptism. Before Shembe was even baptised he had already begun to heal people (Dube, 1936:23). He bought a house at Skoonplaas (Dube, 1936:26) and invited Rev. Leshega to share his home. On the second invitation, the Reverend remained with him for six days and became his mentor. On 22nd July 1906, Rev. Leshega baptised him by immersion and Shembe became a full member of the African Baptist Church and began to preach in the Buwelshoek and Wietshoek areas.

For the next two years, Shembe worked as an itinerant evangelist and was then given an official preacher's certificate by Leshega in 1908. In 1909 while Leshega was in Boksburg he became a catechist for his congregation in Wietshoek (Morton, 2014:69). In 1911, he purchased a freehold farm in Inanda, west of Durban and established a holy city at eKuphakameni that sought in part to keep his people on the land free from white control. He also established a yearly pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain of Nhlangakazi, an event that was central to the Nazarites (cf. Cabrita, 2014). In 1913 Shembe, like Moses to Sinai, had a vision where Jehovah called him to Nhlankagazi mountain. He honoured the vision and went to the mountain and remained there for some time. At this mountain, Shembe was instructed to conduct a healing ministry. In commemoration of this event, he and his congregation take a pilgrimage every January to the mountain to pray, dance and to listen to Shembe and his ministers, preach. Towards the end of the pilgrimage, healing takes place (Gunner, 2002:23).

In addition to his preaching and healing, Shembe was known for composing numerous isiZulu hymns, teaching sacred dances and creating sacred costumes that combined isiZulu and European clothing styles.' These uniforms represent the historical encounters in the 1930s between Europeans and Africans (Muller, 1994:222). He also developed a new liturgical calendar that omitted Christmas, Easter, and Sunday worshipping, and dietary laws that included a restriction against eating chicken, pork and other unclean foods as found in the Old Testament of the Bible (Kumalo & Mujinga, (2017:130). The special achievement was that Shembe believed, the Amazulu people, according to West (2007:491) quoting Roberts (1936) could be converted to Christianity and still retain their own cultural ways, many of which were reflected in the narratives of the Old Testament. He sought to unite all African people, regardless of ethnic or linguistic differences (cf. Patrick Ngubane, a leader in Shembe church testified at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission July 1997)' West (2007:491).

After being baptised by Reverend William Leshega, as a member of the African Baptist Church, he felt that God was calling him as a prophet to minister among the poverty-stricken people in Natal. At this time, he was working as an itinerant evangelist, and in 1908 was awarded an official preacher's certificate by Rev. Leshega. In 1910 he moved to Natal and after some time, in 1911 he started his church which he called the Nazarite Baptist Church. When the members of the church began to grow in number, he built a shrine at Ekuphakameni in the Inanda district of Durban. His congregation continued to grow in leaps and bonds. He started to establish followers in most parts of Southern Africa. He died on the 2nd of May 1935 after having established his church in South Africa.

The type of healing discussed in this work is of a spiritual, mental, faith or paranormal nature common among the African Initiated Churches, African healers and shamans. The investigation is also cross-cultural since the objective is also cross-cultural interpretative research. The type of illnesses these healers treat are somatic. The causes of somatisation reside both directly and indirectly in the patient's mind and culture, and universally exists in past and present societies. Somatisation generally leads to distress, dysfunction and disability, often of great magnitude and intransigence. According to Smith *et al*., (1986a) patients diagnosed with the most severe forms of somatic disorders, have been shown to incur health care expenses that are nine times the US average, and demand a disproportionate amount of time and energy from health care providers (Smith, Monson & Ray (1986a) in Woolfolk & Allen (2007:1). In addition to these extensive costs, somatisation significantly impacts on the economy in terms of loss of productivity (2007:1).These sentiments are well documented in (Mk 5:26), particular in the lament of the haemorrhaging woman, "who had suffered much under physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse." (**26** *καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα*). Somatisation is also known in the isiZulu culture as 'illnesses of the African people' (*ukufa kwabantu*) (Ngubane defined this phenomenon as "illnesses only Africans (black people of Africa) can diagnose" (1977:24).

1.2 Problem statement

This study is concerned with a cross-cultural comparison between the healing of the sick in the Gospel according to Mark on the one hand, and Hadebe's narratives on Shembe the prophet as presented by Elizabeth Gunner (2002), on the other hand. The thesis investigates how the bible can be interpreted in such a way that an African healer could form the basis of that study, as the bible has been interpreted in Mark's story and culture from the perspectives of a first-century Mediterranean region, a place and time during which the Gentiles were part of that community. Hadebe's story is useful as it is told from an African perspective. Scholars such as Kumalo and Mujinga (2017:474) and West (2007) demonstrated various ways in which Shembe utilised the bible in his teachings on morality and good citizenship. However, there is ample scope for further enquiries into the phenomenon, as the stories from the bible were used primarily to reinforce the teachings of the AIC's morality and good citizenship. The African Independent Churches today are groups of churches emergent from the missionary churches. Their founding leaders and visions formed the core of their theologies, their biblical faith mostly gleaned from their founders' leadership and visions. They were Africans who strove to teach themselves Christian ways anchored in their respective traditional heritages. Liturgically, Africans have succeeded in separating themselves from the mother churches, however, hermeneutically they have not achieved this in equal effort.

One of the attractions capable of drawing new converts from mainline churches to the African Instituted Churches (AICs) was faith healing. Healing understood in its wider sense as the restoration of the wholeness of life was not new to African communities, since they practiced it long before the arrival of Christianity on the African continent. While it was practised and boasted African longevity, little or no interest was shown in recording its biblical support intellectually until much later in the 20th century; that is, the African practice of healing without underpinned by scriptural evidence and support. Some African healers who gained popularity were those who manifested great power in their healing performances. Oshitelu, the founder of the *Aladura* (praying) churches in West Africa, called people to "hear the Gospel of joy ... and ... divine healing, the curing of all woes and ailments, ... an offer of blessings in all one's troubles through faith in

God alone ...” (Turner, 1967:27). However, this mostly depended on visions that could not be theologically supported.

Shembe avoided medical help of any kind (Sundkler, 1948:227), and for any problems befalling a member of this church, they had to seek a solution from their prophet, Shembe. Shembe claimed having received his power to heal from Jehovah, which happened after Shembe had been struck by lightning (Dube (1936:22). How this could be interpreted logically and related to the bible is problematic as Shembe could not provide biblical support for his claims. However, he became convinced by the lightning incident to the extent that he forbade his followers to use all western medicines. Shembe’s village at Ekuphakameni in Inanda, KwaZulu-Natal essentially became a healing centre. Nkosi Isaiah Shembe founded his Nazareth Baptist Church here in 1911. Today the village is known for its annual gatherings during July and September and has become a sacred space of spiritual upliftment and enlightenment to its adherents. However, their refusal to use western medicine was not well received by the Government (Sundkler, 1948:227)and since 1926 this issue remained a concern to the administration in KwaZulu-Natal. The Nazarites’ refusal to permit their church members to be vaccinated against the Spanish influenza pandemic was also viewed as a menace by the rest of the community.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

- to gain insight into the healing in the Gospel according to Mark and the testimony of Hadebe
- to understand the relationship between Mark’s and Hadebe’s cultural values
- to explore the causal factors that could guide future development of theory in Africa, as in this context; African religion had not yet been taken seriously in facing the impasse of African biblical interpretation. Thus, this research aims to revisit the African value system and its ontology.

1.4 Research Questions

Given the above problem statement and research objectives, the study addressed the following research questions: these are

- How do participants, i.e., Mark and Hadebe correlate with the meaning of healing?
- What causal factors support the view of Shembe in terms of healing?
- How do these writers exemplify the meaning of healing in their respective narratives?

1.5 The authenticity of faith healing in the Gospel according to Mark

In all the recorded episodes of healing in the Gospel according to Mark, the patients are successfully healed. Those who were healed revealed that it was as if they had been reborn. Jesus sought perfection in his healing which was evident in the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida, whom Jesus healed in two stages for perfection and to show that the healing was authentic (Mk 8:22-26). Jesus' purpose of healing was also to convert a person into believing in God. He exhorted his disciples not to doubt that which they had witnessed (Mk 8:17b). Weeden (1971:26-27) quoted in Lee& Watt (2009:4) argued that, "the two- stage healing of the blind man of Bethsaida (8:22-26) denotes the gradual healing of spiritual blindness, i.e. the disciples' progress toward spiritual perceptiveness." Jesus became angry at his disciples' lack of faith to heal an epileptic boy (Mk 9:19) "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?" (*ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος, ἕως πότε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔσομαι; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν*.[1] He became even more exasperated at the father of the boy who doubted His ability to heal the boy (Mk 9:23). and *says*, "But if you can do anything have pity on us; help us." (*ἀλλ' εἴ τι δύνῃ, βοήθησον ἡμῖν σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.*) He angrily admonished him saying "If you can!" (*τὸ εἰ δύνῃ*),

Guelich (2018: 312-313) opines that "Faith represented the critical link in one's relationship with Jesus although Mark does not define faith it meant much more than being impressed with Jesus'

[1] All Greek translations in this thesis are from The RVS Interlinear Greek-English 1979 edition

words and deeds." Thus, healing for Mark did not only depend on the power possessed by the healer but also on the faith of those seeking to be healed and those who had accompanied them.

1.5.1 Cultural Healing at Bethsaida

1.5.1.1 Saliva: a cross-cultural component

Saliva as a therapeutic cure was widely accepted in the first-century Mediterranean region. Even though the text (Mk 8:22-26) is set in Bethsaida, Mark was writing for audiences in Rome and Alexandria where saliva was known as having therapeutic properties. According to Crussi (2021), the Roman Emperor Vespasian (AD 9–79) used spittle to heal a blind man. Pliny the Elder praised the therapeutic nature of human saliva in his *Natural History* (Book XXVIII, vii). The Christians were also introduced to the use of saliva in the Mediterranean region; Albert the Great (1193–1280) extolled the medicinal virtues of human saliva, especially when obtained during prolonged fasting which included abstention from liquids. Jesus did not use saliva for healing when he was in Palestine. The use of saliva was only found in Greco-Roman territories and some Christians in these territories also used it. However, the Palestine Jews did not use spittle for healing but believed in the method of touch rather than saliva for the healing of blindness. According to (Nu 12:14) it was an act of shame to spit in someone's face, hence the Jews did not use it. When Jesus used saliva, it was a cross-cultural act as it was not part of his culture as a Jew**.** Even though Mark's Gospel healings share similar features with that of John's Gospel, both refer to the use of saliva but differ in the use thereof.

In (Mk 1:35-2:12) Jesus was depicted as traveling through the Galilean countryside conducting healing sessions, but no reference was made to the use of saliva. In (Mk 2:1-12) Jesus visited a house in Capernaum. Among those present in the house were scribes who witnessed and contradicted the healing of a paralytic, and in this case, Jesus also did not use saliva. On one occasion (Mk 3:1-4) Jesus was in the synagogue in the presence of the Pharisees. He went on to heal a man who had a withered hand, and as he was on Jewish territory, again Jesus did not make use of saliva during this healing.

1.5.1.2 Cultural influence in healing the blind

This section compares the general cultural healing system in the Gospel according to Mark to that of other writings of first-century Mediterranean scholars. Jesus healed blindness five times in the Gospels namely (Jn 9:1–12; Mt 9:27-31; Mk 8:22-26; Mk 10:46-53; and Lk 18:38-43). All the people that he healed were males. There is nowhere in the Gospels where Jesus heals a female from blindness. In (Lk18:38-43) and (Mk 10:46-52) the blind men were also beggars. Consequently, blindness could also be associated with the profession of begging. In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus does not perform healings as seen in (Mk 8:22-26) and (Jn.9:1-38). Four healings took place in Palestine (Mt 20:30-34; Lk 18:35-43; Jn. 9:1-38; Mk10:46-52) hence there were no cross-cultural performances except for (Jn 9:1-38) while (Mk 8:22-26) is in Bethsaida, on Roman territory, hence the cross-cultural link. The three Synoptic Gospel accounts (Mt 20:30-34; Lk 18:35-43; Mk 10:46-52) are parallel stories, albeit with small variations. These stories recount simple Jewish healings, and the audience correctly recognising, understanding, and interpreting these as prophetic healings.

1.6 The authenticity of faith healing in the Hadebe Narratives

Although Hadebe has written many healing narratives, only one applicable to the thesis context will be discussed, which is the healing of Mqhanganyi (Gunner 2002:187-191). Healings in the selected narratives of Hadebe which testify to their authenticity are the healing of Mqhanganyi, the daughter of Labhabha Nzama who was bitten by a mamba (Gunner 2002:187-191) and the healing of Lazarus Maphumulo (Gunner 2002:49). Two other healings are the healing of the wife of Chief Mlomubonvu who suffered from a terrible stomach disease (Gunner 2002:193-197), and the healing of Zemethe who married into the Njilo clan (2002:175), and who carried a demon in the form of a white bird in her womb.

1.6.1 Hadebe's Cultural Healing

Hadebe's healing testimonies of Shembe commence with thundering music and the beating of drums, with onlookers appearing from their huts to observe the proceedings, (Gunner 2002:140)

and concludes similarly with a group of Shembe's congregation, singing and stomping to the drum beats (Gunner 2002:191) as per a traditional isiZulu ritual. This shows that singing is fundamental to the church of Shembe and the story of Hadebe.

The healing analysed in this study in terms of cultural typology, takes place at Nhlangwini, in one of Shembe's outposts at the home of Tsitsa Shibase. The healing was for Zemethe, a young woman married into the Njilo clan, who was barren (*isifo sasesinyeni*) (Gunner 2002:175). Shembe spent the night at Zemethe's house and had a dream where Jehovah told him that Zemethe's barrenness was caused by a demon in her womb that was destroying any possibility of conception. Jehovah gave Shembe an instruction on how to destroy the demon. In the morning Shembe explained to Zemethe that the creature in her womb was a dove with two kinds of medicines around its neck which had been coming to her daily, and had collided with him the previous night on its way to her. Jehovah instructed him to kill it, which he did. This healing of barrenness described by Hadebe in a dream could be regarded as a shorter version of exorcism. The lengthier version performed by Johannes Galilee Shembe is provided by Sundkler (1948:230). An important aspect of Hadebe's healing\exorcism is the dream. Traditionally dreams were regarded as an extension of the physical life, in that what happens in a dream could also happen in a person's physical day-to-day life. Oosthuizen (1992:49,50) opines about this healing technique as follows:

> ...the main source of getting information about the patient is that what has been dreamt at night often recurs in visions during the day. Visions are experienced during the moment of healing while one's mind is awake. Dreams are problem indicators, and visions give information on how the problem involved in the illness can be solved.

According to Ngubane (1977:34), the kind of bird that attacked Zemethe's womb was a spiritual and demonic bird (*impundulu*) that possessed women and was accompanied by lightning. It is conceptualised as a mysterious bird that has the power to become invisible. In the isiZulu conception, this healing is completely valid even though there is an overlap of two worlds, the spirit and the physical: the spirit world is as real as the corporeal world. In African culture, this view was normal with no comprehensive problem attached. Usually, the service during this kind

of healing was accompanied by singing, dancing, drumming, and African herbal incense (*impepho*). The ancestors were the chief role players behind the healing (cf. Shange, 2013). Jehovah was also consulted through prayer, singing, and dancing. This type of healing was continued by Johannes Galilee Shembe, successor and the son of Shembe, after the death of Isaiah Shembe. Johannes Galilee Shembe provided Sundkler with an explanation of how he removed demons from the wombs of women, as follows: "I remove demons. I am amazed to find that in the case of women, demons take their abode in the shoulders and the womb. In the case of men, demons reside only in the stomach, (Sundkler, 1948:230).

1.7 The Gospel according to Mark

1.7.1 The Identity of the Disciple Mark

Mark is identified as the son of Mary who had a house in Jerusalem where several disciples usually gathered for prayers (Ac 12:12a). Mark is also mentioned as a cousin of Barnabas the Cypriot (Colossian 4:10) with whom he sailed on a mission to Cyprus (Ac15:39). Tradition holds that he is the 'John Mark' described in (Ac 15:37). Oden (2011a:21, 45) postulates that John Mark was most likely born close to Cyrene, an inland city in the region of Cyrenaica in North Africa, between (5 C E and 15 C E). Judging from his name, he was multicultural, as the name 'John' was from the Hebrew language and 'Mark' was from Latin origins. According to Oden (2011a:80), his family first called him Mark after they emigrated to Jerusalem. This notion may have merit as the name 'Mark' became more popular than 'John' in later years. Oden maintained that Mark was educated in both the Greek and Hebrew cultures. This may have merit as Jewish boys in Jerusalem were taught to read the Scriptures in Hebrew while Greek became the language in which the Gospels were written. Moreover, it was the language of Cyrene where he was born. Vogelman (2019:1) argues that "Mark was Simon Peter's translator, translating the languages Peter was ignorant of which probably would have been Latin and Greek."

The four Gospels of the New Testament were written in Greek by highly educated and well-trained writers some thirty to sixty years after the death of Jesus. The followers of Jesus, however, were Aramaic-speaking peasants from Galilee who evidently did not speak Greek Myer (1987:72), nor were they skilled in composing lengthy accounts or even read in Greek. The Gospels of the New

Testament were written not by Jesus' closest followers in his day, but decades later by more educated Christians who based their narratives on oral traditions that had been in circulation in the years after the death of Jesus (Burkett, 2002:124). Mark was educated in the Greek and Hebrew cultures by his family. The languages Mark would have known from birth or acquired were Aramaic, Greek, Latin, a Libyan language and Hebrew (Oden, 2011a:49), and could speak multiple languages (cf. Shenouda III (1995:9) due to his sound education. He was able to explain Jewish customs and translate Semitic terms to a Greek and Latin audience (Oden, 2011a:49).

1.8 Content common to Matthew, Luke and Mark

Consensus has it that the Gospel of Mark was written before the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The reasoning for this assumption is that had the Gospels of Matthew and Luke been written before that of Mark, it would have been impossible to explain how some content found in the Gospel of Mark also came to be in their Gospels. Simplifying the relationship between the three Gospels is complex as these three Gospels are the only canonical gospels, however, there were also gospels that were written but were not included in the Canon, namely the Gospel of Thomas, which was written in the first century, the second-century gospels are the Marcion Gospel, the Basilides Gospel (102-140 AD); and the Truth Gospel, the Four Heavenly Realms; the Mary Gospel (Gnostic text); the Judas (gnostic text); Gospel of the Egyptians (quarter). The third-century gospels are the Gospel of Philip (Gnostic text) Gospel of the Twelve Apostles (in the Syriac language). The fourth century gospels are the Gospel of Perfection (an Ophite poem) the Coptic Gospel of the Egyptians (also known as the Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit).

The consensus is that Mark's Gospel was written shortly before or after the year 70 CE; after the First Jewish Revolt and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. The date can be deduced from the gospel narrative itself where Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem which actually took place in 66–73 CE. It says in (Mk 13:2b), "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon her, that will not be thrown down." (*βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς; οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ*). However, Jesus did not say when and how it would be destroyed; and in (Mk 9:1) " he said to them, truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they

see the kingdom of God come with power." (*Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσίν τινες ὧδε τῶν ἑστηκότων οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσωνται θανάτου ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει.*). The writer of the Gospel of Mark appears to recast the traditional images of Jesus in an attempt to perhaps make sense of the events that occurred, or did not occur, after he died, some would argue.

1.8.1 Where the Gospel of Mark was written – a debatable issue

The matter of where the Gospel of Mark was written and completed remains a debatable issue as there is no consensus on the matter to date. However, if one follows the suggestions of the Early Fathers of the Church (Papias of Hierapolis c.60–c.130 AD; Justin the Martyr 150 AD; Tertullian 160-225AD), that Mark was travelling around Rome and Alexandria as the secretary of Peter, and recording what Peter was saying, which ultimately resulted in the notes for the Gospel of Mark, then it has to be either Rome or Alexandria, or both, (some even suggest Syria) where the final edition was completed. There are, however, other suggestions such as Antioch, according to Perkins (2007:241) considering that Antioch was the third largest city of the Roman Empire which was founded by Seleucus 1 Nicator in 300 BC. According to statistics, Antioch, which might have attracted Mark to be writing from that point, was an important city, its location offering geographical, military, and economic benefits to its occupants, and was heavily involved in the spice trade at the time. Rice (2006:592) opines that Seleucus encouraged Greeks from all over the Mediterranean to settle in the city, as Antioch had a large population after Rome and Alexandria and was one of the important cities in the eastern Mediterranean region from (240-63 BC). Antioch was also the main centre of Hellenistic Judaism at the end of the Second Temple period. According to Encyclopaedia Biblica vol. 1.186:125 of 612 (online), Antioch was known as "the cradle of Christianity" and played a pivotal role in the emergence of early Christianity.

Van Eck (1995:12) quoted in Dube (2018b:1) agrees with Perkins (2007:241) regarding the possible locations where the Gospel may have been written, by arguing that Mark's community was located in the southern part of Antioch or Northern Galilee. This presumption is feasible as according to the Gospel account, Jesus stayed and worked mostly around the lake of Galilee. According to the Gospel of Matthew, shortly after Jesus left Nazareth, he made his way to the

small fishing village, Capernaum, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and made it "his own town" (Mt 4:12, 9:1). According to Mark's Gospel, Jesus performed his first miracle in the synagogue of Caper'naum (Mk 1:23-28) where he cast out a demon; immediately thereafter he healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law at Peter's house, hence this house must have been within walking distance from the synagogue.

1.9 The genre of Mark

1.9.1 The various genres

Numerous authors have described the genre of Mark's Jesus in many different ways. This thesis cites few such genres in no particular order of importance. Because early Christian writers sought to present the preaching of Jesus in its authentic and perfect form, they had no comparative examples of other types of literature of that time. What they wanted to impart to their readers is what they also learned from the reaching of the Apostles, which is, the preaching or proclamation of the Christian Gospel (*kerygma*) which had its unique form. Even though the Good News was disseminated in the form of oral tradition, and many writers regarded the synoptic problem as proof that there was no uniformity, yet in truth efforts were made to present the Good News as closely as possible to the teachings of Jesus. The difference may lie in to whom the Gospels were presented, and their reception depending on the prevailing cultures and political dispensations of the time. Meagher (1983:203) argues that:

> a 'unique genre' violates two standard assumptions in literature in the context of shared conventions (211), history: humans rarely have the ability to produce what is genuinely original, as novelty often relates to content rather than forms which are culturally conditioned, and meaning is understood.

Since it was insisted that *kerygma* should be the central course in addressing Jesus' store of memories after his death, as a genre it is thus the only way of doing so, it is therefore regarded as the legitimate genre of Mark's Gospel. However, *kerygma* was widespread as it was not only found

in preaching but was also imbedded in the Creeds (1 Cor. 15:3-5) and was progressively expanded upon with prophetic proof-texts and rituals (for example, the sacraments, the teachings of the Apostles (the Didache), miracles, pronouncement stories and sayings once passed down separately for exhortation or instruction. These were unique typologies of the early Christian literary methods which resulted in a stable genre. Boring (2006:7-8) argues that, unlike biographies, the Gospels juxtapose Jesus' humanity and divinity via the secrecy motif, they proclaim the culmination of a universal history, they do not distinguish the past Jesus and present Lord, they are made up of oral units formed by preaching, and they express the Christ-event in parabolic imagery (Mk 4:7-8). As kerygmatic narratives, they are *sui generis*.

Cline (2019:1) opines that:

> Most scholars treat the gospels as a combination of biography, aretalogy, and hagiography among other things. Some, though, argue there is much more going on than is initially understood, and one recent line of research has involved tracing much in Mark to the influence of the Greek epics of Homer.

The most noticeable parallels, however, are those between Odysseus and Jesus; the Homeric tales about Odysseus emphasise his sufferings in life, just as in the Gospel of Mark Jesus said that he, too, would suffer greatly (Mk 8:31). Odysseus was a carpenter like Jesus, and he wanted to return to his home in the same way Jesus wanted to be welcomed in his native home (Mk 6:4) and later in God's home in Jerusalem. Odysseus was plagued with unfaithful and - ignorant companions who displayed tragic flaws. They foolishly opened a magic bag of wind while Odysseus was asleep and released terrible tempests which prevented their return home. These sailors are comparable to the disciples who disbelieved Jesus, asked foolish questions and displayed a general ignorance of everything.

The general character of Mark's Gospel narrative is a tragedy, a first-century Hellenistic type of literature sometimes equated with 5th-century Greek tragedies. The plot, destiny, moves towards its inevitable tragic climax despite the character's best efforts to avoid it. Mark presents this inevitability thus, 'The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and

chief priests and the scribes and be killed (Mk. 9:31a' (*ἐδίδασκεν γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀποκτανθεὶς*). Wright (2015:11) quoting Burch (1931:351) divides Mark's plot into two halves. The first half (Mk.l:l-8:30) consists of the Galilean ministry and presents the action of the tragedy, while the second half, (Mk 8:31-16:20) the tragic incidents, includes the trial, condemnation and crucifixion. The plot also contains bystanders which Burch likens to a Greek Chorus[2]. What makes a plot essentially tragic is its ability to convey the conflict between two powers, where each of these is justified in its own right. The two power structures in this Gospel narrative comprised elders, Pharisees and the scribes on one hand and Jesus on the other.

The first core element in tragedy is what Hegel (1975) calls *Kollision.* Every tragedy contains some type of *Kollision,* or dramatic conflict, and can be defined as the portrayal of a conflict between two highly valued powers that make incompatible demands, and it is this conflict that leads to the tragic outcome of the narrative. Mark presents this *Kollision* as the clash over the authority and management of the Temple which is represented by the sons of Levy as the result of their birthright and office.

Jesus is God-man (Mk 1:1; 9: 35 and Mk 15:39b) and who was famous. For example, in (Mk6:56) it read "And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment."

(**56** *καὶ ὅπου ἂν εἰσεπορεύετο εἰς κώμας ἢ εἰς πόλεις ἢ εἰς ἀγρούς, ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς ἐτίθεσαν τοὺς ἀσθενοῦντας καὶ παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν*) and he drew great crowds from all over thus, 'a great multitude from Galilee followed; also from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan, Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude hearing all that he did, came to him.'[7b] (*καὶ πολὺ πλῆθος ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας [ἠκολούθησεν], καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας* ***8*** *καὶ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰδουμαίας καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου καὶ περὶ Τύρον καὶ Σιδῶνα πλῆθος πολὺ ἀκούοντες ὅσα ἐποίει ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτόν*). He was also a powerful public speaker who spoke with authority (*ἐξουσίαν*)

[2] A Greek chorus in the context of ancient Greek tragedy, comedy, satyr plays, is a homogeneous group of performers, who comment with a collective voice

(Mk 1:21-24) *thus, ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς.* (for he was teaching them to have authority not like scribes). Flavius Josephus, the famous Roman historian quoted in Whiston (1987:63) comments on Jesus as follows:

> Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works; a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles.

The second condition is that of a (a *spoudean* quality) which is that "the tragic protagonist must have a clash of values between himself and opponents, and his consequent death." Aristotle understood this concept as an elevated character type, like Heracles, or having divine qualities like Achilles or Theseus, *the mythical founder of Athens*. Consequently, in the Gospel of Mark, the *spoudean hero* is the divine figure of Jesus who strives against all odds to maintain the order of God in the face of impending death. In (Mk 1:11) a voice from heaven, in (Mk1:24; Mk 5:7b; Mk 9:8) demons and (Mk. 15:39) a human being, a soldier at the Cross who all testify to His divinity.

The third core element is an ever-present contention with death (Mk 8:31a; Mk. 9:31b; Mk 10:33-34; Mk 14:1c) and suffering (Mk 8:31b; Mk 10:34a), and more specifically, this speculative question: "If Jesus had persuaded the religious teachers of his message, would they have crucified him? The best answer to this is embodied in Wright's (2015:87) argument, "And if not, how could the all-important resurrection have occurred?" Wright (2015:13) points out that, "the resurrection is not part of tragedy as it forms the beginning of a new narrative, and the second reason is that the resurrection offers an 'anti-climax' to the tragic story that Mark offers."

1.10 The Healing Ministry of Jesus vs ukuthwasa

Dube (2019a:1, 8) opines that "the developing healing ministry of Jesus in Mark's Gospel could be understood by an analogy of the graduation of a diviner (an *isangoma's ukuthwasa*). Through this process, one learns all the trade of healing and emerge as a healer". By comparison, the

disappearance of Jesus into the desert is similar to the initiation process of some diviners (*isangoma*). It is claimed that initiation candidates are submerged in the river without their consent to join their ancestors and thereafter emerge from the river as diviners (*izangoma*). Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the desert. While in the wilderness, He experienced temptation and eventually returned victorious and stronger than before. In the case of Shembe, it is reported that he took his bible, a blanket and a rod and went to Nhlangakazi mountain and remained there for days. During his stay on the mountain, Shembe experienced temptation and in a similar way to Jesus, he was able to identify good from evil. Jehovah eventually revealed to Shembe what his mission was. One can compare this to Jesus' temptation by the devil who promised Him all the kingdoms of the world (Mt 4:8-10).

In both contexts, the practitioner is called and it is a process undertaken by a prospective *isangoma* possessed by divine power; a process which will later become evident in their ministries. Such parallels reinforce the common truth that healers experience some form of divine revelation or an intense experience that rekindles their careers. Throughout his stay in the wilderness, Jesus was aware of His calling, resisting Satan. Similarly, in African cultures, a person who is initiated into healing needs to be aware of her/his calling and accept to become a healer. According to Pilch (2002:108-109), the testing of Jesus in the desert can be likened to the confirmation of the initiation. Craffert (2017) argues that the vision and the temptation in the desert are features of the altered consciousness, and is a proper environment for the initiation of a holy man. For Dube (2019a), being able to overcome the tests showed commitment to accepting the calling and prepared one for the challenges ahead. 'And immediately the Spirit took him to the desert,' (**12** *Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον.*) (Mk1:12). It is crucial for the initiate to comply, as this bears witness to the Spirit taking Jesus to the desert. The intention is to emphasize the fact that the Spirit was in control, and that Jesus did not initiate the process. Seen through a comparative lens, the *ukuthwasa* has a similar motive of being driven by the Spirit.

1.11 The Character of the Gospel of Mark

The three most obvious characteristics of the Gospel of Mark, is its brevity, compared to the other gospels. The language used is also unlike that of the other gospels, for example, it appears that

(Mk 1:37; Mk 10:45; Mk12:9; Mk 13:10); and even (Mk 16:15) were written for Greek-speaking audiences, evident in the use of the term 'ransom.' A ransom is a sum of money demanded or paid for the release of a captive. According to (Mt 20:2), Ac 20:28, Rm 3:23. Rm 3:24, 1 Cor. 6:20, and Gal 3:13 Jesus paid a ransom on the Cross for humanity's sins. Jews do not understand this because the Talmud prohibited selling each other for ransom. Mark is hence explaining this to his Jewish-Christian believers.

The 'vineyard tenants' according to Christian meaning is a reference to the chief priests, therefore it cannot be a Jewish expression. The term 'all nations' (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*) also does not apply to the Jews as it means leaving Palestine for the outside world. Understandably, the expressions were directed at the Greeks, the language in which the Gospel was written. That the Gospel was composed for a non-Jewish public follows from the fact that such Semitic terms and expressions Talitha B*oanerges* (brothers of thunder) (Mk5:41 *talitha cumi* (little girl, rise) (Mk 5:41), *corban* (sacrifice) (Mk 7:11), *ephphatha* (be opened) (Mk 7:34), and *abba* (father) (Mk 14:36) were translated by Mark into Greek. This implies that the Greek-speaking world should be able to understand them.

Moreover, the writer of the Gospel explained Jewish customs (Mk 7:3, 4; Mk 14:12; Mk 15:42). The Jewish audience would have had little trouble in understanding these expressions. As for the Gospel's origin perhaps being Rome, it is notable that at times Mark renders Greek into Latin. He mentions that the two *lepta* ('copper coins') that the poor widow cast into the offering box amounted to one Roman *quadrans (*'penny', Mk 12:42), and that the *aule* ('palace') into which the soldiers led Jesus was *the πραιτώριον (praetorium)* (the governor's official residence, (Mk 15:16).

Smith (1996:1) argues that Jesus is scarcely the son of David. Mark's questions how can David call him Lord? (Mk 12:35-37). Jesus Christ, the Messiah and the Son of God.' The two natures, human and divine, are in perfect harmony (for example Mk 4:38, 39; Mk 6:34, Mk 41-43; Mk 8:1-10; Mk 14:32-41). Only a few Markan verses as provided below are generally mentioned in this context: Mk 1:1; Mk 2:27; Mk 3:20, 21; Mk 4:26-29; Mk 7:3, Mk 4; 7, Mk 7:32-37; Mk 8:22-26; Mk 9:29; Mk 9:48, 49; Mk 13:33-37; Mk 14:51, 52.

1.12 The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel according to Mark was the first gospel written by an anonymous writer and from the first line, his purpose of this writing was made clear, introduced by the words 'the beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ (the Son of God) (*Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* [*υἱοῦ θεοῦ*]). He was introducing the fact that Jesus was the Son of God. It is also clear that he was not writing a biography of Jesus, an idea that can be construed from the fact that he, unlike Matthew and Luke, included no genealogy. However, similar to John's Gospel, Mark also begins his Gospel with Jesus as an adult.

Regarding the inclusion of the phrase 'Son of God' (cf. Mk1:1), the Gospel according to Mark resembles John's Gospel (John 1:14, 18; John 3:16, 18). For example, (Jn 11:27b) imitates (Mk 1:1) thus, "You are the Christ, the Son of God." (*ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*) The Gospel of John brings heaven close to the earth by saying (Jn 3:16). "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son," (*γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν,*), which is also a metaphor of the marriage between heaven and earth in which Jesus is the bridegroom. The divinity of Jesus is keenly developed throughout John's Gospel, for example (Jn 14:10b and Jn 14:11a) 'that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.' (*ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν;*); the whole of this Gospel is saturated with this theology concept.

To confirm the notion that Jesus was the Son of God, Mark did not mention the virginal conception. However, this omission was not to deny that Jesus had a mother, as (Mk. 3:31-35) he refers to his mother indirectly, 'and came to his mother and his brothers, and (Mk 6:3) (*Καὶ ἔρχεται ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ*) describes Him as 'the son of Mary' (*υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας*).

All of the Apostle Paul's letters were written earlier than the Gospel of Mark and do not espouse the idea of a divine Jesus being one with God. Modern scholars agree with the traditional second-century Christian belief that the letters that were almost certainly written by Paul himself are as follows; 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans. These letters were probably written during the height of Paul's missionary activities between (50 and 58 A.D.), making these the earliest surviving Christian documents predating the earliest of the Gospels, Mark, by at least ten years. They commence with phrases that clearly set out the distinction between God and Jesus Christ. For example, 'Grace to you and peace from God

our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' (*χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.*) (Rm 1:7b).

The Encyclopaedia Britannica divides the Gospel into three main parts; (1) (Mk 1:1–8:26), the Galilean ministry, an account of mighty deeds; (2) (Mk 8:27–10:52) Jesus' discussions with His disciples; and (3) (Mk 11:1–16:8) controversies, the passion, death and the empty tomb, each of which could be divided into another three parts. The New Jerome Biblical Commentary (1968b), divides the Gospel into five parts, namely (1) the prelude (Mk 1-13); (11) the mystery of the Messiah (Mk 1:14-8:33); (111) the conclusion of part (11) and transition into part (1V); (1V) the mystery of the Son of Man (Mk 8:27-16:8) and (V) The ending of the Markan Gospel (Mk 16:1-8). Each of these five parts has a total of 70 subdivisions. The reason for the lack of a consensus on the division of the Judeo-Christian bible is that when the scriptures were first written, the scribes made no divisions into chapters and verses.

1.13 The Meshack Hadebe Narrative

Libutho Meshack Hadebe, the son of Nyathi Petros Hadebe (Gunner, 2002:155) and one of his wives, MaNgwenya Melika Hadebe was born in Mpharane, Lesotho. In 1918 Melika had a dream in which a voice told her that Jesus had returned and lived among the black people, that he had taken their image and built a holy place for them to live in and he lived there with them. The voice continued and told her, "if you wish to see him, pack your bags, set out, you will come to him and see him" (Gunner, 2002:143). When she woke up from the dream, she related her dream to the family. At the time she had no idea where Durban was. Fortunately, an herbalist named Mzizi arrived in the area from Natal and was able to explain to them how to get to Durban. After listening to the dream, Mzizi told them of a powerful prophet based in Durban, Natal but hastened to add that he was not the figure referred to in the dream. He further elaborated that this prophet "only heals with prayer and does not take medicine and his followers don't use it" (Gunner, 2002:145). Mzizi was critical of Shembe and felt sorry for his followers whom he thought were victims of many diseases. Nyathi decided to leave for Durban, taking with him his wives MaNgwenya and MaMhlakwana as well as some of his children. The epic journey took its toll on the resilience of

the family as some of the children and MaMhlakwana died of hunger and the Spanish influenza. Melika, Meshack's mother began to have doubts about the merits of the journey.

However, Nyathi refused to entertain any doubts about the journey and insisted that they continue and not return to Mpharane. Melika had another dream in which she was baptised by a man whom she later recognized as Shembe. According to Hadebe, his mother remarked that the man who baptised her "did look like Jesus, because he had wounds on his hands and feet," (Gunner 2002:147). When the family finally reached Durban, they were directed to Ohlange in Inanda. They did not meet with Dr Langalebalele Dube, but waited outside Ohlange until people directed them to Ekuphakameni. As they were destitute, Nyathi decided to sell his daughter Lwela Sitshana Evelina, to a white man for £6 (equivalent to 12,00 ZAR in today's South African currency). They left Ohlange and arrived at Phoenix, from where they proceeded to Ekuphakameni and arrived there in January 1919. Shembe encouraged Nyathi to retrieve his daughter whom he had sold earlier, which he did and the family was together again. Shembe relocated the family to Nhlanzini south of Durban where there already was a congregation (Gunner, 2002:44) and some well-established mission stations. After buying Nhlanzini he renamed it Gospel. This place is often featured in Meshack Hadebe's account of Shembe's travels with reference to his support by Tsitsa Shibase and his family (Chapters 4, 6 and 8). Sceptics such as the members of the Bheka-Bantu (Care for the People) Wesleyan Church became Shembe's opponents.

1.14 The Preaching of Shembe

Shembe's preaching, like his healings, began before he was baptised, as stated in Dube (1936:23) "I started preaching before I was baptised." (*Ngasuka ngahamba ngishumayela, ngingakab'apatiswa*). He preached the reconstruction of the *isiZulu* culture, an example of which is the introduction of *isiZulu* liturgical attire. According to West (2007:46) he established an exemplary little village where widows and young women lived according to the *isiZulu* culture. He also preached the African renaissance (*Isl* 21) (Shembe (1940:50), economic construction (Shembe (1940:4), and work ethics (cf. *Isl* 46) (Shembe (1940:4). He contrasted his new-found religious life with life of corruption and laziness, thus, "Lord bless the work of our hands. Do not be lazy; it is sinful to be lazy." (*Uyibusise Nkosi Jehova imisebenzi yezandla zethu. Ningavilaphi yisono*

ukuvilapha). Shembe preached socio-economic consciousness, (*Isl 46*) (Shembe, 1940:50) thus, "Rise up Africa, seek your Saviour. Today you are a laughing stock of all nations" (*Phakama Afrika. Funa uMsindisi Namhla uyisihlekiso. Sazo zonke izizwe*). These ideas were expressed in their songs and dances as an added element of preaching. He preached pride in being a Zulu person (*umZulu*) through the liturgical songs and dances in his services. He appropriated bible texts from the Old and New Testaments and used them in the context of his congregation to enthuse its members. Sithole (2010:10) refers to this manner of appropriation as 're-membering' the bible. Re-membering in this context means quoting sections from the bible. He was conscious of the mainline churches, particularly those led by the whites of the American Board, the Roman Catholics and the Wesleyans. He was also apprehensive of the black Wesleyan Church in Mthwalume, which later was to become his closest opposition. Hadebe recorded a small section of one sermon (Gunner, 2002:159, par., 4) at Mthwalume in the Mlangeni territory in March 1923: "He preached again, He said going astray happens like this; even when light has come to the world, the people of this world still choose darkness rather than light. He was quoting from (Jn 3:19-20)."

1.15 The Genre of the Hadebe Narrative

Hadebe's narrative is akin to a diary kept by someone who records their thoughts and experiences. He was not writing for outsiders but for his peers, as most of the journals were circulated among the members of the AmaNazaretha Church. However, a journey from Lesotho to Durban his family took like other journeys taken without knowing the destination it is an extremely difficult and painful journey with a blind date with the Supreme Being. Petros Nyathi and his family's journey to Natal was difficult, similar to the journey undertaken by the Christian character in The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan. The narrative also begins with a dream, as the journey of Petros Nyathi was also inspired by a dream, and as a result of that dream, the Christian meets with extreme difficulties on his journey in his search for God. This narrative is also similar to that of Thomas Mofolo's (1907) *Moeti oa Bochabela.* It tells the story of a young herd boy going on an unchartered journey to an unknown destination in the East searching for God. During his travels, he encounters extreme difficulties. Mofolo's narrative functions as an allegory where people and places represent abstract concepts and symbolize the soul's desire to see God and heaven. While the three pilgrim

stories are similar in terms of the difficulties encountered during their journeys, Hadebe presents his story as factual and historical. His writing has been described by (Gunner, 2002:45) as being the biography of a man but also of the biography of an outpost named Gospel in Mthwalume. Shembe is characterised as the divine "Prophet of God" who speaks from the soul to God, much like a father would speak to his son (Gunner, 2002:159). Hadebe had another dream in 1922, where Shembe appeared to him as an angel. A voice told him that Shembe was older than his father Nyathi, however, Hadebe doubted the veracity of the voice.

1.16 The Healing of Mqhanganyi

Shembe made use of cross-cultural prophetic healing and a traditional method all in one process. First, he used a tourniquet which was an earlier isiZulu method of treating the neurotoxin venom of a snake bite, so that the venom drains to the ground. To understand Shembe's healing effect on Mqhanganyi, it must be said that he was faced with issues that were not in Hadebe's testimony. According to Müller *et al.,* (1999a:362-381) pharmacologists, the mamba venom contained, inter alia, many scientific and medical descriptions of neurotoxicity characterised by a progressive, descending soft paralysis; the early symptoms and signs are discussed further on in the study. In addition to the neurotoxic effects, Müller (2012) adds that patients bitten by a mamba include these additional features: vomiting, chest and limb pains abnormal heartbeats, and may present with pain in varying degrees. The victim may die within (1-8) hours. From this description one can surmise the dire condition Mqhanganyi was in, which accounts for Shembe's reported reaction when he heard of the incident from Peter, as described in Hadebe: 'The Lord shouted at him, "why are you frightening me?"' (Gunner, 2002:189).

1.17 Shembe's actions to heal Mqhanganyi

Whether or not Peter Cele applied the tourniquet according to the necessary requirement, Shembe made a cross-cultural treatment of the snake bite. He enhanced the pressure bandage with prayer, song, and dance to consolidate and bring about holistic healing. All these acts should be seen as one continuous treatment. What is important is that it was the hearing of the song, dance, and

drums that caused Mqhanganyi to rise, despite all the terrible physical and symptomatic ill-effects of the neurotoxin venom as described later (Gunner, 2002:191). Prophets are associated with and use artifacts that they bless to empower them with healing grace, while they draw their inspiration mostly from Old Testament prophets.

1.18 Cultural Influences: Healing in Mark and Hadebe

1.18.1 Ailments Healed by Jesus

The impression given in these summaries of (Mk 1:32b-34) and (Mk 6:56b) is that Jesus healed all manners of sicknesses, but he healed only a few types of diseases and ailments which are categorically stated as fevers (Mk 1:29-32); leprosy (Mk 1:40-45); a withered hand (Mk 3:1-6); menstruation (Mk 5:24-34); deafness (Mk 7: 31-37); blindness (Mk 8:22-26, 10:46-52). From these Gospel texts, it would appear that a person's sex was a factor in Mark's healing. For example, those that debilitated females were fevers (Mk 1:29-32) the rest afflicted males. However, may be that Mark was emphasising examples of the major illnesses of the time.

(Mk 3:1-6) refers to a man in the synagogue e who had a withered hand and nothing further. However, (Lk.6:6-11) and (Mt 12:9-14) who wrote the same text years later, include references to the Sabbath. The purpose of this inclusion may have been to underscore the Mosaic commandment that regulated time in which duties may not be performed. Luke, who wrote later than Matthew, still added 'the right hand' (Lk 6:6b) which Mark and Matthew did not mention. Therefore, it could be deduced that Luke's purpose of writing differed from that of Mark and Matthew. In (Lk 6:6b) the purposeful mentioning of the right hand and distinguishing this with Mark's report implies a certain connotation that Luke wished emphasise. Consequently, Luke was referring to something that was happening in the first-century culture with regard to the working culture of men, which immediately informed them what the future held for them. In healing the working hand, Jesus had done more than just healing, he also restored the man's dignity and livelihood. It could also be concluded that Jesus' healings looked ahead as long-term projects.

1.19 Chapter Overview

The research centred on the cultural assumptions underpinning faith healing in which biblical interpretations were central; the Markan Gospel and Hadebe's healing narratives form the case studies. The thesis considers the issue of cross-cultural comparisons between the two models with the ultimate aim to transcend the boundaries between the religions, with the final aim to determine how interreligious relations are viewed from an African perspective, the African character might have occupied the central position in such interpretations.

Chapter 1 provided a critical assessment of the authenticity and cultural healing in the two models conducted and touched on issues of the healthcare systems that underpinned the healing methods of the time. The chapter introduced the authors, their genres, the time and place of their authorship, and their status in the healing fraternity. The types of illnesses prevalent during the time of the authorship of the two texts were also scrutinised.

Chapter 2 described the methodology employed—which were historical and cross-cultural methods—in this study and its application in decoding the appropriation of the biblical texts applicable in the cross-cultural contexts of both models. The emphasis was placed on the definition of the method employed in the cross-cultural comparison, the social system of biblical texts, and in the use of the models and theories in the social scientific criticism to explicate the social systems of the texts. It particularly applied to the social scientific criticism found in the African biblical interpretations.

Chapter 3 placed the focus on Jesus, the protagonist of Mark; his initiation, his supremacy over the healers of his time and the source of his authority, as well as His relationship to the God of Israel. The investigation also included blindness and its traditional and cultural healing method, and the use of saliva as a unifying therapeutic application. The two stages of the metaphor inherent in the healing of blindness and healing as the source of initiation in following Christ is viewed against the backdrop of the author's use of miracles to demonstrate the divinity of Jesus.

Chapter 4 discusses Shembe and his portrayal by Hadebe as a healer superior to all his contemporaries, including the source of his authority as a healer Various related incidents and types of illnesses the communities of the area suffered from and the illnesses Shembe treated were scrutinised through the lens of the AIC prophetic healings, which included prayers, singing and dancing.

Chapter 5 compared the influence and rank of Jesus and Shembe to the healers of their times and localities by reflecting on the use of the bible texts by Mark and Hadebe in the presentation of their protagonists. The portrayals of Mark's Jesus and similarly that of Shembe as healers were illustrated. The chapter established the concept of authority of the protagonists in both models as well as the types and methods of healing used in both models.

Chapter 6 demonstrated how the cross-cultural interpretation of biblical texts were arrived at by both Mark and Hadebe in establishing their new-found religions; Research was conducted into the similarities of their appropriation methods and the similarity in the context of the notion of being a messenger in both models.

Chapter 7 how the New and Old Testaments were appropriated by Hadebe and the author of the Gospel according to Mark. How Mark appropriated the Hebrew text. How Mark appropriates the OT texts in composing his prologue. How Hadebe interpreted the bible from the isiZulu culture and how he appropriated the bible.

Chapter 8 concluded the thesis by presenting Christianity and *UbuNazaretha* as comparative models, their understanding supported by considering their historical, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts and their political dynamics. The role played by the converts in the establishment of the two models and the significance of healing as model formation and identification of the founder were discussed, including the role played by language as an element of communication.

1.20. Conclusion

The research was made on the problem statement which led to a further inquiry about research objective and research questions. The authenticity of faith healing in the Gospel according to Mark and Hadebe's testimony was carried out. This led the investigation to look at cultural healing in both Mark and Hadebe. A further investigation was made on the Gospel according to Mark and an assumption of Mark as the author. This led the thesis to inquire how Mark came to be connected with the authorship of the Gospel. The Gospel itself how it relates to other Gospels and its genre. A similar research was made on Hadebe. Such issues as who he was, how he came to be connected to the story and the genre of his literary writing. The chapter then looked at the typology of a healer Jesus. An assumption was made that he falls under the category of Shamans and traditional healers. The same assumption was made about AIC healers of which Shembe is part off. How Jesus became a healer in the perspective of this category. A suggestion was made, looking at his been taken by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, that the process assimilated diviner's calling (*ukuthwasa*). It was discovered that Shembe, a healer and protagonist of Hadebe, also went through a similar process of being called to a lonely place; Nhlangakazi mountain where he also underwent an initiation process.

An investigation about the character of the Gospel according to Mark and its purpose was made. Similarly, an inquiry about Hadebe's narrative and its genre was made. The preaching of Shembe was also looked at. The healing of the Blind man of Bethsaida was analysed. Equally, there was also an investigation about the healing of Maunganui in Hadebe's testimony. Both healing that of the Blind man of Bethsaida and Mqhanganyi were placed in the cultural contexts. Cultural influences in both healings of Mark and Hadebe were researched. This led the chapter to look at the type of healings the Gospel according to Mark and Hadebe concentrated at. A conclusion was then taken at the chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduced the literature underpinning the aims and objectives of this study. Various scholars and forms of literature were studied during the writing of the thesis, however, this chapter focussed on the literature pertinent to and containing the required material supporting the contents of the thesis. The time of the authorship was also considered relevant, for example, even though Sundkler (1948) and Oosthuizen (1967) wrote after Dube (1936) the arguments these authors presented were mostly derived from Dube, and consequently Dube (1936) was considered as one of the fundamental contributors to this study.

The literature review pertinently focussed on authors who addressed the biography of Shembe, that is; his origins, parents and family, his childhood, his connection with the Wesleyan church, his mentorship by William Leshega, his baptism by Leshega, his parting from Leshega and the establishment of his church *Ibandla lamaNazaretha*. The key topics considered were cultural healing, cross-cultural interpretation, and the historical analysis of the protagonists, all of which were addressed in the Gospel according to Mark and the testimony of Hadebe. However, since Hadebe's testimony was based on the character and healings of Shembe, this required that Shembe, as a protagonist of Hadebe, should be correlated with the Gospel according to Mark. Ample literature was available on Shembe, for example:

1. Shembe 1940 prayer book (Gunner, 2002:41)
2. Sundkler (1976:175) He entrusted his work to the church archivists and saw it as real history (Gunner, 2002:41)
3. Sundkler (1976:175) quoted in (Gunner, 2002:41) however, it was J G Shembe who set in motion the collection of a huge written archive.
4. Comaroff & Comaroff (1991:171), the narrative of the journey is both like and at the same time deeply unlike the missionary narrative which converges around the trope of the journey
5. Comaroff & Comaroff (1991:172), for the missionaries the overland trek from coast to the interior was the essential passage into the African reality (Gunner, 2002:43)

6. Sundkler (1976:175), Zulu Zion

The thesis methodology concerned matters of correlation and comparison thus the focus of the thesis was on the Shembe ministry and the history of the Gospel according to Mark. Consequently, the socio-history milieu of Shembe and the Gospel according to Mark were central to this investigation. Thus, various authors who contributed to the life and ministry of Jesus and Shembe's biography, his church and ministry, were included in this chapter. Authors such as John J. Pilch went beyond the historical and literary questions to examine the social questions of how the earliest followers of Jesus and ancient Judeans understood healing, the roles these healers played and the different emphasis placed on healing in the Gospels.

John Pilch drew on insights from medical texts and Mediterranean anthropology to analyse and make sense of the healing methods that were employed by healers in the region during the first century, especially the healings of Jesus. Such insights leave one with a greater appreciation for their work as they explain and practice their techniques within their cultural worldview. In his own words Pilch (2000:15) stated "Because healers mediate culture, the interpreter will have to be enculturated into the Mediterranean world to properly understand and interpret ancient biblical texts". Being aware of the cultural worldview of the text prevents the modern reader from imposing their own beliefs on the community of the text. This approach aims to unravel the healing methods of the first-century Mediterranean region from contemporary Western biomedical biases.

Pieter Craffert was referred to extensively in the thesis as he likened these types of traditional healings with Shamanism and other traditional healers and healing methods. Craffert (2011) in *Shamanism and the Shamanic Complex* asserted that Shamanism is not a religion but a set of cross-cultural religious sensibilities and practices. In other words, shamanic practices can be found across various cultures. Dube (2018c) likened the calling of Jesus to that of the African diviner. The issue here is the cross-cultural interpretation of the New Testament, for instance, Jesus retreats into the desert (Mk 1:12-13) which Dube (2018a: abstract) likens to the retreat of an *isangoma* to a secluded place upon his calling. According to Dube (2018a: abstract) the importance of this similarity is that Mark presents Jesus as the best folk healer. He, therefore, suggests that the analogue of the African notion of a calling (*ukuthwasa*) may provide illustrative insights into the importance of Jesus' retreat into the desert; interpreted as a rite of passage whereby the practitioner

(e.g. *isangoma*) acquires healing powers. Dube's approach falls within the category of analogical interpretation –an approach that seeks to find an interpretive or illustrative lens to a less-known phenomenon within the Bible.

2.2 The Gospel of Mark

Craffert (2008) provided a different insight and approach to the activities of Jesus, a depiction that diversified some of the portrayals in the Gospels. He engaged in anthropological, cultural and historical research which sought to discover some of the activities around the first-century Mediterranean cultures, to expand knowledge on community life during the time of Jesus. In this book, the historical Jesus is presented as a Galilean shamanic figure. The idea of Jesus as a shamanic figure builds on existing approaches as studies on the historical Jesus. It did not aim to replace any of these methods but to bring more clarity on the healing activities of the historical Jesus.

Craffert typified the historical healer such as Jesus, particularly in contrast to the modern Western scientific practitioners. Craffert (2008:39) argued that the historical Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels was not portrayed accurately and that Jesus could be aligned with the cultural concept of the traditional healers (Craffert, 2008:143). According to Craffert, Shamanism referred to the features and practices regularly occurring as a pattern in many cultural systems and consisted of a specific configuration of certain characteristics and social functions that resulted from these experiences. His work on the historical Jesus provided an opportunity to compare and contrast first-century healers and contemporary African healers. As a combination of regularly occurring features and functions, these did not appear in this pattern amongst other religious practitioners or entrepreneurs. Consequently, a shaman figure is a recognisable social type[3] distinct from other social types such as prophets, priests, healers, sages, or rabbis.

[3] People who are passionate about educating others and performing in leadership roles might have social personalities. People with this personality often hope to create a change in the lives of others.

Craffert (2008:245) further argued that

> If Jesus was a shamanic figure, it would not be surprising that together with the accounts about his teaching and prophecy, the reports about healings, exorcisms, and control of spirits constitute the bulk of the material ascribed to Jesus' activities as a historical figure. The focus will be on understanding of the healings, exorcisms, and control of spirits as potential shamanic activities.

Therefore, the testing hypothesis that Jesus was a Galilean shamanic figure depended on an understanding of the healing and exorcism narratives typical of shamanic figures. However, that depended on the nature of the shamanic healings and exorcisms at the time. The central functions of a shamanic figure were on the one hand healing, exorcism and the control of spirits, and on the other hand, teaching, prophesy and various matters of divination. Jesus did not perform surgery, but his healings were meant to portray a holistic view of health and salvation. Meier (1994:512) quoted in Craffert (2008:254)

> who thinks that all the healing accounts are reports about extraordinary deeds or miracles, which he defines as follows: "unusual, startling, or extraordinary events" that are readily visible to everyone but without any "reasonable explanation in human abilities or in other forces that operate in our world of time and space.

According to Kleinman, cures pertained to the treatment of the individual organs of the body, while healing was viewed as a holistic experience (cf. Kleinman, 1980b:12). There is, however, little evidence about the kind of illnesses Jesus healed during his life, for example, Davis (1995:69) quoted in Craffert (2008:247) describes Jesus' healing as "healings of somatic disorders" and "exorcisms of supposedly possessing demons." In the summaries of the Gospel according to Mark (Mk 3:10-12) and (Mk 6:55-56) Jesus went about cities and villages healing every disease and infirmity, or healing all the sick and possessed who came to him. However, this did not imply that he was a physician in the manner of modern practitioners. Viewed from the hypotheses of these scholars, the concept of healing in contemporary Western ideology differs from that in the Gospels.

This study aimed to compare the process of initiation that Jesus underwent to that of an *isangoma.* The development of Jesus towards his full ministry could be compared to the process of the African diviner's graduation (*ukuthwasa*) where *ukuthwasa* meant to graduate from being an aspirant to fully becoming a healer and diviner. During the early training period, the aspirant retreated into

isolation for the purpose of acquiring power. Dube (2018c) provided insight into Jesus' retreat into the wilderness after his baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist (Mk 1:9). The purpose of retreating into isolation was threefold, namely, for sharing in the role and power of the Spirit during the initiation, the commitment of the practitioner staying on course during an initiative by avoiding possible prohibited activities and last, being possessed by a divine power which would later become evident throughout the ministry.

Dube (2018c) explained that his approach was not new, but fell within the category of analogical interpretation – an approach that sought to find an interpretive or illustrative lens to a less known phenomenon within the bible. He chose the route of analogue through the *ukuthwasa* – the calling of a *sangoma* as a model to understanding the consciousness of Jesus, that he embodied God's power to perform healings and exorcisms. Gould & Watson (1982:239) observed that models could be in the form of direct or indirect models. Due to the perceived continuity with contemporary culture, most social scientists favoured direct analogues. However, this did not suggest that contemporary cultures were a direct, indubitable window into the past, but instead through them, one could find traceable cultural practices present in the contemporary culture that assisted in making inferences about previous generations.

Direct models were derived from cultures that had direct historical and cultural links to biblical culture. For example, cultures such as those existing in Africa have been shown to have a close affinity to biblical culture. However, not all models or analogues were simplistic as was initially assumed; the complexity became evident when deciding on an applicable or appropriate model and how one should go about deciding on the suitability of a model (Craffert, 2001:23). Craffert, who has done much work on this topic, suggested that, while direct models were safer choices, they were not the final solution, and selecting one required careful deliberation.

It must be noted that this study is not comparing Jesus to a *sangoma* but was more pertinently, illustrating his calling as a healer. Making sense of such events from the perspective of *ukuthwasa* as a ritual of acquiring power, could perhaps assist in explaining the disappearance of Jesus, his time in the wilderness and his later appearance in the communities as a powerful preacher, healer and exorcist (Mark 1:12-13). The term *ukuthwasa* referred to the divine calling to become a sacred practitioner, a calling usually ascribed to herbalists, diviners, or lot casters. Within most African

cultures, a calling to become a *sangoma* – which was a generic term referring to and including the said categories above, was not a vocation that one decided on unilaterally, as such a choice was a decision ultimately reserved for one's ancestors.

The study also considered the differences between the concepts of healing and cure, specifically the difference between biomedicine and anthrocentric healing. According to Pilch (2000:13), "just as health and sickness are variously defined in different cultures, appropriate therapies differ too." In the Western scientifically-oriented cultures, therapies were aetiological, focussing on the cause of diseases, bacteria and viruses. What the physician required was an instrument such as a microscope and other technological medical inventions. The name given to this specific type of therapy was a 'cure.' Kleinman found that this implied "taking effective control of a disordered biological and/or psychological process, usually identified as a disease" (Kleinman, 1980b:82). In cultures that were not scientifically orientated, therapies were symptomatic and aimed at alleviating the symptoms. Jesus was not concerned with the cause of the affliction; this is evidenced when his disciples asked him about a man born blind, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents?' (*Ῥαββεί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ*;) (Jn 9:1-5). Jesus replied that neither had, as the cause was irrelevant. Even in the accounts of demon-possession, the demons were not viewed as the cause, but rather the manifestation of the misfortune and the symptoms. The exorcisms Jesus performed were therefore symptomatic rather than aetiological therapies. According to Kleinman (1980b), this type of therapy was known as 'healing', that is, a process by which (i) disease and certain other troublesome circumstances developed into illnesses (a cultural construction and therefore meaningful) and (ii) the victim gained a "degree of satisfaction through the reduction, or even elimination of the psychological, sensory, and experiential oppressive engendered by his medical circumstances" (Kleinman, 1980b:265).

Galanti (2000:335) maintains that health and sickness were differently defined in different cultures, including their different and appropriate therapies. Thus, modern industrial scientific therapeutic healing could be used as the benchmark for all traditional healing and is a category that ably accommodates the healings Jesus performed in his time. These traditional healers do not rely on modern laboratory instruments; they view the ailment from the perspective of microbes and viruses but rather prefer to treat the patient and the ailments from a cultural point of view. They

regarded symptoms as causes and sought external causes rather than biological causes within the body.

2.3 Cross-cultural interpretations

The following section dealt with a cross-cultural interpretation of the bible which sought to analyse how Africans interpreted the bible and how the missionaries understood them to interpret it. The study also took into consideration that African authors today opined that references to Africans had also been found in the bible. Nyiawung (2013) in his article on contextualising biblical exegesis, posed a question on the identity of Jesus: 'Who do you say I am?' (Lk 9:20) and maintained that Africans had contributed minimally to biblical theology, especially in the domain of biblical exegesis. He proposed an African biblical hermeneutic approach (ABHA), a paradigm shift from the text and its author as well as its context, to the context of the subject of exegesis as a contextual approach to biblical criticism. As a hermeneutical and contextual approach, it emphasised a move from what the text meant to its original audience, to what it meant to Africans in their context.

Nyiawung divided his article into two main sections, the first section being a review of the so-called traditional approaches in biblical criticism. It concluded with the definition of some lacunae that justified the reflection on the need for a contextual approach. The second section focused on the contextualisation of the exegesis of the New Testament. According to Chouinard (1997:68), the bible contained a 'verbal reality' that remained silent unless it was exposed through scientific research, that is, exegesis. During the Middle Ages, exegesis was aimed at ensuring that biblical interpretation 'agreed with the tradition of the church in asking how exegesis should be done. The question of methodology was thus being debated at the level of schools of thought, theologians and contexts.

Each of these debates was grounded in a specific 'centre of authority' (Porter, 1995:87). The historical exegetical (diachronic) approach, with the historical context of the text as its centre of authority, focused on the author of the text, the text itself as its centre of authority and concentrated on the internal structure of the text. The reader-oriented exegetical approach focused on the reader or receptor of the text, including contextual issues that surrounded the reader of the text. This

approach, known as social scientific criticism, rendered texts as products of specific social systems (cf. Elliott, 1993).

From an African point of view, a 'traditional' Western exegetical approach seemed abstract because it did not appear to address the African people in their very context. The term 'abstract' was not only understood in the usual sense as being opposed to 'concrete', but also implied being unattached to the life and reading of ordinary people removed from questions developed in the privileged seclusion of the universities. It also meant being detached from the present and its problems, concerned only with the reconstruction of a past with all its problems (Dietrich and Luz, 2002:ix). Traditional approaches had conditioned Africans to 'reading' theology rather than 'doing' theology (cf. Green, 2009). Given the current challenges, relevant knowledge was that which led to creativity and production, as opposed to passive participation and a somewhat 'spoon-feeding knowledge'. When Africans were engaged in 'doing' theology, they appropriated biblical texts and thus allowed the text to speak to their context.

This approach that made use of the African worldview therefore intervened as an attempt to make theological findings relevant to the context in which they were practiced, 'putting theology to work in a practical way in order to manifest the kingdom of God in deeds, not merely in words' (Bray, 1996:507). An African contextual approach recognised the entire cosmos and human spectrum, irrespective of sex, colour and status as the focus of biblical studies. This served to explain the shift in theological activities from the text and its surrounding context, to that of the audience, which in Nyiawung's (2013:3) article was that of the developing world and the historically marginalised groups. From the survey of African biblical studies, one observed that although there had been a growing interest in doing theology from an African perspective, the various efforts had not yet crystalised into a defined exegetical approach. In addition, as Oeming opined, all the exegetical methods of Afro-centric hermeneutics resorted to the traditional reader-oriented approach of biblical interpretation (cf. Oeming, 2006:v). The African Biblical Hermeneutic Approach (ABHA) therefore focused on the context of the audience, making use of the results from alternative methods of exegesis and applied these to the realities of the African context (Nyiawung & Van Eck, 2013:3). It had its roots in the contexts of biblical studies and emphasised the relevance of the message to the African people in their context.

Secondly, the ABHA was a way of rereading, that considered biblical texts as a challenge to African theologians, particularly those whose task it was to seek solutions for the various problems that plagued African societies (Nyiawung, 2010a:69). As discussed above, the inculturation of the biblical hermeneutic method stressed the importance of the African context in biblical interpretation. However, when Ukpong and Loba-Mkole referred to 'context' they were pertinently referring to 'culture'. The method emphasised the context of the reader rather than that of the characters in the text.

It is from this background that a method that did not focus on the context of the characters in the text, was developed, that is, the African biblical interpretation method. Tracy (1987:7) and Dietrich and Luz (2002:viii) rightly observed that interpretation matters in times of cultural crisis. Before this attempt, there were three other attempts at African biblical interpretation, such as Afro-centric hermeneutics. This emerged with four main exegetical methods: liberation hermeneutics (feminist hermeneutic and deliverance hermeneutic), white South African hermeneutic, missiological hermeneutic and neo-traditional hermeneutic (cf. Krog, 2005). These did not take into consideration the socio-cultural aspect of the context.

The first phase (Ukpong, 1999:314) involved drawing comparisons between African and biblical notions of interpreting the bible. The second phase involved drawing hermeneutical conclusions from the encounter of the bible and the African context. The earliest attempt at biblical interpretation was traced to the city of Alexandria and to such names as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others who lived and worked there (Trigg, 1988:21-23). In Africa south of the Sahara, the area on which Ukpong's essay was focused, the impact of these modern methods began to be felt during the mid-20th century. This corresponded with the period of political independence and the founding of African universities where these methods were taught. By the third quarter of the century, the use of these methods in the academic interpretation of the Bible in Africa had become widespread (Onwu, 1984-85:35).

The focus of interpretation was on "the communities that had received the text, rather than on those that produced it" (Ukpong, 1999:314) or on the text itself, as was the case with the Western methods. There were two approaches to the academic readings of the bible in Africa - one followed the Western pattern, while the other followed the African pattern of linking the text to its African

context. The study by Ukpong focused mainly on an academic interpretation, excluding Apartheid and popular uses of the bible, which began from the 1930s when one of the pioneering studies was first published. The study found it convenient to divide the development of biblical interpretation in Africa into three phases, namely Phase I: 1930s-70s; Phase II: 1970s -90s; and Phase III: 1990s: Phase III is proactive: recognition of the ordinary reader; African context as subject of biblical interpretation; dominated by liberation and holistic inculturation methodologies. The above division was used to facilitate discussion rather than to compartmentalise biblical interpretation in Africa. It was also important to note that the seeds of one phase were sown in the previous phase; meaning that the emergence of a new phase did not imply the disappearance of the former.

The commencement of modern biblical studies in Africa was in response to the widespread condemnation of African religion and culture by Christian missionaries during the 19th and 20th centuries. African religion and culture were condemned at face value and without any formal investigation, also labeled as demonic and immoral, and had therefore to be exterminated before Christianity could take root in Africa. In response to this, some Westerners who were sympathetic to the African cause and later the Africans themselves undertook research that sought to legitimise African religion and culture *vis-a-vis* Christianity. This was done initially by way of comparative studies. Since some missionaries saw only discontinuity between the religious culture of Africa and the Bible, comparative studies revealed that despite the discontinuity, there was also continuity between the two. Emphasis was on the Old Testament, and since the New Testament shared the same cultural worldview as the Old Testament, the consequences of such comparisons were considered to extend to the New Testament too (Dickson, 1984:181). These studies were mainly located in West, East and Central Africa.

In 1930, Williams (1930) sought to show a correlation between the Hebrew language and the Ashanti language of Ghana, based mainly on similarities in sound. He also pointed out similarities between the worship of deities other than *Yahweh* in the Old Testament and the Ashanti worship of God and other divinities. These similarities led him to conclude that there was a possibility that the Ashanti of Ghana were descendants of the Jewish race or that there had been very early contact between the Ashanti and the Jews (Williams, 1930:35). However, there have been objections to this type of study, based on the fact that ancient Israel and contemporary Africa were distant from each other both in space and time (Isaac, 1964:95).

Adamo (2012) discussed certain illusions or misunderstandings, realities and challenges facing African biblical studies. Some of these illusions were that African Biblical Studies was fetishist, syncretistic and primitive, local and unpopular at best. The word 'African' was used in a broad sense to refer not only to the people on the continent and the black people of Africa geographically but also to embrace people of African descent globally, including those who embraced African culture, religion and traditions (Adamo (2001). The discussion on hermeneutic(s) that could transform Africa was a discussion of the biblical studies that was important to the well-being of society and resort under African cultural hermeneutics. African Biblical Studies was the biblical interpretation that made "African social cultural context a subject of interpretation" (Ukpong, 2002:17-32).

It meant that the analysis of the biblical text was viewed from the perspective of the African worldview and culture (Adamo, 2001:6). African Biblical Studies comprised three main characteristics: It was 'liberational, transformational and culturally sensitive'. It employed liberation as a crucial hermeneutics and mobilised indigenous cultural materials for theological enterprises (Sugirtharajah, 1999:11). It was 'postmodern, postcolonial in its aim to celebrate the local', and to challenge the reigning imported western theories (Sugirtharajah, 1999:11). However, there had been accusations that some of the studies within the ambit of African Biblical Studies were illusionary, notions that were formulated and made use of African indigenous materials and methods of African traditional religion and culture (Asaju, 2005:121-129).

In African indigenous society, people believed in enemies who were viewed as the main source of all evil and occurrences; the belief that nothing happened naturally without a spirit force behind it was entrenched in society, thus incidents like barrenness, infant mortality, accidents and other evils were ascribed to these enemies. Before the advent of Christianity, Africans had a cultural way of dealing with the problem of enemies and evildoers. In African indigenous tradition, when an enemy was identified and one did not have potent words or charms to deal with it, such a person consulted a babalawo (a *sangoma* in Yoruba) who prepared a charm or potent words to ward off such person or enemy.

Unfortunately, the western missionaries did not reveal the source of their power and knowledge to their African converts, but instead met them with prejudice and oppression. In short, the type of

Christianity introduced to the African converts did not meet the needs for African protection, healing and success. African Christians therefore sought diligently but in vain for the source of power in the bible, which the missionaries failed to explain to them – which was the Word of God. When they read of the miraculous healings and the imprecatory psalms, they assumed that there was a hidden power inherent in the bible and began to use the so-called imprecatory psalms (e.g. Psalms 35 and 109) for protection against their enemies, as they believed that it was as powerful as their own potent words (*ogede*) and charms. Psalms such as 5, 6, 28, 35, 37, 54, 55, 83 and 109 were classified as protective psalms which could be read, chanted and sung several times as African incantations (Adamo, 2005:17-21). The use of imprecatory psalms with the various names of God evinced recognition of the power in names found within African tradition, similar to the power attributed to names in the Hebrew bible. African Christians revered the names of God and believed that the names in the bible were powerful when recited and the recitation of such names would achieve whatever result was sought.

The use of the imprecatory psalms for protection against enemies and evil spirits was based on the recognition of the fundamental belief in the power of words. The belief in the potency of words and its efficacy of this practice in the African tradition was never doubted among African Christians and in most churches in Africa. The study by Adamo (2012) was in favour of using imprecatory psalms rather than consulting local priests for harmful medicine to destroy their enemies. This belief remained strong even among the westernised Yoruba people. The Book of Psalms became the most treasured book of the bible, believed to be more powerful than any other book and was used for protection, healing, and success (Ogunkunle, 2000:217). The study by Adamo (2012) provided information regarding the relationship between the missionaries and the indigenous people in the early 1920s at a time when Isaiah Shembe's movement was in its formative stage. The causes of the parting of ways between the Africans and mission churches were well documented by, for example, authors such as Duncan (2015), Hasting (1996), Dee (2018), Nmah (2010), Adamo (2018), William (1976) and Baldick (1999).

The greatest contribution of these studies is the singling out of the African founders of the Independent Churches who were not intellectuals, such as Lekhanyane (c.1885-1948), MaNku (1894-1988) and Shembe (1865-1935). The studies also determined the reason why the biblical interpretation was grounded in the context of their congregations. It was a shift away from the

western way of interpreting the bible message, to the African context. This is evidenced by "the search for Africans in the bible," by authors such as Adamo (2018) and Ukpong (1999:317). The overall purpose is to articulate Africa's influence on the history of ancient Israel and Africa's contribution to the history of salvation, as well as to correct negative interpretations of some biblical texts on Africa. It is clear that these founders, Lekhanyane, MaNku and Shembe, regarded themselves as reformers of the church and deemed their churches and congregations as true followers of God.

Adamo (2001) sought to define the term 'African' and which people resorted under this nomenclature. According to his definition the word 'African' was used in a broad sense, not only for the people on the continent and the black people of Africa geographically but also to embrace people of African descent globally, including those who embraced the African culture, religion, and tradition.

2.4 Shembe

The following section discoursed on the writing of and on Isaiah Shembe, the founder of the *Ibandla lamaNazaretha.* Scholars have approached the subject from different points of view but the difficulty in finding a suitable and all-encompassing definition betrays the complexity of the subject. The book by John Langalibalele Dube (1936) *UShembe* is an important source of information on Shembe and his movement. The book was written in early *isiZulu* orthography and concerned the core issues of the thesis, as it underscored the biography of Isaiah Shembe, the founder of the Nazarite Baptist Church, and the history of the formation of his congregation, *Ibandla lamaNazaretha*. In his book, Dube presented the history of the Shembe family, his birth and early life, including his resurrection from death as an infant. His miraculous encounters regarding visions of Jehovah and the beginning of his ministry even before he was baptised and other events were fully documented by Dube and which was utilized during the research for this study.

2.4.1 Sundler's contribution to the thesis

The contribution made by Sundkler to the thesis is of paramount importance and is tabulated as follows:

Chapter	Author	Title
1.2	Sundkler (1948:227)	Shembe avoided Medicine
1.4.1	Sundkler (1948:230)	Demons that cause barrenness in women dwell in the womb
2.4.2	Sundkler (1948:110)	How different AICs participated in the secession from the mission churches
2.4.2	Sundkler (1948:38)	How AICs formed tribal churches.
2.4.2	Sundkler (1948:38)	The general rise of AICs
2.4.2	Sundkler (1948:39)	The appointment of African church leaders during secession.
2.4.2	Sundkler (1948:65)	The suppression of AICs by the Government, particularly Natal government
2.4.2	Sundkler (1948:68)	The Ethiopian church is a political and social movement and not religious
2.4.2	Sundkler (1948:111)	Shembe breaks away from the Baptist Church and forms the Nazarite Church

Sundkler (1948), in his classic book Bantu Prophets in South Africa, provides valuable insights on the formation of various African Independent Churches as breakaway movements from mission churches. The reason for the secessions was the dissatisfaction of black leadership in the mission churches. He described the general rise of the independent church control as part of the Christian mission and included the history of the rise of Ethiopian and Zionist churches founded on the Witwatersrand in 1892 (Sundkler, 1948:38). He recorded the sporadic occurrences of black emancipation from mission authorities control and he recognised the

first black tribal church organised in 1884 by a Wesleyan minister, Nehemiah Tile. Tile was one of the prominent African leaders within the Wesleyan Mission Church who had been ordained as a result of John Kilner's "deputation hurricane" in the 1880s (Sundkler, 1948:38). Tile was criticised by the European missionaries because of his strong Tembu-nationalistic sympathies and he left the church in 1882. Two years later he founded the Tembu Church together with Ngangelizwe, the chief of the Tembus, as the leader. The cause of the secession was not only the opposition to European control, but the Tembus wanted their tribal church to be under their control (Sundkler, 1948:38) Unfortunately, the chief displeased the Government authorities of the Cape Colony because of this church and consequently reverted to the mission fold. Another tribal chief, Kgantlapane, actively participated in the founding of the Native Independent Congregational Church later that year and appointed ministers of his choice to lead this tribal church (Sundkler, 1948:39). In 1889 a young, over-zealous missionary of the Berlin Mission to the Bapedi Church, J. A. Winter, afforded African leaders of the church more responsibility. In the same year an evangelist of the Anglican Church in Pretoria, Khanyane Napo, formed his own organisation, namely the Africa Church (Sundkler, 1948:39).

In certain colonial dependencies, however, even the least evidence of independent church tendencies was promptly dealt with and suppressed by the government (Sundkler, 1948:65). Government policies from various provinces were differently applied, for example, the so-called Pre-Union. In the Cape Colony, the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E) brought the Cape Government into contact with the Separatist Church problem. A black minister had been supplied with official Marriage Registration forms, as was done for the white ministers, but was ceased forthwith. The A.M.E. was requested to comply with the appointment of ministers and was to have a fully competent authority with whom the Government could negotiate. The Ethiopian church grew rapidly at the time, appointing 200 ministers. The African Presbyterian Church claimed it had 6500 members and 20,000 adherents. In these new churches, "Africa for Africans" (Sundkler, 1948:66) was strongly preached. The Ethiopian movement was declared "a political and social movement, not a religious movement at all," (Sundkler, 1948:68).

The roles played by Ethiopian preachers in the Zulu Rebellion was the cause of the strongly repressive action which the Natal Government in 1908 suggested as a basic requirement for a common South African policy regarding the treatment of Native Separatist Churches. In Natal, it was declared that there should be no Native Minister of a Church, independent and free from direct and effective European control, and be registered as a Marriage Officer. No official recognition in any form by grants-in-aid of schools or otherwise were to be given to Native Churches independent of, and Johannesburg free from, European control. Pretoria was regarded as the birthplace of Ethiopianism and as the birthplace of the independent Churches of the Zionists (Sundkler, 1948:80). The Witwatersrand as a whole dominated the development of the independent Churches which later became a problem for the independent churches. Whereas in the missionary struggle, white and black leadership were the cause of secession in the established independent Churches and leadership problems began to take root. The coveted rank was that of chief leadership where the family became permanent leaders and succession was through birth. Isaiah Shembe was typical of this type of leadership.

Sundkler was a notable scholar who provided a considerable wealth of information on Shembe in terms of his baptism in the Native Baptist Church, his ordination, and his eventual leaving of the Native Baptist Church and establishing his church in 1911, after his breakaway from the Baptist church over a Sabbath issue. He started his church and named it the Nazarites (*amaNazaretha*) and asserted that all the verses in the OT referring to Nazarites were to be applied to his people. In 1916 he established his church village, Ekuphakameni, and initiated pilgrimages to the Nhlangakazi mountain shrine soon after. Because of his considerable influence, he dominated the chiefs wherever he went. Upon his death, he was buried with great honour in being called holy (*Uyingcwele*) (Sundkler, 1948:111).

2.4.2 Oosthuizen's argument

Oosthuizen (1976), in his seminal book, *The Theology of a South African Messiah*, concluded after his analysis of the Nazarite Baptist Church hymnal *Izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha*, (the hymns of the Nazarite) that Shembe had usurped the status of God. The hymnal was divided into five parts, namely the Supreme Being, the Messiah, Man and the supernatural world, the Community, and

the Eschatology. The term 'Supreme Being' (*uMvelingqangi*) only had mythical significance, however, Oosthuizen (1976:286) argued that Shembe was also designated, by his followers, by being called *uMvelingqangi*. He argued that the term could be separated into three parts namely (1) *Umveli* which meant; to come forth, appear, come into view, (2) *Ngqa,* which was used to express a superlative, a first sighting and a rare occurrence, beginning, commencement, and (3) *Ngi,* which indicated the first-person singular. Oosthuizen went on to argue that in (hymn 197:2) Shembe averred that he was called in his mother's womb (Oosthuizen, 1976:40). He did not claim possession of a spirit like a diviner (*sangoma*) would, but claimed to have a spirit at his disposal. Oosthuizen argued that Shembe's claim of a supernatural calling provided him with supernatural powers, believing that he could remove curses. In (hymn 216) Shembe was the *iNkosi* of the Zulus. In (hymn 217) members of the church were pictured standing before their *iNkosi*. The term *iNkosi* could be understood in two ways; namely in ordinary *isiZulu* usage where it meant 'Chief' However, when it appeared in the bible, it meant 'Lord' as in God or Jesus Christ. This is the meaning Oosthuizen argued that Shembe designated for himself. For example, in (Verse 3) it read

Yizani wema Zulu	Come ye Zulus
Siyibonile iNkosi yethu	We have seen our *iNkosi*

Oosthuizen (1976:40).

Oosthuizen maintained that coming from another world was not strange for the *AmaZulu,* as they believed one could enter it through dreams. However, Shembe professed to have had his supernatural spirit entering his mind. Oosthuizen stated that in (hymn 220) which Shembe had written after his resurrection, he was referred to as "iNkosi Isaiah Shembe," (1976:167). Oosthuizen's (1976) argument in this section was that Shembe had usurped the status of God as he claimed that he could get anyone out of difficulty by intervening on their behalf. Oosthuizen (1976:41) argued that the term *uNkulunkulu* was used more often by Shembe than was the case in the *isiZulu* bible and used it only once in connection with Jesus. He argued that in (hymn 21) he

excluded Jesus as liberator (*uMkhululi*) and described the God of Adam (*Thixo ka Adam*)[4] as the only *uMkhululi*.

Oosthuizen analysed several terms to illustrate how Shembe had usurped the status of Jesus with words such as leader (*uMkhokheli*)[5]; the one who pays, the paymaster, one who pays another's debt. Oosthuizen maintained that this term, when translated into *isiZulu* meant that Jesus Christ was the payer of debts. However, Shembe took it to mean Jehovah (cf. hymn 10:2). The term servant (*iNceku*) a designation indicating a person of high rank was used in the bible to signify Moses; he was called "my servant Moses," (Numbers 12:7) Oosthuizen (1976:44) however, opined that Isaiah Shembe was called God's servant (*Wena-Israel iNceku yami* hymn 41:8. Shembe considered himself as a prophet in a similar journey with Moses, sent by his master Jehovah to liberate his people, the AmaZulu, from physical, mental and spiritual oppression. However, this study finds that there was nothing untoward in calling Shembe God's servant in the same way as Moses was called God's servant.

Concerning man and the supernatural world, Oosthuizen analysed how Shembe used the biblical term "*umoya*" which belonged to *umu-imi* or a magical class, and bore the following meanings:

(i) Wind; air; breath; (ii) substantive, fullness of matter, solidity; (iii) spirit, soul, life, (iv) rumour; (v) nonsense; (vi) (mod) climate, climatic conditions. Oosthuizen explained that he had dealt only with the first three meaning for '*Umoya.* In the Old Testament. "R*uah*" was translated into isiZulu as *umoya* (cf. Kings 22:41) as well as in the New Testament "*pneuma*" (cf 1 Cor. 15:45). Oosthuizen quoted Callaway where he maintained that the ordinary isiZulu speaker would not use *umoya* in the sense of *spirit* or soul, but would only apply it to the inhaling of air. He further stated that even though the word had been used in a wider context, as mentioned by Callaway, his statement was nevertheless significant. He argued that in the hymnal (*izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha*) *umoya* was used with three different meanings: (i) impersonal power, force or energy; (ii) personal being; (iii) simply as a metaphor. The term "*umoya*" was used only once in the prayers and refers to work. In this case it meant physical strength, to cultivate, weed, plough, and herd the cattle.

[4] *Thixo* is a *isiXhos*a term

[5] *uMkhokheli* is *isiXhosa* term meaning leader

According to Oosthuizen, Shembe distorted the term as its fundamental meaning was to constitute the vital force of the body. It referred to more than mere physical strength. He pointed out (hymn 13) where he gave it some clarification. Shembe stated in (verse 2) "The ardent desire of your *umoya*, let it search for me, let it find me; In the poverty of my *umoya,* let me be happy today, Oh, *Nkosi*," (Oosthuizen, 1976:58).

Ebusweni was the locative of -*so* (n. *ubuso*) which could mean face, countenance or the front of anything looking in a particular direction or that part directed to one, e.g. 'there was darkness on the face of the earth' (cf. hymn 51:2). Oosthuizen (1976:131) argued that even after Shembe's death his followers were continuously aware of his presence, that they were still before his face. He had repeatedly emphasised this in the hymns e.g. (Hymn 86:2).

Indumalo njalo Nkosi	disappointment always, *Nkosi*
Ngibuyisele endlini yakho	take me back to your house
Ngidumise nabaningi	that I may praise with the many
Ebusweni bakho kunjalo uyazi Nkosi	in your presence, it is so, you know Nkosi

(Oosthuizen (1976:131)

Oosthuizen (1976:131) concluded that at Ekuphakameni, those in difficulty had the privilege of standing before the face, or in the presence of, the *iNkosi*. His face was beautiful before *iNkosi* and also before the face of heaven (hymn 125:1, 3). In (hymn 35:2) they stood before the face of (the father). In (hymn 181:4) he stated: "We have sinned, we confess in your presence" (*Sonile siyavuma ebusweni bakho*)

2.4.3 The female body, *Ibandla lamaNazaretha* and Jephthah's daughter

West (2007) dealt with three themes in his writings on the bible and the female body in *Ibandla lamaNazaretha*: Isaiah Shembe and Jephthah's daughter, namely the history of Shembe. These excerpts were taken from Gunner's (2002) research regarding Shembe's birth, his parentage, his

tribe, his early life, his adolescence, his baptism, his involvement in the Wesleyan church, his employment at Buwelshoek in the Harrismith district and his polygamous family in the late 1800s (Gunner, 2002:17).

West recounted Shembe's return to Natal in the 1900s in the context of the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902), the Anglo-Zulu war (1906), the Bambatha rebellion (1906) and the formation of the Union of South Africa (1910). Using this history as background, West aligned his account with that of Gunner (2002:23) in that many who joined Shembe's church in the twentieth-century, were merely seeking respite to create a social group to resituate mental and material spaces (Gunner, 2002:23). He also aligned his research with that of Muller (1999a:25) that Shembe's mission was to preach the Word of God as detailed in the mission bible, that Shembe believed the *amaZulu* people could be converted to Christianity and still retain their own cultural ways, many of which were reflected in the narratives of the Old Testament (cf Roberts, 1936) quoted in West (2007:491).

According to Muller and West, when Shembe returned to Natal, oral accounts suggested that he did not intend to establish his own church in opposition to the European mission. Initially, he encouraged those he healed and converted to join established mission communities (cf. Bongani Mthethwa, June 1991). West detailed how Shembe contrasted his hybrid organisation by merging various aspects of traditional Nguni culture, European colonialism, missionary Christianity and emerging industrial capitalism, and in so doing attempted to reassert some sense of economic, political and cultural identity. However, according to (Vilakazi *et al.*, 1986:10) Shembe merely attempted to create his own world.

According to Muller (2005:96), it was not known whether Shembe was literate or not as he was mostly self-taught and could manage to write and read to some extent. Another version was provided by Johannes Galilee Shembe, the son of Shembe and his successor, who opined that 'When Shembe was working in town, he learned to read and write.' Muller (1999a:48) opines that "Though illiterate in his early life, he learned to read and write to both read the Bible and write down his visions". In 1915/16 Shembe bought land on a site known as Ekuphakameni where he established his headquarters, which included a large community of women and young girls who had been following him. The land was bought for the purpose of building a boarding house where these women could be educated and the girls raised according to the ways of the bible.

2.5 Conclusion

The literary review assisted in providing a scholarly background to the thesis as scholars and their writings were specifically sourced in terms of their applicability and contribution to the study. It must be noted that most of the prominent and relevant literature discussed in this chapter included versions of Shembe's biography in their various facets, his childhood and youth, his calling, his ministry and the founding of the congregation including the status of the founders of the different congregations. As he is a central figure in this research. Shembe is an example of one who changed his status and emulated a divine status. He was. however, accused by a number of scholars as having appropriated the status of Jesus, the Holy Spirit and of God.

The key topics in this study focussed on cultural healing, cross-cultural interpretation, and the historical analysis of the protagonists, all of which were addressed in the Gospel according to Mark and the testimony of Hadebe. The focus and criteria of the material were on the latest works that could be obtained and relevant to the theme of the thesis. There was ample material with regard to the Gospel according to Mark while, concerning the testimony of Hadebe, there was a paucity of sources available. The earliest and the most reliable source on Shembe was his biography by his contemporary and friend, John Langalibalele Dube whose work *UShembe* was published in 1936. Most of the authors who wrote thereafter based their work on this booklet of ninety-two pages. Two such popular scholars were Sundkler (1948) and Oosthuizen (1967) who presented scholarly material which in themselves became sources of many studies. Sundkler (1948) while writing about the biography of Shembe also worked broadly on the prophet typology of Shembe and the analysis of African Independent churches in general. Oosthuizen (1967) worked on the critique of Shembe's hymnal *Izihlabelelo samaNazaretha* in which he criticised Shembe's religious regard of himself.

In the Gospel according to Mark, the most recent material on culture and healing were considered. Since the healing was cross-culturally considered concerning the Gospel of Mark (first-century writing) and African prophetic healing of Shembe (the first-half of the twentieth-century events in Nyuswa region of Natal) relevant authors were deemed to be Pilch (1985/2000) whose work focussed on the anthropological approach to a first-century reading and understanding of the

healing in the Gospels. Pilch examined how the earliest followers of Jesus and ancient Judeans understood healing and how the modern western readers who were not au fait with those cultures would perhaps find it difficult to identify with the cultural aspect of healing, the roles these healers played and the different emphasis placed on healing among the Gospels.

Craffert (2008) wrote about the typology of Jesus of Nazareth comparing him to a Shaman, thereby being also relative to most traditional healers of most countries. Craffert's hypothesis hypotheses were relevant to the healing system of the AICs prophets like Shembe as he compared and contrasted Jesus' healing to modern western scientific practitioners. While he described Jesus' healings as extraordinary, at the same time he did find that they were either magical nor illusory, but that they were authentic.

How Jesus of Nazareth was called to become a healer and prophet was considered relevant to the hypothesis of Dube (2018c) and the theory of *ukuthwasa* which is part of the calling for an African diviner. While Dube likened the calling of Jesus to that of the African diviner, he emphatically pointed out that he was not comparing the healing abilities of the two.

The thesis methodology concerned matters of correlation and comparison thus the focus of the thesis was on the Shembe ministry in Hadebe's testimony and Jesus' ministry in the Gospel according to Mark. Consequently, the socio-history milieu of Shembe and the Gospel according to Mark were central to this investigation and the literary review. Various authors who contributed to the life and ministry of Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark and Shembe in Hadebe's testimony became integral part of the thesis.

Since Pilch and Craffert considered the healing method of Jesus and traditional healers as comparable to some extent, Jesus, similar to the traditional healers, did not perform surgery like modern western medical practitioners. Thus (Pilch (2000:142) claims that Jesus could not cure, only heal. At the same time Dube (2019b:2) denied that he was comparing Jesus and a diviner (*isangoma*). The study thus also considered the differences between the concepts of healing and curing, specifically the difference between biomedicine and anthrocentric healing (Craffert (2008:256). This difference was emphesised by (Kleinman (1980a:82), in that a cure takes place when individual bodily organs were treated in modern industrial hospital surgeries and the malady was called a disease. Jesus was not concerned with this. When alleviating symptoms which were

at the centre of interest according to Kleinman (1980a:265), this type of therapy was known as 'healing.'

Pilch (2000:13) argues that "just as health and sickness are variously defined in different cultures, appropriate therapies differ too." In the Western scientifically-oriented cultures, therapies were aetiological, focussing on the cause of diseases, bacteria and viruses. This was not the case with with Jesus and traditional healers.

The difference between how the missionaries and the Africans intepreted the bible was regarded as cross-cultural interpretation. The thesis discusses several authors whose contributions were too lenghthy to be accommodate in this chapter, elsewhere in the thesis. The most that could be said here was that the basic African interpretation was most agreed upon. Nyiawung (2013), proposed an African biblical hermeneutic approach (ABHA), a paradigm shifts from the text and its author as well as its context, to the context of the subject of exegesis as a contextual approach of biblical criticism. While Nyiawung & Van Eck (2013:3) opined that the ABHA focused on the context of the audience, making use of the results from alternative methods of exegesis and applied these to the realities of the African context. Nyiawung (2010a:69) also argued that the ABHA was a way of rereading, that considered biblical texts as a challenge to African theologians, particularly those whose task it was to seek solutions for the various problems that plagued African societies. However, authors like Trigg (1988:21-23) did not regard the term 'African' confined to black people only south of the Sahara, but also included North Africans in the Arab world. Consequently, he argued that the earliest attempt at biblical interpretation could be traced back to the city of Alexandria and to such names as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others who lived and worked there. The traces of this work shows that interpretation was largely allegorical and lasted in the *Eastern Orthodox Church*— Eastern Orthodox Church as distinct from Oriental Orthodox Churches, Eastern Christianity or Eastern Catholic Churches—till the onset of the Enlightenment.

According to Ukpong (1999:intro) in Africa South of the Sahara, the impact of this African interpretation—as according to Nyiawung and Van Eck (2013:3)—began to be felt in the mid-20th century, a period that corresponded with the period of political independence and the founding of African universities where these methods were taught. He focused on three periods in South

African history, namely 1930s -1970s: which was a period of widespread condemnation of African religion and culture by the Christian missionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries. The period 1970s -90s, as the most dynamic and rewarding progress in biblical studies in Africa. During this period the reactive approach of the first phase gradually gave way to a proactive approach and the 1990s: during this period the reactive and apologetic focussed on legitimising African religion and culture; dominated by the comparative method.

Adamo (2016:intro) sought to define the word African which appeared in much of the literature above**.** As discussed earlier**,** Adamo found that the word 'African' was used in a broad sense to refer not only to the people of Africa but also people of African descent globally, including those who embraced African culture and religion. African Biblical Studies with its three main biblical interpretation made the "African social cultural context a subject of interpretation." It employed liberation as a decisive hermeneutics and mobilised indigenous cultural materials for theological enterprises which aimed to celebrate the postcolonial. The greatest contribution of these studies was the singling out of the African founders of the Independent Churches who were not intellectuals. This study revealed why the African biblical interpretation in the 1920s-1930 was grounded in the context of their congregations. It was a shift from the western method of interpreting the bible message to the African context. This was ultimately evidenced by the quest to discover the African in the deceptively yet multi-layered narratives of the bible.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study is a qualitative research design, hence the need for various perspectives and different methodical approaches. The selection of a methodology was informed by the conviction that no one method or discipline will provide an all-inclusive understanding of the religions under discussion. Since the study is about the Gospels and narratives of a biblical nature, a historical approach is included, as it is linked to the social sciences and explores the history of the past to make sense of the present. The historical approach inclusive of a sociological approach will be used as an empirical and scientific research methodology in this study. In addition, as man is a believer in his practices, the phenomenological approach as a method representing beliefs, practices, and values will be used in this thesis, Hence, a combination of the historical, sociological, and phenomenological approaches will be used in the study, as will be discussed below.

This study involves a comparison between, the Gospel according to Mark and Hadebe through a comparative research methodology exemplified in cross-cultural studies that aim to make comparisons across different cultures. The method analyses phenomena and put them together to find the points of differentiation and similarity (Mokhtarianpour, 2016). The comparative method combines theory and theoretical concepts with data collection (Given, 2008) and is a broad term that includes both a quantitative and qualitative comparison. Social entities may be based on many lines, such as geographical or political demarcations in the form of cross-national or regional comparisons (Mills *et al.*, 2006). Aspects of social science are examined across different countries, consequently, a qualitative approach or analysis in which different types of methods such as case-study analysis are used by the researchers to elucidate the similarities and differences between the countries.

This definition reflects traditions such as cross-cultural analysis in anthropology, cross-societal analysis in sociology, cross-national analysis in political science, comparative historical analysis in history, and psychological analysis (Smelser, 2013). The use of comparison in the study of

human science, history and culture has a history that can be traced back to the Classical period of Ancient Greece and Greco-Roman period in history lasting from the 8th century BCE to the 5th century CE and grew from strength to strength with the passage of time. In modern history due to certain historical developments such as the enormous expansion of communications, technological advances and the immanent intensification of internationalisation tendencies, comparative research and cross-national comparison have increasingly received much attention; the bulk of contemporary humankind and social sciences abounding with examples of comparative approaches (Azarian, 2011).

The comparative method is often applied when searching for patterns of similarities and differences between two entities, explaining continuity and change. Researchers compare cases with each other; they use statistical methods to construct (and adjust) quantitative comparisons; they compare cases to theoretically derived pure cases; and they compare case values on relevant variables to average values to assess co-variation. Comparisons provide a basis for making statements about empirical regularities and for evaluating and interpreting cases relative to substantive and theoretical criteria. In this broader sense, comparison is central to empirical social science as it is practiced today (Ragin, 2014), and social research is inherently comparative (Lieberson, 1985).

Researchers compare the relative effects of variables across cases; they compare cases directly with one another. Comparative research is a perspective or orientation rather than a separate research technique (Ragin & Rubinson, 2009). A comparative perspective exposes weaknesses in research design and assists a researcher in improving the quality of research, thus the focus of comparative research is on similarities and differences between units (Holt & Turner, 1970). A quantitative comparative analysis is variable-oriented, a qualitative comparative analysis is case-oriented and a fuzzy comparative analysis is collection-oriented Sa'i, (2013:1). Social entities may be based on many lines, such as geographical or political lines in the form of cross-national or regional comparisons (Mills et al, 2006)

Since the comparison in this study entails faith healing as per the New Testament and African Independent Christianity, which are closely aligned, the certainty of similarities already exists. However, this does not imply a lack of differences which may render any progress redundant; these are already obvious and rendered by time and locality. However, the emphasis is more

focused on similarities. This method of study seen from a different perspective is the act of comparing two or more entities with a view to discovering something about one or all of the entities being compared (Heidenheimer, 1983:505). This technique often utilises multiple disciplines in a single study. Concerning its universality Jones (1985:28) argues that there is no methodology peculiar to comparative research; the multidisciplinary approach is useful for the flexibility it offers, yet comparative programmes do have a case to answer against the call that their research lacks a "seamless whole." Causality is a major issue faced in comparative research, as researchers focus on identifying causes of differences and similarities existing in two statements or groups of individuals. Researchers may erroneously identify the cause of the problem due to the absence of a common scale for applying both cases (Smelser, 2013).

3.2 Cross-cultural research method

3.2.1. Defining cross-cultures research

Cross-cultural studies are research designs that compare human behaviours across two or more cultures. They involve the systematic comparisons of different cultures that aim to understand variations of human behaviour influenced by the cultural context. Berry *et al* (2002:10) opine that "this research approach is primarily concerned with examining how our knowledge about people and their behaviours from one culture may or may not hold for people from another culture". Wimbush (2009:162-177) argues that the influence of African culture in the bible is a historical fact and that African biblical scholars continue to demonstrate its importance. These scholars also demonstrate that the bible is not only an ancient Jewish document but also an African document. This approach is devoid of any prejudice against Africa and Africans in the bible. The first five books of the bible (the Pentateuch) which most African people claim to recognise as similar to their customs support this claim despite the argument that those laws are akin to natural laws and thus common to all people of the world, it is argued that although the Israelites once lived in Africa, the African influence was forced upon them. Another view of this argument is that Africa south of the Sahara is dissimilar to the Arabian countries in the north of Africa and the Arabs are not physically similar to the Africans south of the Sahara

Adamo (2012:67-78) opines that the ancient Israelite ancestors once lived in Africa for about 430 years and by the time they left Africa they were all African-Israelites. This was discussed in detail in "A Mixed Multitude: Exodus 12:38 in African Context" Adamo (2015:43). However, the relationship between the Judaizing African Pentecostal churches and the ancient Zion theology of the Old Testament cannot be denied. However, it begs the question as to when this relationship came into existence as there are no historical records of this purported relationship between the Northern African Arab world and the south of the Sahara. The only relationship that may have been recorded was the trans-Atlantic slave trade which did not reach Southern Africa.

Pretorius & Jafta (1997:212) argue that this relationship revolves around a shrine or a cultic centre much like that of the Old Testament Jews, whereas the African Indigenous Churches strive to indigenise and establish a new African identity. The cultic centre refers to a mountain shrine that the African Initiated Churches revere, such as eNhlangakazi of Shembe or Moriah of Legkanyane. These are holy sites, and the headquarters of a movement. The site is often identified as a sacred mountain or a fountain of life, sometimes both. These mountains are likened to Jerusalem which stands on Zion highland referred to as the New Jerusalem.

Dworkin (2020:4) describes the Arabian countries of North Africa as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, and occasionally the Sudan, while sub-Sahara refers to the states and territories which lie fully or partially to the south of the Sahara Desert. There are shared ties between both regions in modern times, chiefly because of immigration. However, no record of a relationship existing in ancient times has been recorded. Sengat- Kuo (1958:227) quoted in Debsi (2022) online argues that, “More than just a demonstration of solidarity, the Arab countries were uniting with their African counterparts around a *personnalité africaine* distinctive, a specific African personality". This sociocultural specificity lent a feeling of belonging to the African identity, of which some Arab populations were convinced. However, this feeling is based not only on historical-geographic factors, but also on the religious and linguistic factors. The number of Muslims was estimated to be 242,544,000 in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2010. Nagham (2020:101) argues that:

> First, I am African. I am from white Africa, if we can divide Africa like that, but everyone who sees my work thinks I am from black Africa. … I can't forget, as Moroccan and African, all the culture of caravans, all the dynamic exchange that Morocco had with Africa.

Sundkler (1976:314) argues that, "African Zionism has a high regard and reverence for the cultic centre. The movement may differ in functions, yet at the deepest level these are congruent". He cites ideas such as AIC shrines whose analogous images had been adopted, for example, he states that Shembe had his first vision on the Nhlangakazi mountain. His followers relate to two ritual centres, that is, Nhlangakazi and Ekuphakameni. George Khambule found some of his sacred stones for sanctifying people on the mountain. Elias Vilakazi of Swaziland lived on the mountain for three years, preaching to a tribe of "small people." Timothy Cekwane and his followers saw a star with a long tail on the Drakensberg, the centre of their annual pilgrimage. Both Daniel Nkonyane and Paul Mabiletsa of Zion confirmed the practice of regular pilgrimages for seclusion on the mountain, to return with renewed spiritual strength. There is no denying that the AICs' faith is towards the God of Israel—even though they recognise Jesus Christ as His Son and also pray to Him, and in many ways, their practices are aligned to that faith; such as the baptism of immersion and the observance of the Sabbath and their artifacts.

3.3 Data collection

Even though primary data collection is reputed for use by the investigator conducting the research, it was of no use for this research because it includes offline surveys, interviews, offline quizzes, delphi technique, focus groups and observation methods which the research chose not to engage. Most of the data collected for this research was obtained from secondary, data obtainable from internet searches and libraries, journals, newspapers and magazines. There were other methods accessible to this research which were of little use such as online, for example, the online Ember (2007:396-427) online Human Relation Area Files (HRAF) Cross-Cultural Concordance (first published as the *Computerized Cross-Cultural Concordance* –see C. R. Ember, 1992) was developed to assist researchers match times and places across different samples.

Ember (1992) online argues that,

> One of the most useful aspects of this concordance is that it gives the researcher the appropriate sources to look at in the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) Collection of Ethnography (in paper, microfiche or now online as *eHRAF World Cultures*) to see if one wants to match cases in another sample. HRAF processes an extensive set of sources for each society included in the archives.

Jackson *et al* (2022:64) suggest that codes usually involve multiple times and places, hence a researcher must select and maintain the appropriate focus; those who want to use data already available from other sources commonly make use of the Ethnographic Atlas (EA)–in its unabridged or summarised version. The codes for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (published by many different authors) have appeared in two journals (*Ethnology and Cross-Cultural Research* [formerly *Behavioural Science Research*]). Many have been reprinted in Barry & Schege (1980) online as *Cross-Cultural Codes and Samples*, and have been reformatted for computer use for the *World Cultures* electronic version. However, online methods are dependent on whether the information sought has been correctly loaded or available online. There is a possibility that traces of the Old and New Testament cultures could be found, however, Hadebe's testimony does not exist electronically.

Matsumoto & Juang (2003) online quoted in Goldstein & Jack (2011:438-440) opines that,

> cross-cultural studies share methodological similarities as any other scientific research study. However, a specific methodological parameter that differentiates cross-cultural studies from other research studies is the sample; specifically, the participation of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In effect, this methodological distinction reveals the philosophy that cross-cultural studies contribute to scientific research.

Although cross-cultural studies share methodological similarities, there are some specific differences, for instance, in terms of date and timelines, Halder *et al* (2007:7) online opines that:

While particular dates and times might be useful and convenient for researchers in one country, the same might apply to in another country. For example, a data process in the UK was conducted without any hindrance, whereas a different picture emerged in India as national holidays were suddenly called for by the government due to local elections. According to Halder *et al.*, (2007:9) online issues such as anonymity, participant information and information consent; information about the data collection process and information about ownership of the data are some of the points that should always be considered.

Development of the HRAF Collections was premised on the belief that enduring generalisations about human behaviour and culture will emerge from a wealth of knowledge about the ways in which the different peoples of the world live. However, even though the HRAF Collection of Ethnography is a unique source of information on the cultures of the world, and as of April 2008 the complete collection contained over a million pages of indexed information on about 400 different cultural, ethnic, religious, and national groups around the world, it is, nevertheless still too small to encompass the world at large. Besides hidden and earlier notions such as those held by Hadebe are too remote to have been discovered and collected.

3.4 The purpose of the study

The reason for choosing to compare the Gospel of Mark to Hadebe's testimony is first, because they were drawn to interpret the bible for the people they led under compelling circumstances of need, with limited resources ascribed to the troubled historic-political situation. Many of their followers were forced to abandon their respective Judaist and Missionary churches as their interpretation of the message of the bible differed from the faith they came from. They were forced to interpret the scriptures in the light of the teachings of their new leaders, Jesus and Shembe, whose critics believed they were not praying to the God of Israel. Their interpretation of the biblical texts were accepted by their followers as canonical, and in so doing even their most staunch critics accepted that they were praying to the same God that spoke to Moses. Second, their persistence and visible growth from strength to strength drew the interest of many people from different walks of life to study them. Although there are many approaches to the interpretation of the narratives, this thesis compares the aspects of their hermeneutical elements and structures

through cross-cultural criticism, since they originated from a different time and culture yet held similar insights that assisted in developing their communities. Third, this kind of study, that is, comparing AICs to the New Testament has to date not been done by researchers.

Last, the comparison of the writing of Mark and Hadebe is aimed at elucidating African hermeneutic in South Africa during its initial emergence in the 1920s, by comparing to the developments of the Gospel of Mark at a similar stage in the Greco-Roman world of the first-century Mediterranean region. This process is a continuation of the work already in progress by some black theologians in exploring the growth of African hermeneutics. The ongoing research is also to establish the textual structures and subsequent influence on biblical studies, further contributing to the study of enculturation that is currently underway in South Africa. The interest in cross-cultural interpretation particularly in South Africa is well identified by Ukpong (1999:314) who argues that during the politico-religious oppression of (1930s-1967s) there was a steep increase in the AIC's comparative interpretation. The elements of such interpretation also gives rise to the interest of analysis and discovering its exegetical structures. Consequently, in undertaking this adventure, the aim is to discover new questions that will assist in the future development of profitable and continued study of cross-cultural reading.

3.4.1 Aspects s of history that gave shape to African hermeneutics

3.4.1.1 Marks' context

The milieu of Mark during the development of the new-found churches, the politico-cultural conditions of the time directly impacted on the communities. Their only way to respond was through the bible and its contents which assisted in explaining to their followers how God would possibly respond to the situation in which they found themselves. The Gospel of Mark was the first gospel to be written at about (70 AD) before the Christians left the Jerusalem Temple and shortly before the destruction of the Temple in the same year during the Roman-Jewish war of (66–73 CE), and Mark alluded to these events in his narrative (Mk 13:2): 'And Jesus said to them, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon one another, that will not be thrown down." (*καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς; οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ*). Mark's community experienced the wrath of new

beginnings coerced from external forces which were not related to his biblical interest at all and without any reference to the scrolls of any of the Old Testament authors. He alluded to this in the narrative (Mk 2:22) 'And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, but new wine is for fresh skins.' (*καὶ οὐδεὶς βάλλει οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς· εἰ δὲ μή, ῥήξει ὁ οἶνος τοὺς ἀσκοὺς καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἀπόλλυται καὶ οἱ ἀσκοί· ἀλλὰ οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινούς*). The skins were analogous to the parchments upon which the bible texts were written in those days, and the wine the spirit of the message of the bible text, that is, the new spiritual life of the followers of Jesus' teachings. The situation was tense in Rome and throughout the Roman territories during by Emperor Nero's Christian persecutions (64 CE). Van Eck (1995:12) argues that this situation affected even Antioch where he maintains the community of Mark was situated.

3.4.1.2 The historical milieu of Hadebe

The historical setting in which Hadebe found himself was similarly tense, as Shembe, according to Magwaza (2011:136) established his church in 1911 (some say 1910), immediately after the establishment of the Union of South Africa and shortly before 1913 during the promulgation of the controversial Native Land Act of 1913. The situation in Natal was also tense because of the Mbambatha Rebellion Wars of 1906 and the war on the hut tax in Natal, implemented vide Act 13 of 1857 which demanded 14 shillings per hut. Africans that lived in European-style houses with only one wife were exempt from the tax. This Act eventually culminated in to the war of 1906. Shembe relates this distressful situation in hymn 21:

Izwe lakithi lichithekile	Our land is devastated
Nemizi yakithi ayisahlali muntu	even our homes are desolate
Singabafelokazi nezintandane	We are widows and orphans
We Nkosi yeSabata usisheyelani	Oh Lord Sabbath why do you desert us (Shembe 1940)

Even though Hadebe avoided quoting or mentioning these events they were well documented and recorded in the annals. (Cabrita (2012) opines that Shembe himself was sometimes implicated in certain events even though he tried his best to avoid them, such as the case heard at the District Magistrate of Ndwedwe in 1923 brought against him by rival church ministers. Shange (2013:37) argued that Shembe disagreed with the mission churches on some biblical interpretations, for example according to the bible, the Sabbath[1], was to fall on a Saturday not a Sunday; he responded by forming his own movement where he could freely hold services on the Sabbath. This is reminiscent of Jesus' arguments with the Jewish leaders in (Mk 2:27) where he says, "Sabbath was made for men not men for Sabbath,' which Hadebe is employing in cross-cultural hermeneutic.

There are a number of similarities in their turning towards the bible to find their way in their new role as leaders of their followers after the disastrous political events which occurred during their time. In the case of Hadebe, some reasons were provided by quoting Ukpong (1999:314) above. These historic-political discouragements Shembe encountered are similar to the situation of Mark after the destruction of the second temple and the Christian persecutions that saw Christians rejected by Jewish leaders. Shembe was also rejected by Christian missionaries. The Gospel of Mark (Mk 2:19) refers to the parable of the wineskins,, which is understood to describe. There are, however, some interpretations of these verses which differ to that in this study, such as Edwards (2002:91-92) who argues that Jesus here "pits his own, new way against the old way of the Pharisees and their scribes", thus the use of the biblical texts are justified in supporting their context.

3.5 Towards the definition of a cross-cultural comparison

Heidenheimer *et al.,* (1983:505) define comparative research thus: Where is the quote for this definition?? Is this the quote below? Comparative research entails a comparison of two or more items with the intention of discovering something about one or all of the things being compared. This technique often utilizes multiple disciplines in one study. When it comes to method, the majority agreement is that there is no methodology peculiar to comparative research. This methodology is usually utilised to make comparisons across space and/or time and is applicable when studying samples of similarities and differences, and seeking to explain their continuity and

change; thus, it can be both qualitative and quantitative. It has been recommended particularly for African theologians who seek to make comparative studies between western and African cultures. When applying this method, particular care is taken not to apply one's own culture as a frame of reference to judge other cultures, practices, behaviours, beliefs and people in the text. Rather, the known standards of the particular culture involved is reflected on.

When reading these ancient texts, a biblical across-cultural reading implies a sound knowledge of insights from cultural anthropology as the various biblical texts are those that concern the lives and the behaviour of people within a specific sociocultural, political and religious setting different to one's own. Consequently, clear parameters should be established and always kept in mind whilst reading the texts. Rhoads (1992:136) described the first- century texts of the New Testament as a '"keyhole, an opening through which to look into another culture, in a different world.' The reader is acutely aware that a cross-cultural reading of biblical texts enables an understanding of biblical characters in their own terms before interpreting their behaviour to another context. Consequently, there is a danger of adding one's own contextual perceptions and thereby alter the meaning of the original context of the text.

3.6 Engaging in cross-cultural interpretation

Cross-cultural interpretation is a complex undertaking in which one should avoid implementing common sense ideas. For instance, to avoid misconstruing cultural factors, it is important to develop extensive and sophisticated knowledge about the cultures that one is engaging in. Pfundmair (2018:2) opines that

> one must be familiar with all aspects of a society (e.g., language, religion, values, history), thereby, one have to be aware not to equate country and culture. Within each country, several "micro-cultures" or subcultures exist. In China, for example, there are over 50 different ethnic groups that differ in important dimensions.

An important factor is the likelihood of including one's own bias; cultural factors might be misconstrued if the interpreter generalises own experiences to the sample under study and thus

may confuse and infuse the text message with one's own cultural nuances, idioms or philosophical ideas.

3.6.1 The social system of the biblical texts

Being absolutely ignorant of the system or nature of biblical texts or reading blindly with no understanding of the context, could obfuscate the contents and confuse its reader. One should at all times be aware that the biblical society mentioned and discoursed on in the bible once existed in real time and living lives alien to that of the modern reader. The lives of the Jews in ancient times are often referred to by scholars as 'high context', whereas the lives of people living in the modern times are described as 'low context. The terms of 'high-context' and 'low-context' were coined by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in his 1976 publication, *Beyond Culture,* which describes culture as a way to distinguish the extent to which communication within social cultures requires a grasp of the context.

3.6.2 The use of models and theories in social scientific criticism

The cross-cultural system functions in conjunction with other critical systems. One should be cognisant of how and in what capacity other systems operate so that one can seek assistance from them. For example, biblical societies existed within their historical contexts and systems, therefore to reach them one must first understand the historical systems. Notably, anthropological studies are also engaged in investigating bible societies thus it is therefore advisable to solicit aid from their research when in difficult situations. Consequently, one should be aware that arriving at a conclusion that is not in line with historical truths about a text, that conclusion is false.

3.6.3 Social scientific criticism in African biblical interpretation

The research is bound by a specific methodology where principles precede conclusions. This implies that the methods fall under certain precincts that lead to specific truths. African biblical interpretation is a social science which should be treated as such and is hence part of the family of sciences that deals with human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects. Included in the social

sciences are inter alia, cultural (or social) anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, and economics.

3.6.4 Models and theories from the African context

Appropriation of African models into the African context is the process of enculturation. which refer to the process of learning and internalising cultural norms, values and beliefs from the society one was born into. Tutu (1978:336) opines that African biblical scholarship focuses on the communities that receive the text, any continued ignoring of the ordinary readers will lead to sterile scholarship. African questions are now being put to the Bible and African resources are being used in answering them. No longer then shall we have from the Bible answers to questions that have not been asked by Africans. The importance of this idea is that the African laity have also much to contribute to the interpretation of the bible. In most of the bible text the people who populate them are the laypeople (*hamraaz*) the e people in the same category as the ordinary working class of the African people who populate the Sunday services. It is, therefore, logical that they should take part in the interpretation the Word of God in the way it affects them in their socio-cultural situation. This then is the true spirit of enculturation.

The theory of enculturation was largely triggered by the Second Vatican Council held on 11 October 1962 at St. Peters Basilica in the Vatican in which a strong case was made for the cultural adaptation of Christianity in Africa. This idea has spawned several terms and concepts such as 'Acculturation', 'Enculturation', 'Interculturation', 'Incarnation', 'Africanisation', 'Adaptation', and 'Indigenisation' of Christianity in Africa. These concepts revolve around the idea of making the Christian faith culturally acceptable in Africa. According to Pope John Paul II, Ezechi (2011:221) argues, “A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not fully lived out”. What Pope John Paul II opines is what African people have always thought of their traditional religion, that in its initial stages, it was not taught theoretically nor presented in any literary form, but rather, was a lived theology. Generations receive it from their former generations through practice. It was an internalised system that had no chapters, verses, or codes; its adherents would maintain that their religious beliefs were passed on to them by their forefathers.

Mbiti (1969) quoted in Nche (2016:5) insightfully argued that because traditional religions occupy the whole of the person and their entire life, conversion to a new religion such as Christianity must embrace, inter alia, language, thought patterns, fears, social relationships and attitudes and philosophical disposition if that conversion is to make a lasting impact upon the individual and community. Hence, efforts over the years have been channeled towards a successful inculturation of Christianity which aims at making the Church more at home in Africa, and Africans more at home in the Church. This objective is in line with the declaration of the Second Vatican Council, which holds that the church 'is not tied exclusively or indissolubly to any race or nation, to any one particular way of life, or to any customary practices, ancient or modern.' According to Mbefo (1989:28) 'with the experience of massive defections from the church, one is disposed to affirm that Christianity as rendered by the Europeans has been found wanting'. Hence, the concept of inculturation formed one of the major themes at the Second Vatican Council on 11 October 1962, and the subsequent Synod of Bishops for Africa which took place in May 1994.

Specifically, enculturation refers to a movement for the *Africanisation* or indigenisation of Christianity in Africa. It is an effort that dispels the failure of the missionaries to implant Christianity among the Africans; a failure, which resulted in a seemingly alienation and estrangement of Christianity on African soil. Madu (2004:59) argues that “this failure also made it difficult for Africans to 'separate the gem of Christianity from the chaffs or accidents of it.'” As Christianity is practiced by modern missionaries who often refer to themselves as part of the ‘western world’ and see Africans as belonging to the so-called ‘third world,’ the notions of Christianity among Africans become a world apart from the westerners. It also becomes difficult for Africans to access the faith of the modern missionaries.

This is in tandem with the position of the Synod of Bishops for Africa, which was held on 6 May 1994, with the theme 'The Church in Africa and Her Evangelising Mission, Towards the Third Millennium - You shall be my Witnesses'. The African Bishops established that the inculturation process can successfully be achieved in Africa if it is applied from the point of view of incarnation. Christianity, as in the doctrine of Jesus' incarnation, should be incarnated, and assume the form of African culture to achieve the ultimate meaning in Africa. In the understanding of 'inculturation' as 'incarnation',

Nche (2016:2) wrote thus:

> the spirit of inculturation must henceforth permeate the entire curriculum of studies in seminaries and theological institutes in the country. It is not enough to teach Inculturation as a course, or organise short seminars on Inculturation. The same spirit of inculturation must permeate our homilies, retreat talks, and seminars.

3.7. Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter 2, a multi- faceted research approach was employed, namely cross-cultural, social, historical and comparative research, which were suitably applicable to the study. The cross-cultural methodology is a research design that compares human behaviours across two or more cultures. This design involves the systematic comparisons of different cultures that aim to understand variations of human behaviour, as it is influenced by the cultural context. Mark and Hadebe, although from different locations and times, had similar historical causes. This kind of study which compares the African Initiated Churches and the New Testament, has not be done before and hence this process of comparative hermeneutic is also the continuation of work already initiated by some black theologians, to explore the progress of African hermeneutics, to establish their textual structures and their influence on the whole biblical study and further contribute to the study of enculturation that is currently underway in South Africa.

The methodologies employed in this study are all related to the family of social sciences exemplified in cross-cultural studies in making comparisons across cultures. Social sciences is a broad term that includes both quantitative and qualitative comparisons. Social entities are often based along many lines, such as geographical or political demarcations in the form of cross-national or regional comparisons (Mills *et al.,* 2006). This definition reflects traditions such as cross-cultural analysis in anthropology, cross-societal analysis in sociology, cross-national analysis in political science, comparative historical analysis in history, and psychological analysis (Smelser, 2013). The use of comparative research in human science, history, and culture has a history that can be traced back to the Greek Antiquity. The comparative method is often applied when looking for patterns of similarities and differences, in two entities explaining continuity and change. The method provides a basis for making statements about empirical regularities and for evaluating and interpreting cases relative to substantive and theoretical criteria. The research is

more of a perspective or orientation rather than a separate research technique (Ragin & Rubinson, 2009) as it exposes weaknesses in a research design and assists the researcher improve the quality of research. Since the comparison in this study entails matters of faith healing in the New Testament and African Independent Christianity basic similarities already exist; the differences are rendered by time and space.

African biblical scholars have begun to demonstrate that the Bible is not only an ancient Jewish document but also shares inherent similarities with African biblical thinking. The purpose of the study is to show that these religions make a compelling study in many similar ways, as both strove to interpret the bible driven by the needs of the people at the time. The aspects of history that gave shape to the two models were the politico-cultural events of their time albeit in different locations. similarly affecting both these diverse communities thus they were compelled to respond through the use of the bible to make sense of their situations, to which Mark alluded in his narrative (Mk 13:2) and likewise Hadebe in his narrative on Shembe and his tribulations as evident is his as evident in Shembe's hymn 21. It is clear that a cross-cultural comparison is a complex undertaking, and to avoid misconstruing cultural factors, it is important to develop extensive and sophisticated knowledge about the cultures that one is engaging in. The appropriation of African models into the African context is a process of enculturation, which necessitates learning and internalising cultural norms, values, and beliefs from the society one was born into. This cross-culture research and methodologies aim to provide the African people with a voice as African questions are now being put to the Bible and African resources are being used in answering them.

CHAPTER 4

THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the idea is to prove that Mark uses the healing of blindness [of the man of Bethsaida] symbolically to his central message that Jesus is the Son of God. To prove the authenticity of this investigation the chapter will probe two texts in the Gospel, namely, (i) the story of the obtuseness of his disciples (Mk. 8:15b) and (ii) blindness in the Gospel of Mark, that is, (Mk 8:22-26) and (Mk 10:46-52). Scholars have generally acknowledged Mk 8:27–10:52 as the theological nerve centre of this Gospel (Craig (2001:3, 4). All these texts deal overtly with the identity of Jesus.

The central message of Mark is that Jesus is the 'Son of God' (*υἱοῦ θεοῦ*) and this message runs right throw the Gospel. It appears at the very beginning of the Gospel (Mk 1:1) introduced by the author himself. Mark uses various techniques to keep this idea as a refrain so that it keeps returning to the minds of his readers. He uses a voice from heaven (Mk 1:11. Mk:9:7b) presumable the voice of God which pronounces that "This is my beloved Son" (*οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός,*); He uses demons to declare publicly that Jesus "is the Holy one of God;" (*ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ.*) in (Mk 1:24; Mk 5:7b), he uses human witness, the Centurion (Mk 15:39b) to declare that "Truly this man was the son of God"(*ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν*).

All these declarations indicate the importance of the identity of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. This is also the idea of the Good News (*τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*). The story of the disciples obtuseness starts with the disciples confusing the term leaven (*τῆν ζύμην*) (Mk 815b), thus, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod" (*βλέπετε ἀπὸ τῆς ζύμης τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ τῆς ζύμης Ἡρῴδου*.). They misinterpret the term leaven for bread when Jesus means the false teachings of the Pharisees and Herod. This obtuseness runs concurrently with the story of the blindness of the man of Bethsaida. Some authors believe that this is Mark's technique to connect the two stories. Jesus explains that he had been teaching and doing miracles and yet they do not understand. This incident is put strategically to follow after a few miracles; thus, (Mk6:39-44) miracles of the multiplication of the loaves and fish, (Mk 6:48b) walking on the waves, (Mk 6:56) cures at

Gennesaret, (Mk 7:29) the cure of the daughter of the Syrophoenician woman (Mk 7:33-35) and the healing of the deaf man.

He uses the expression "having eyes yet do not see" (*ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες οὐ βλέπετε*) (Mk 8:18a) to allude to mental and spiritual blindness because he connects this notion with hardness of heart. Expressions such as these pointing to blindness suggest this relationship between obtuseness and blindness. Obtuseness here means the inability to recognize his true identity. This part of the story occupies the same position in the story of the healing of the blindness of the man with Jesus asking the blind man whether he could see. Laying hands on the blind man and taking him outside the village is equivalent to Jesus teaching the disciples and taking them privately for special teaching (Mk 9:28). The first test (Mk 8:23b) "Do you see anything?" (εἴ τι βλέπεις;) is equivalent to (Mk 8:29) And he questioned them, "But you, who do you say I am?" (καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπηρώτα αὐτούς· ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι;). Both these tests were not satisfactorily answered and they point to the identity of Jesus. Thus, the obtuseness of the identity of Jesus symbolizes blindness of not seeing his miraculous works that indicate who he truly is.

Further to specify how blindness in (Mk 8:22-26) is unique there is another story the healing of blindness that could be compared with it. Mark presents two occasions of the healings of blindness in his Gospel; one in Bethsaida and the other at the gate of Jericho. The presentation is very distinct. The only common aspect of the healings is that the patients are both men. The two men are met in under different circumstances; one is brought to Jesus by some people who speak on his behalf (Mk 8:22), and the other, is described as a beggar and is also mentioned by the name Bartimeus. Jesus finds him alone seated on the side of the road (Mk 10:46) and the man is vocal and immediately comes into an altercation with Jesus. The silent one requests nothing from Jesus while the vocal one requests Jesus to make him see again and he knows Jesus and his lineage; he calls him the son of David; a title Mark rejects (Mk. 12:35). The presentation in (Mk 8:22-26) leads to a belief that the man was not born blind because, after the first attempt, he recognizes trees which means he had seen them before. Consequently, the thesis argues that Jesus was repairing a defect in his eyes. Blindness from birth is the result of a form of a disease known as ophthalmia neonatorum which sets in a few days after birth. Bartimeus also was not born blind because he says, "Master that I may see again" (*ῥαββουνί, ἵνα ἀναβλέψω.*). The difference again is that Jesus mentions the blind beggar having faith thus, 'And Jesus said to him, "Go your faith has made you

well,'" (*καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὕπαγε, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε*). The man was instantly healed while it took two attempts to heal the man of Bethsaida which is according to the argument of this chapter the point to be considered to the identity of Jesus relating to the obtuseness of the disciples. These differences are an indication that the blindness in the story of the man of Bethsaida is not related to that of the man of Jericho. They are used differently. Given these differences, many scholars argue that the two-stage healing (Mk 8:22-26) provides implicit commentary on the disciples' spiritual blindness. Their confusion about the mission and identity of Jesus, as well as their own role within the kingdom, indicates that, like the blind man, their vision is still partial.

Even more noteworthy is that the two accounts bookend, or frame, a section of the narrative. Often referred to as the "way section"—since Jesus and the disciples are making their way to Jerusalem—the unit begins with the two-staged healing in Mark 8:22-26 and concludes with the healing of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus in (Mk 10:46-52). Not only is the section set off by two healings, it also incorporates three passion predictions (Mk 8:31, Mk 9:31, Mk 10:32-34). In each instance, Jesus reveals that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Following each prediction, the disciples fail to grasp Jesus' teaching.

In the account which immediately precedes the healing of the blind man, Jesus has pointedly asked his disciples, "Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?" The word blind is used as a verb, as (Jn 12:40), usually in the sense of obscuring spiritual perception. In reference to physical blindness, it is used as a noun frequently or else as an adjective with the noun man. Thus, 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and turn for me to heal them" (τετύφλωκεν *αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς* καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν *τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.*). In so far as usage of the imagery in this chapter of the thesis is concerned Mark is not unique in this Scripture often employs the imagery of blindness to describe the spiritual condition of persons who are either unable or unwilling to perceive divine revelation. The things of God are perceived not by observation and inquiry, but by revelation and illumination (Mt 11:25-27; 1 Cor 1:21; 2 Pet 1:19-21.). The chapter used this hypothesis to prove that Mark is using a similar technique to prove illustrate his central point that Jesus is the Son of God. Consequently, whatever He does in a way of a miracle the readers should remember that He is the Son of God.

4.1.1 The exegesis of Mk 8:22-26

Bethsaida was the scene of several miracles, including Jesus walked on the waters of the sea, the feeding of the 5000 people with 2 fish and 5 loaves besides healing the blind man. Despite those miracles Bethsaida remained stubborn and it was the cause of her hardened heart that Jesus pronounced harsh punishment for the place. Thus, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (*οὐαί σοι, Χοραζίν, οὐαί σοι, Βηθσαϊδά· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγένοντο αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γενόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῷ μετενόησαν*). (Mt 11:12). As the result of these accusations of Jesus Bethsaida has come to represent those who have heard the gospel, understood God's plan of salvation, and rejected it. Jesus (cf. Mt 11:22) suggested that she would get a very harsh punishment than those cities which have not heard and seen the miracles he had performed.

4.1.2 (Mk 8:22b) Some people brought him (*Καὶ φέρουσιν αὐτῷ*)

In this section of the exegesis, we treat the chapter verse by verse. Some people could mean a number of people either known to the blind man or not because Jesus' fame had begun to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee (Mk 1:28). [NRSV]. People would be drawn to have first-hand information of Jesus' miraculous works. Stott (2021) online argues that Jesus conducted healing in Bethsaida and people who believed in these miracles brought the blind man to be healed. One would think of people like Peter, Andrew, and Philip whose home is Bethsaida and eventually became the apostles of Jesus. Lefebure (2015:36) opines that early Christian leaders were forthright on the importance of caring for those who are suffering, both in the Christian community and beyond. Caring for the sick with a non-discriminating love was one of the Christian community's concerns from a very early date. Marcan narrative uses this term 'some people' not so often for example the paralytic man (Mk 2:1) and the deaf man (Mk 7:32) were brought to Jesus by unidentified people. Parents also brought their children like Jairus who brought his daughter (Mark 5: 21–24, 35–43) also Greek, Syro-Phoenician woman who pleaded for her daughter (Mk 7:26). Obviously the blind man could not bring himself he need someone with eyesight. Still the

people who brought him to Jesus could be ordinary local interested people who wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle.

4.1.3 (Mk 8:22c) and they begged him to touch him (*καὶ παρακαλοῦσιν αὐτὸν ἵνα αὐτοῦ ἅψηται*)

4.1.4 The culture of touch

The culture of 'healing touch' was predates its practice by Jesus in the Gospels. According to Atsma (2010) online the healing touch is believed to have originate with Asclepius, a Greek god of medicine. Besides the mentioning of this touch here, the healing method of touch was practised in Rome and Greece. The healing process was varied according to the needs of the victim. According to Carod-Artal (2013:29) Asclepius simply touched a patient, or performed surgery or administered a healing drug. He delivered his healing touch while the patient was asleep. In preparation, the patient completed a purification process, fasting one day and abstaining from wine, baths, and massages for three days. Their healings took place mostly overnight in the interior temples, sanctuaries and shrines where cult entities played diverse magical roles. Cases where Jesus used the practice of healing as touch, is often described as "laying his hands" on the one to be healed (Mt 9:18; Mk 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:22–25; Lk 13:13).

Mark illustrates the power of touch in two texts; the first is (Mk 5:28b). Here the power of touch is illustrated by the haemorrhaging woman (Mk 5:28b) who points out that the clothes of Jesus will be able to conduct the healing energy, thus, 'If I touch even his garments I shall be made well.' (*ἐὰν ἅψωμαι κἂν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι*). Mark wants to illustrate to the reader that even the clothes that Jesus wore were power laden; they transmitted healing energy. This illustrates that healing energy that oozes from Jesus and conducted by touch is extremely powerful. This also demonstrate the faith that the woman had in the power of Jesus to heal. In this case the woman was also contrasting Jesus' power to heal with the failure of the physicians who treated her before thus, 'And who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse.' (*καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα*),[RVS interlinear Greek]

Here the voice is that of Mark. It is quite possible that Mark was saying that Jesus is more powerful than Asclepios.

The second text that expresses the wish to touch is (Mk 6:56b) which involves numerous patients laying on the ground and their wish to be touched is expressed. In this case Mark demonstrate the power of touch thus, the object of touch is diminished thus, . 'That they might touch even 'the fringe' of his garment; and as many as 'they touch it,' they were made well' (*ἵνα κἂν τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ἅψωνται· καὶ ὅσοι ἂν ἥψαντο αὐτοῦ ἐσῴζοντο*) [RSV interlinear Greek] while the number of those who touch the fringe is multiplied, thus, 'And as many as touch it they were made well' (*καὶ ὅσοι ἂν ἥψαντο αὐτοῦ ἐσῴζοντο*).. Conversely the diminutiveness of the point of touch and the huge multiplication of the number of people who touches denotes the extraordinary power of touch itself. Relatively, it also shows the great power of the person from whom the energy emits.

Another way of expressing the power of touch is by showing the number of places, healing had been performed; in villages (*κώμας*)), cities (*πόλεις*) and country (*ἀγρούς*), and the marketplaces (*ἀγοραῖς*) and this also shows the popularity of the touch without which we cannot leave Jesus' power out. This power of touch is demonstrated in the following text which talks about the sick who were laid down on blankets and see Jesus as he stands over them. 'they besought him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment and as many as they touched it were made well.' (*παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν ἵνα κἂν τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ἅψωνται· καὶ ὅσοι ἂν ἥψαντο αὐτοῦ ἐσῴζοντο*).

The popularity of Jesus is also shown by the adverb 'wherever he goes' (*ὅπου*) (Mk6:56a) people are begging for this touch. The most powerful remembrance of Jesus' touch is when he healed a person with leprosy (Mk 1:40). A leper came up to Jesus and pleaded on his knees saying to him, 'And saying to him "if you will you can make me clean"' (*καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι*). And Jesus responded by stretching out his hand and touched him saying, 'And said to him, "be cleaned," and immediately leprosy left him' ([40b]*λέγει αὐτῷ· θέλω, καθαρίσθητι·* **42** *καὶ εὐθὺς ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα,*).

Leprosy was a dreaded and notorious disease feared by everybody in the ancient societies and worse of all it had a stigma. Jesus' touch made an everlasting impression in the minds of some

people that they made images of it in the catacombs and pictures. Jefferson (2023) online points out, that a few images of the healing of the blind man also have been discovered in the catacomb paintings (such as at the catacomb of Peter and Marcellinus). Christ is depicted touching the eyes of his patient while the man's arms are raised up in the position of prayer. Other scenes render Christ touching the patient with his entire hand. The healing of the blind exhibits Christ physically encountering and healing his supplicants with a touch. This healing touch image is evident in other fourth century examples of Christian relief.

Other accounts detail Christ's healing touch as the catalyst of the event, that is, it remains undefiled by the pollution of uncleanliness. The gospel accounts of these events include the healing of blind Bartimaeus by faith in (Mk 10:51); Jesus healing two blind men with the power of touch in (Mt. 9:27–30) and (Mt 20:29–34); and healing with touch in (Jn 9:1–41). One of the famous healing touch stories of the haemorrhaging woman. The story appears in all three Synoptic gospels (Mk 5:21–34; Mt 9:18–26; Lk 8:40–48). So powerful is the remembrance of the event of the haemorrhaging woman's touch of the clothes of Jesus that the scene is also depicted in catacomb art that emphasizes the healing energy that emanated from Jesus. Hill (2004:67-68) suggests that it is possible that the Synoptic Gospels may have subtly shaped their accounts of Jesus's healing miracles to resemble familiar Greek stories about miracles associated with Asclepius the mythological god of healing. The mentioning of Asclepius is important because according to Hill (2004:67-68) he was the god of healing. It is possible that Mark was comparing him with Jesus whom he described as the Son of God. To describe Jesus as more powerful than Asclepius, a Greek god, was essential to encourage the developing Christian communities in the first-century.

4.1.5 Jesus' healing power

Some of the authors who write about African healing have compared Jesus source of healing power with of that of powerful spirits. Dube (2019a:7) writing from a Zimbabwean Shona traditional healing perspective argues that comparative healing under the power of a superior power is found in a practitioner that is possessed by a mermaid spirit. First, he points at the source of the healing power of a traditional doctor who has a support of a mermaid behind him; the mermaid spirit allows the practitioner to cast away any competitive form of spirit. Comparatively, the power that

Mark demonstrated of Jesus—source of power being from God—could be deduced from his overshadowing of all other healers. He healed people with all sorts of diseases and evil spirits who came from all over (Mk 3:7-12; Mk 3:32-34); crowds from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, Transjordania and the regions of Tyre and Sidon heard about his fame and came to him (Mk 3:7-12). People who came to listen to him and be cured were always overcrowding. In Capernaum, they were full in the house that some were standing outside (Mk 3: 32-34). These reports make it as if the other healers were non-existent. Dube is quick to say that he does not mean that Jesus is like healers driven by mermaid spirit. Dube (2019a:6) clarifies this comparison by saying that

> The task is not making Jesus equivalent to a *sangoma* but rather strives to compare the process of acquiring divine healing power between Jesus and *isangoma* during *ukuthwasa*. The two processes are not the same, yet they can illuminate the reader regarding the central themes during the performance of such crucial rite of passage.

The point here is to compare Jesus preparation for his ministry in the desert (Mk 1:14-15) and that of *isangoma.* Like a healer with mermaid spirit, Jesus is able to heal any form of illness – the dreaded leprosy, haemorrhaging—and even pronouncing and commanding healing from a distance. Dube picks this up and say that healers have hierarchy from less powerful to the most powerful this is also clear from the manner Mark presents Jesus as the most powerful healer. He further says that Jesus' fame spread throughout Galilee and the surrounding regions (Mark 1:28). People travelled distances to be healed by Jesus, for example, Syrophoenician woman (Mk 7:24ff), the centurion servant (Mt 5:13) and the Centurion official's dying son. He argues that a powerful a mermaid healer is known to have these characteristics.

4.1.6 Blindness in the first-century Greco-Roman region

The theme of blindness in the first-century Mediterranean region appears in many stories from ancient Greek mythology and Judeo-Christian religious texts. There were various explanations of what caused blindness ranging from punishment from the gods, old age and accidents. Tatti-Gartziou (2010:200-210) argues that blindness in first-century was said to have been a punishment from gods. One well-known example is the prophet Tiresias, whose blindness is ascribed to various

causes. According to one story, it was a punishment for revealing the secrets of the gods; according to another, he was struck blind after accidentally witnessing Athena bathing; in a third, he was blinded by Hera after taking Zeus's side in a dispute. Another famous Greek story is when Erymanthus, was blinded by the goddess Aphrodite when he saw her bathing naked. Cameron (2004: 152) identified several instances of blindness in the Old Testament that resulted from old age. For example, Eli (1 Sam. 3), the high priest, who became blind with age, and calls his son, Samuel following the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines. Eli enquires about the cause of the commotion in the city. When he is told that the Ark of the Covenant has been taken, he falls backwards out of his seat and breaks his neck. Although, there is an incident of the Ark, the symbol of Yahweh making covenant with the children of Israel in Mount Sinai involved in this story which makes it like it is God's punishment, it is probably classified as an accident.

There are also incidents when blindness was caused by accidents like in the famous story of (Tobit 2:11) who while sleeping down facing upwards, a hot dropping of a sparrow dropped into his eyes and blinding him. There were other causes like those caused by human beings to others like that of Samson. But these do not come strictly under the blindness we are discussing in this study. In the blindness of the man of Bethsaida Mark does not disclose the cause because it does not fall under his ambit of his interest. Blindness to Mark is just one of the sicknesses he discusses to demonstrate the power of Jesus and his ministry in having compassion to the suffering people.

4.1.7 Miracles as a demonstration of the divinity of Jesus

The fact that in Mark's narrative Jesus is a super healer was initially detected by Van der Loos (1965) quoted in Dube (2018d:1) maintained that miracles have four dimensions: divine revelation, a sense of awe from the observers, breech against the known order of nature and an event that has a sense of profound meaning to the viewers. That the healing have divine dimension is something that need not be argued because Mark has stated it in the beginning of the Gospel. The healings parallel power of creation in some sense for instance raising people from death if indeed this act could be categorized as a healing. Davis (1995:25) building on Van der Loos' hypothesis of the miracles, argues that Jesus was able to heal because he has or he is the power of God; he was more than a prophet for prophets are possessed by the power of God. In the Gospels of Mark and John,

Jesus is not possessed with the Spirit of God he is equal to God (Mk 1:1) and (Jn 1:1b) respectively. 'the Word is God' (*θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος*.) (Mk 1:1b). "Before Abraham was I am," (*πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί.*) (Jn 8:58b). The phrase, "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex 3:14) is a common English translation of the Hebrew phrase אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה which is how God explained Himself to Moses when Moses asked Him 'who shall I say send me?'

As a Messiah, Jesus healings reveal Him as divine as well. In the councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Chalcedon (AD 451) the doctrine of the Trinity was defined. The councils concluded that the divinity of Christ, the Son, is of the same 'substance' (*ὁμοούσιον*), as the divinity of God, the Father. Thus makes Jesus God. Consequently, despite similarities between Jesus and other healers of his time, Jesus was a uniquely divine person because he was the Christ. He distinguished himself by being a teacher and 'wounded healer, a phrase which implies that Jesus was the crucified messiah (Remus (1997) quoted in Dube (2018d:5).

4.1.8 (Mk 8:23b) …led him out of the village (*ἐξήνεγκεν αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς κώμης*)

This verse contains a secrecy motif which is embedded in the warning Jesus makes to the demons, that is, not to reveal his identity as it has a 'secrecy motif'[6] Thus, by taking the blind man away from the village Jesus is protecting his identity, which the successful healing would have likely revealed. This action is similar to (Mk 7:33) where Jesus leads the deaf-mute man out of the village. The identity of Jesus according to Mark is that he is the Messiah and Son of God (Mk. 1:1).This is the identity Jesus is keeping secret. There are, however, occasions in the Gospels where Jesus explains the reason why he is keeping this identity secret. For instances, when the wine failed in Cana at a wedding feast, Mary tells Jesus, 'They have no wine' (*οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν*). (Jn 2:3b). She did not expect him to go and buy wine; rather, she expected him to do something. Jesus replies, "O woman what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." (*λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; οὔπω ἥκει ἡ ὥρα μου*). From this answer it can be deduced that Jesus did not want

[6] In Mark's gospel, Jesus is constantly portrayed as keeping secret his messianic identity. This he does by commanding demons not to disclose his divine identity. In other instances, he warns the beneficiaries of his healings not to discuss their healings with others.

to perform a feeding miracle like he did with the multiplication of the loaves and fish (Jn 6:11-12) rather, he had in mind when the proper time would be when his identity would be revealed. Miracles, according to Van der Loos (1965) quoted in Davis (1995:25) revealed his identity. This idea is apparent in (Mk 8:29) when Peter plainly stated that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone about Him, that is, he acknowledged Peter's guess. He then began to tell them that he was going to suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed. Stein (2008:25) argues that revealing his true identity would lead to his untimely demise and this was the reason that Jesus did not want to expedite his death. This was correct because some of the accusations levelled against him during his trial, was that he claimed to be the Christ/Messiah and the Son of God (Lk 22:67 and Lk 22:70) respectively.

Some authors disagree with this hypothesis. They content that the phrase 'Son of God' did not appear in all the early copies of Mark's Gospel (cf Garland (1996:23). It was either omitted from some manuscripts, or added by a scribe sometime after its authorship. According to France (2002:49), it was unlikely that this phrase would have been left out by Christian scribes, it would more likely have been added. He pointed out, however, that there was a possibility of incorrect duplication due to the written styles of the manuscripts. Cole (1989:62) suggested this was not important, but instead recognising that the words 'Son of God' appeared numerous times throughout the book in reference to Jesus. It remains an important phrase regardless of whether it was originally in this verse or not.

4.1.9 (Mk 8:23c) spitting in his eyes (πτύσας εἰς τὰ ὄμματα αὐτοῦ)

The Jews, early Christians, Greeks and Romans ascribed healing properties to saliva to healing a number of ailments, especially eye diseases (Yer. Shab. xiv. 14d; Yer. 'Ab. Zarah ii. 40d; Sanh. 101a; B. B. 126b; Mark vii. 33, viii. 23; John ix. 6; comp. Pliny, "Historia Naturalis," vii. 2; xxviii. 4, 7, 22). Saliva has been considered therapeutic, and considered by some to be highly efficacious in treating a number of various ailments. In (Mk 7:31-53) Jesus heals a person with hearing and speech impediments through his touch, prayer, and by spitting on the ground mixing to make mud and applying it to his tongue and ears. Except for important people like Pliny the Elder and Vespasian the emperor, spittle was customarily used by almost everybody in the first-century

Mediterranean. Saliva was then considered a legitimate agent in ophthalmological therapy. The emperors were at the forefront on the list of those who were recorded who used spittle. Tradition holds that Roman emperor Vespasian (AD 9–79), while touring in Alexandria, spat upon the eyes of a blind man who implored him to do so, allegedly at the prompting he had received in a dream from the Greco-Egyptian god Serapis. This goes on to show how popular saliva was that it was employed culturally by the emperor.

Jones (1985) online said that Pliny the Elder in his "Natural History" (Book XXVIII, vii) praises the therapeutic powers of human saliva. He even extended the power of saliva to small creatures like snakes as a repellent, and to plants. Saliva was considered a repellent in Rome as locals spat to ward off bad luck after meeting a polluting lame person and people suffering from epileptic fits. In using saliva, Jesus followed after a long tradition connected to ophthalmological therapy during his time. The difference between Jesus, as the Son of God, and Vespasian and Pliny is that Jesus' healing is efficacious and salvific. In opening the eyes of the blind man, the result was that the blind man saw Jesus with a new lens and he understands his healing in a profound way. In the healing of the blindness of Bartimaeus (Mk 10:52b) Jesus invoked faith to access healing by saying, "Go your faith has healed you." (*ὕπαγε, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε*). Faith is underscored as an important component of healing for Jesus. Immediately after receiving his sight the blind man follows after Jesus. The term, 'followed him on the way,' (*ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ*). as expressed in Greek also means on 'the way of discipleship' according to Brown *et al* (1968a:889). It is clear that Mark demonstrated the superiority of Jesus' healing as it had more elements than that of ether Vespasian or Pliny the Elder.

4.1.10 (Mk.8:23d) He asked him, "Do you see anything?") (ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν· εἴ τι *βλέπεις;*)

This question is placed in the central part of the episode. It is also the key for the interpretation of the passage. The specific tool of the Bible, to bring man to reflect by himself, is enigma! The typical form of enigma is the question. Now it's often a question which occupies the centre, that is the focal point, the major strategic position, of the concentric constructions (see Meynet (2000:1). In fact, the whole episode is built around this question. Firstly the passage clearly shows that Jesus has the power to restore the physical vision of the blind man and secondly, it also

refers to Jesus' inner perception and understanding (Best (1986:49). The healing here is not a simple physical one,but a holistic healing, which operates on a deeper level, a level which only God can reach and give as a gift (Keir (1984:1).

This text is peculiar and controversial since Jesus has never verified his healing effort or doubted it before. And this question has been a subject of many debates and suggestions by various commentators. Jesus asked him, "do you see anything?" (*εἴ τι βλέπεις;*). The tone of Jesus implies that he is aware that the sight has been restored. Thus, he wanted the man to confirm it. The man's response was *βλέπω* (I see) which confirmed what Jesus already knew. And the fact that he could see 'men,' (*τοὺς ἀνθρώπους*) the concrete and external objects to the eyes, means that his sight was restored or the eyes were 'repaired.' But the idea that people were *ὅτι ὡς δένδρα*) meant there was an imperfection in the focus that needed adjustment. Stott (2021) online pointed out the man was not blind from birth. He had at one time the ability to see clearly. He knew what a tree looked like. Evidently, he had lost his eyesight either to disease or some action on his part.

Jesus asking for confirmation from the patient is what scholars commonly call the 'first attempt of healing.' It was not to say that the healing had failed but it means it had succeeded but the lenses were out of focus—or some physical defect—and they needed to be readjusted. The demarcation line is that before the use of the spittle the man was blind. Now he can see objects which means eyes are 'repaired.' What is now needed is Lens calibration, also known as autofocus calibration, which is a method of fine-tuning where the focus point falls in the image when it is autofocusing. Theoretically, autofocus should always produce sharp images, with the chosen subject in focus. This means that Jesus was working with empirical phenomenon and not abstract or magical objection. To adjust lens calibration needs a special place and light; it could not be done anywhere and in any atmosphere. In the camera situation what is needed is a clear light, tripod and a steady immovable object to focus upon. Perhaps, this is why Jesus chose to go out of town and find a place where there is less or no movements.

Similarly, Jesus chose to go out of town when 'repairing' the ears of the deaf man (Mk 7:31-37) thus, taking him from the crowd, (*καὶ ἀπολαβόμενος αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου*). This does not mean that he could not do it in a raucous place, since he has healed in (Mk 3:10-12) where there was an extreme noise of people and shouting demons; in (Mk 2:32-34) where the whole town came

crowding at the door and where he cast out many demons. It is well known that whenever demons are cast out they make a lot of commotion and noise. But then that was in Caper'naum among the Jews where his method was customary to the Jews. But if he was to do it culturally in a culturally mixed place like Bethsaida, as the non-Jewish healers would do, he would choose an atmosphere that is different and suitable for him to concentrate so that he could perfect his healing work.

For Jesus to take the man privately is complex. He could've simply spoken a word right there in the middle of the bustling crowd and the man would've been healed. However, Jesus chose to tend to this man in a very caring way. Jesus, being divine in his nature, perhaps already knew that the man lacked faith. In compassion and love, Jesus "led him outside the village." We are not told if anyone followed, or if the disciples were near, but what is important to note is that Jesus intentionally sought to be alone with this man.

First, we assume that the blind man was a Gentile; the land in which the miracle was wrought was of a half-heathen country on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. In the second place, it was other people that brought him; he did not come of his own accord. Then again, it is their prayer that is mentioned, not his—he asked for nothing. This miracle had a massive impact, showing not only that Jesus was a great healer, compared to the local healer but more so that He was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

4.1.11 (Mk 8:24a) and looking up … …(*καὶ ἀναβλέψας ἔλεγεν·*)

He is looking up because he is searching for the light of the sun. The human eye is a sense organ adapted to allow vision by reacting to light. When the eye focuses on an object, it directs the light bouncing off the object directly onto the fovea to get the best image (see Richardson (2007:26-27). However, to say that Jesus was working purely like an optician would be incorrect. Even though the eyes would be repaired and see correctly Jesus was also working on faith and salvation. He was opening the faculty of the soul, that works in conjunction with the eyes, to perceive spiritual matters. The text represents organic eye diseases, as it were, but in certain places in the New Testament blindness is viewed differently. St Paul mentions the affairs of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers (*ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων*) and do not understand the message of the Gospel (2 Cor 4:3–4). St Paul states that "pagan blindness makes them

blaspheme God's name" (*τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται*) (Rm 2:24). Some authors also interpret this blindness as symbolic. The symbolic significance of the scene is indicated here by a number of factors, in particular by not mentioning the healed man's name or the context of the event (Rybicki *et al* (2020:intro).

In contrast, theological discussions around this scene concern the nature of the miracle: by definition, the miracles present in the bible are meant to be a confirmation of God's omnipotence; this scene, however, is rather a denial of that omnipotence, because Jesus repeats the healing, rather than making it work the first time. The first scene of great spiritual significance is found in the Gospel of John, namely the scene of the healing of the blind man in the Siloam pond (Jn 9). Jesus faces the blind man, but people also ask him about the cause of his disability: 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'(*Ῥαββεί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ;*) (Jn 9:2b). Jesus, however, strongly contradicts this line of reasoning, pointing out that the question is incorrect. He stresses that one should not ask about the cause, but rather the purpose and sense of the handicap. Jesus' conversation with the healed person is equally important from a spiritual point of view (Plich (2006-2009:480). After healing the blind man, Jesus asks him about his faith "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (*σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸντοῦ ἀνθρώπου;*) [Jn 9:35b]), and performs a second, spiritual healing of his sight, letting the already physically healed man see him as the Messiah, the Son of God. To the man's question: 'And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?' (*Καὶ τίς ἐστιν, Κύριε, ἵνα πιστεύσω εἰς αὐτόν;*) (Jn 9:36b), Jesus answers: 'You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you' (*ἑώρακας αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν*) (Jn 9:37b). The verb (ὁράω) used here means 'to see fully', and it is only at this stage that the full meaning of the entire text is revealed. After regaining his sight, the previously blind man "worshiped him" (Jesus) (*προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ*).

Therefore, Jesus was also opening up the spiritual eye of the man, that is, concept of faith that enables one to see and perceive spiritual things. The ability of an eyes to see and perceive for those who are not given the perception of the kingdom of God is explained by Jesus in (Mk 4:12) thus, "that one may see and not perceive." (*ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν,*) Those who are given to see and perceive are also given the knowledge of the kingdom of God. These are the disciples who follow Jesus. Consequently, by working on the blind man Jesus is also giving him the knowledge of the kingdom of God.

4.1.12 (Mk 8:24b) I see men; but they look like trees walking (βλέπω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὅτι ὡς δένδρα ὁρῶ περιπατοῦντας.)

The eyes are repaired but they are out of focus; they interpret the images they are focusing on wrongly. They still need adjustment. A strange thing is that the man says what he sees are men looking like trees. Stott (2021) online opines that in the Middle East, Chlamydia Trachomatis is a common cause of scaring of the eyes and blindness. He had either become blind by disease or an accident. Consequently, Jesus is repairing the damage and adjusting the focus. In agreement with this opinion Ryle (2019) online opines that the man could not have been born blind otherwise he would not be able to identify trees. His eyes were damage somehow. Consequently, Jesus is repairing the damage and adjusting the focus.

Mark's theme of 'seeing but not perceiving' is relevant in this text. Consequently.

Glenney (2014:74) argues that:

> any acceptable interpretation should provide a basis for partial blindness that accounts for how something can be seen, presumably with a measure of acuteness, but not truly understood. A cognitive explanation that goes beyond the attribution of distorted appearance or a lack of visual sharpness will better account for the report that the people specifically appear 'tree-like'.

Glenney reasons that the first healing may have cured the man's 'optical blindness,' which likely involved the removal of lens opaqueness (cataracts). After this healing there is no suggestion of light blockage, only a misconception of what form the light took. The remaining deficiency in the transitional period is something 'cognitive' that relates to the interpretation of the perception. The distinction between optical and cognitive blindness provides a basis for exploring various types of 'double blindness' (Noë (2006:12). The eye that is both optically and cognitively blind would need to be doubly cured in order to recover vision of form. In some cases where a cure is found for long-term or congenital-optical blindness, some time and experience is required for the perception of form to become possible (Fine *et al* (2003:intro). This presents a clear

disproportionateness between optical and cognitive blindness. There might be cognitive blindness on the one hand, but have normally functioning eyes; however, if one is physically blind, that person is also cognitively blind.

4.1.13 (Mk 8:25) Then again, he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored (*εἶτα πάλιν ἐπέθηκεν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, καὶ διέβλεψεν καὶ ἀπεκατέστη*)

In this section the chapter looks at the phenomenon of the laying on of hands by Jesus on the sick, which is regarded as faith healing. Faith healing is the practice of prayer and gestures (such as the laying on of hands) and believed by some to elicit divine intervention in spiritual and physical healing, especially in the Christian practice (Green & Scott (1995:335). Jesus' laying on of hands is a physical expression of salvation (Graves, 2011:52). Being healed has been described as a privilege of accepting Christ's redemption on the cross (Bosworth (2001:32). His healing acts are considered miraculous and remarkable due to the results being impossible or statistically improbable (Ehrman (2016:251-253)and were referred to as a "sign" (Jn 6:2) to prove Jesus' divinity and to foster belief in him as the Christ (Jn 4:48). In (Mk 5: 25-34) they are described to be well outside the capacity of first-century medicine. This is the end to which the Gospel writers intend them to be. They are not an end in themselves but part of the proclamation of the breaking of the Good News, which was Jesus himself coming into the world. The presence and the power of God, in Jesus, is demonstrated through these miraculous healings.

Jesus lays his hands twice on the blind man. In the OT, laying on of hands had three significances: the dedication of sacrifices to God (Ex 29:10, 15; Lv 1:4; 3:2f) and installation of the Levites to the office of priest (Nb 8:10) and a means of blessing (Gn 48:14f; Nb 27:18, 23; Dt 34:9). However, there is an instance where it is linked with healing, seen in the vain hope of Naaman, the Syrian general, for a cure from leprosy at the hands of Elisha (2Ki 5:11). Jesus would have taken over this practice from the OT. In Mark, except on one occasion, all his laying on of hands occur in the context of healing (cf. Edwards (2001:242-243). This is especially so among those advocating the discipleship model of Mark, including Telford (1999:100) and Marcus (2009:599-602). Jesus'

most common practice in healing is touch, often described as laying his hands on the one to be healed. (Mt 9:18; Mk 5:23, Mk 6:5, Mk 7:32, Mk 8:22, 25 & Lk 13:13)

The following section will address the lengthy process of the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida. Peabody *et al* (2002:186-187) noted that in (Mt 16:9,11) the disciples are presented as people of 'little' faith and have difficulty in immediate understanding. However, when Jesus explains the issue to them, they understand (Mt 16:12). With Mark it is different, as in (Mk 8:14-21) he highlights the obtuseness of the disciples and follows it to the healing of the blind man in Bethsaida (Mk8:22-26). Jesus attempts to show them the lessons of miracles that he had performed, which should have functioned as pointers for them to understand his mission and identity. A flashback to what they had witnessed Jesus do, will reveal what Mark means by being obtuse. The figure of the body of the narrative and that of the eyes of the blind man is a metaphor for obtuseness. This narrative will be explained in two stages equivalent to the two stages of healing of the blind man.

4.2 The first stage of the Mark's metaphor: obtuseness

In the Gospels, Jesus is portrayed as having various roles. For example, in Matthew Jesus plays the role of Moses as the law giver (e.g. Mt 5, 6, and 7). In the Gospel of Luke, he plays the role of a liberator (e.g. Lk 13:12-16). In the Gospel of John, he is a cosmic protagonist who comes down from heaven to interact with the world (e.g. Jn 3:16). In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus complains about the obtuseness of the disciples (Mk 8:17b-18) thus, "do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes, do you not see, and having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?" (τί διαλογίζεσθε ὅτι ἄρτους οὐκ ἔχετε; οὔπω νοεῖτε οὐδὲ συνίετε; πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν; **18** *ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες οὐ βλέπετε καὶ ὦτα ἔχοντες οὐκ ἀκούετε;* καὶ οὐ μνημονεύετε)

In the Gospel narrative, the mistakes the disciples make are very noticeable. For instance, they have a problem with understanding the parables (Mk 4:13); they do not comprehend the meaning of the teachings of Jesus (Mk 8:14-21), Peter fails to understand God's plan of Jesus' suffering even though Jesus "said this quite openly" (*καὶ παρρησίᾳ τὸν λόγον ἐλάλει*) (Mk 8:32-33), they fail when they try to perform miracles (Mk 9:14-29), they argue about who is the greatest among them (Mk 9:33-34), even though Jesus teaches that the best must be the least of all and the servant of all

(Mk 9:35b). They ask for positions of honour (Mk 10:35-40). Jesus explains that he had not come to be served, but to serve (Mk. 10:43). Judas turns Jesus into the authorities (Mk 14:10-11, 18-21, and 41-46), the disciples fell asleep when Jesus asked them to keep watching (Mk 34-41), Peter denies that he knows Jesus (Mk 14:29-21 and 66-72), they all flee when Jesus is arrested (Mk 14:50-52), and the women leave the tomb in silence (Mk 16:8).

The obtuseness of the disciples, like the arguments between Jesus and his opponents, play an important role in the narrative as it provides ample teaching opportunities for Jesus, which in turn become opportunities for the audience to learn from. This becomes a subtle testimony of the power of atonement to bridge the gap between human frailty and the demands of discipleship. It may also serve to highlight the importance of Pentecost; the role of the Holy Ghost is emphasized as it reveals how poorly the disciples function without it (Stein (2008:31). It also allows for Jesus to showcase his patience and faith in their eventual success (ibid). Dewey (2006:29) opines, that the very fact that "Mark's story is being told suggests that Mark views failure as part of continuing discipleship."

The presence of the obtuseness of the disciples in the narrative runs parallel with the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida, where the obtuseness of the disciples is symbolic of the blindness of the blind man. Sovelåg (2018:1) argues that,

> Markan healing stories (Mk 2:1-12; Mk 7:24-30), concluding the theory's claim of disability functioning as metaphorical device could be more nuanced, since the two stories use disability metaphorically in quite different ways (physiognomically in the former and symbolically in the latter
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> .

In Sovelåg's hypothesis and choice of healing texts should be added to (Mk 8:22-26) since the text contains similar literary components to (Mk 7:24-30). The metaphoric blindness of the disciples is obvious in the fact that the disciples participated in the miracle of the multiplication of bread (Mk 6:30-34); they witnessed the miracle of Jesus walking on the waters of the sea (Mk 6:45-56); they heard Jesus answer the question posed by the Pharisees and the scribes (Mk 7:1-23); they listened to the Syrophoenician woman interpret the metaphor of the breadcrumbs

(Mk 7:24-30). Yet, they understood nothing while the Syrophoenician woman understood the metaphor of the breadcrumbs (Mk 8:17-20). This is the height of the disciples' obtuseness and clearly symbolises their blindness to the truth of Jesus.

4.2.1 The second stage of the metaphor

The second touch enables in-depth perception. This part presents a turning point in Mark's narrative as matters begin to become clearer as many begin to understand the identity of Jesus, albeit imperfectly (e. g. Mk 8:28). Even though this seems to happen after (Mk 8:26) it should be understood that it is part of a lengthy and ongoing process. When Jesus asked the question as to his identity, this question is parallel to the first stage of the healing through the next question "Can you see anything?" (Mk 8:23c). The people responded by saying he was a prophet similar to John the Baptist or Elijah, or any of the prophets of old. This answer is imperfect like the imperfect sight of the first test of the recovery of the blind man of Bethsaida, where he said he could see men but they looked like trees walking (Mk 8:24b). He had regained some vision but it was as yet imperfect. He needed a second attempt at healing, in the same way the disciples needed a second attempt at the teaching. Jesus went on to again place his hands on the eyes of the blind man, and asked them directly "But you: who do you say I am?" (Mk 8:29a). This question is parallel to the second stage of healing where Jesus asked the blind man for the second time after laying hands on him. Peter suggests that Jesus is the Messiah, without a clear understanding of what a Messiah is (Mk 8:29b). This answer is perfect and it corresponds to the perfect healing of the blind man (Mk 8:25b).

The symbolic nature of the obtuseness of the disciple Mark dealt with was not as brief as the stroke of a pen but was a step by step process. Mark was telling two parables that were parallel and concurrently to each other—the story of the obtuseness of the disciples and the story of the healing of the blindness of the man of Bethsaida—in which he did not allow the one to overlie the other. The two stage process was important as Jesus was dealing with something he was greatly caring and passionate about..

4.2.2. (Mk.8:26a) And he sent him to his house (*καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν εἰς οἶκον αὐτοῦ*)

This text is linked to (Mk 7:33) and (Mk 8:23b) through the secrecy motif. There was the likelihood that when the men who had brought the blind man to Jesus witnessed his healing, they would have told the villagers about Jesus' miraculous powers, which could have contributed to the exposure of his identity. The blind man, having been healed physically and spiritually, was sent home by Jesus and was warned not to take the route through the city. It may be helpful here to consider some spiritual aspect of Bethsaida. Geographically, the city was not far from Caper'naum and Chorazin. It was also the birth place of the disciples John, Andrew and Peter. It was also the place where Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fish (Lk 9:13-15); where he cured those who were ill (Lk 9:11) and where he also taught about the Kingdom of God (Lk 9:11). However, these teachings and lessons made no impact on the people as they did not repent but continued to openly live opulent, wanton and wicked lives.

In (Mt 11:21) Jesus lamented the behaviour of the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida for not repenting, even though miracles had been performed there. He warned that, in the day of Judgment, it would go hard with these towns compared to the Phoenician sister cities of Tyre and Sidon, who lived a worldly and sinful lifestyle and never witnessed the miracles and teachings of Jesus. In the book of (Jdg. 1:31), Israel failed to overthrow Sidon in their conquest of the Promised Land. The trouble seemed to have come when Asher failed to control Sidon, due to Israel's failure to completely abolish the Canaanite's gods as God had instructed them (Deut 20:17; Jdg.1:31). Queen Jezebel was a Sidonian who married King Ahab and caused Israel much spiritual trouble (1 Ki 16:31). As the result of Asher's disobedience, Sidon's idolatry and pagan practices continued, even leading Israel to mimic its sins (Jdg. 10:6-16; 1 Ki 11). To a Jewish audience in Jesus' day, Sidon was synonymous with wickedness.

The impression of Tyre in (Ezk 28:12) showed its people to be puffed up with pride and self-sufficiency and the prophet described the overthrow of this sinful city. Consequently, according to Matthew, it is now known that the people of Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum did not believe Jesus or repent their wicked ways and lifestyle, despite the fact that Jesus had preached for repentance from their sins and had performed numerous miracles to show His glory, authority and

sovereign power. The Old Testament contains several prophecies against both Tyre and Sidon that predicted a complete overthrow (Is. 23; Jer. 25; 27;47; Ezk 26-28; Joel 3; Am 1:9-10; Zec 9:1-4).

The overthrow of these cities occurred in stages; Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre from (585—572 BC) and Alexander the Great conquered Tyre in (322 BC), destroying the city. The Persian king Artaxerxes also conquered Sidon. Consequently, God's prophesied judgment came to pass. It was only one person, the Syrophoenician woman, from Sidon, who impressed Jesus with her great faith (Mk 7:24-30; Mt. 15:21-28). Lastly, the miracle is bracketed by the blind man walking away from the village (Mk 8:23b) and (Mk 8:26) again by the recovered blind man walking away from the village. This bracketing of the text symbolises the literal isolation of Bethsaida, highlighted in a negative sense.

4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter reflects on the notion of the identity of Jesus which Mark introduced at the very beginning of his Gospel. The central message of the Gospel of Mark is that Jesus is the Son of God. The disciples were obtuse to this fact despite witnessing the miracles of healing, that Jesus had performed. The aim of this chapter was to prove that Mark used the healing of blindness (of the man of Bethsaida) symbolically in his central message, that Jesus is the Son of God. Consequently, the chapter investigatted two texts running concurrently, namely (Mk8:15b) the account of the obtuseness of the disciples and the physical blindness of the man of Bethsaida (M8:22-26) and (Mk10:46-52). The idea behind the text is the symbolism of blindness (Mk 8:22-26) portrayed by the obtuseness (Mk 8:1-17) of the disciples.

The story of the obtuseness of the disciples who fail to understand this central idea of the Gospel of Mark, albeit the fact that they heard the powerful teaching of Jesus done with authority unlike the synagogue leaders. They witnessed the miraculous acts of Jesus; the multiplication of the loaves and fish,(Mk 8:6-8) the walking on the sea (Mk 6:48b) and the miraculous healing of (Mk1:29-31) Simon Peter's mother-in-law; (Mk 1:41)) the leper; (Mk 2:11-12) the paralytic, (Mk 3:5b)the man with the withered hand; (Mk 4:39c the calming of the storm (Mk 5:13) the Gerasene demoniac; (Mk 5:34) the woman with the haemorrhage; (Mk 6:41) the multiplication of the loaves and fish; (Mk 6:49) Jesus walking on the water; (Mk 7:34b) healing the deaf man), yet they failed

to realise that Jesus was not an ordinary person; he was more than a prophet. They heard him command the demons and the demons beyed because he did that with an authority which the temple leaders did not have. The causes of blindness in the first-century Greco-Roman territories varied, ranging from old age to God's punishment and accidents. These cases appear in many stories across the world, from ancient Greek mythology to Judeo-Christian religious texts.

In the exegesis of Mk (8:22-26), Mark shows that Jesus taught and performed many miracles in Bethsaida. Some unidentified people, who believed in Jesus' healing power, brought a blind man to be healed by Jesus. They pleaded that Jesus should touch him. This method was already common among the Romans and Greeks; for instance, it was invented by Asclepius who simply touched a patient. Jesus' power of touch had become common knowledge, for example, in (Mk 5:28b), the woman with the flow of blood said "if only he can touch my arment I shall be made well." The fact that in Mark's narrative, Jesus was the supremer healer was initially detected by Van der Loos (1965) who declared that Mark used miracles to identify Jesus.

Jesus led the blind man outside the village -the reason for this was to keep the identity of Jesus a secret, that he in fact was the Messiah and Son of God (Mk. 1:1). Once outside the village Jesus spat in the blind man's eyes. Thereafter he asked him if he could see anything. The blind man responded that he could see men resembling trees and they were walking. This act was commonly known as the first attempt at healing. Jesus laid his hands upon him and the man could see. This act came known as the second attempt. These attempts are compared to Jesus asking his disciples, "who do people say I am?" (Mk 8:27b) and the people answered that he was a prophet like 'John the Baptist.' Others say Elijah, and others, again, "one of the prophets." (Mk 8:28). These answers were wrong like the first attempt on healing the blind man. Then Jesus asked the disciples, "who do you say I am?" (Mk 8:29) Peter answered, "You are the Christ." (Mk 8:29b). This answer was correct like the second answer of the blind man of Bethsaida. The blind man, healed both physically and spiritually, was sent home by Jesus, and warned not to take the route through the city.

The objective of this chapter was to address Mark's intention to present Jesus as the supreme healer and focused on his calling. It revealed the similarities between his calling and that of a diviner's

graduation (*isangoma's ukuthwasa*). It also located traditional societies which affected the cross-cultural study. The verse by verse analysis of (Mk 8:22-26) enabled the discovery of the literary device where Mark correlated the two text, the blindness of the man of Bethsaida and the obtuseness of the disciples, and informed each other. The notion of cultural cross-healing which was what Jesus was doing, was also addressed in the Gospel of Mark.

CHAPTER 5

THE HEALING OF MQHANGANYI, THE GIRL BITTEN BY A MAMBA

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the healing of Mqhanganyi, the daughter of Labhabha Nzama, which took place in the district of Zinkumbini in Libode, Eastern Cape in 1926. As Mqhanganyi was crossing the Mlambengwenya river, a mamba reared up and struck her on the right leg, just above her calf. She turned back, crossed the river and moved as fast as she could. Tilton (2010) (online) advises that when bitten, the victim should find somewhere safe to sit down as this snake's venom can cause loss of consciousness, thus the victim should not be walking, let alone running. Running increases the heart rate, which increases the rate the venom will spread through the body. It also increases the likelihood of injury such as a twisted ankle, which could further delay the treatment.

In the case of Mqhanganyi, Hadebe reported that, "she speedily crossed the river" (*yawuwela lomfuyana ngejubane*), therefore, she ran, which should never be done. Further advice is that one should walk back to where one came from, which Mqhanganyi unknowingly did (*yaphinda emuva)*. The reason for this is that one is reasonably sure there are no other snakes on the path where one came from. Mqhanganyi ran to the house of Peter Cele, a preacher, and related to him what had happened. She pointed to the full-size bite mark of the greyish mamba. Peter panicked and went to report the accident to Shembe. Shembe was so shocked that he picked up stones and threw them at Peter. And that was his first answer. He instructed Peter to fetch his scarf and bind it around the bite; he was to tie it above the wounded section. Shembe insisted on ensuring that Peter had understood his instructions.

5.2 The mamba's bite

This section examines the concept of a mamba bite. This information is important as it augments Hadebe's narrative, as he emphasised Shembe's power to heal different ailments, exorcise evil

spirits and remove poisons from people's bodies. The story of the mamba's neurotoxic venom, a deadly poison, should be one that irrefutably confirms Shembe's power over diseases. A snakebite is classified as a trauma because it is regarded as an injury. A mamba bite is a venom-infested wound caused by the injected venom that is continuously in motion in the blood vessels. This is what makes a mamba's neurotoxin venom unpredictable, dangerous and elusive to treat.

All clinical experiments show that the venom is predominantly neurotoxic, and symptoms often become apparent within ten minutes after the bite. Dreyer & Dreyer (2013:45-52) opine that early neurological signs indicating severe envenomation include a metallic taste, drooping eyelids and gradual symptoms of bulbar palsy. Other neurological symptoms include constricted pupils, blurred or diminished vision, a tingling sensation on the skin, slurred speech, difficulty in swallowing, shortness of breath, difficulty in controlling saliva, muscle twitching, impaired voluntary movement, drowsiness, loss of consciousness and respiratory paralysis. Earlier Hodgson & Davidson (1996:133-145) suggested other, more general symptoms which include nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhoea , sweating, goosebumps and red eyes. Laustsen *et al* (2015:126-142) opine that the bite of a black mamba can cause collapse in humans within forty-five minutes.

Not every bite of a mamba is fatal; there are two kinds of bites. First, mambas use their venom mostly for their prey, but it may strike humans when provoked. Mambas are actually timorous creatures who prefer to avoid confrontation and may attack only when cornered or if one is standing between them and their resting place. In the second type of attack Murphy (2010: 15) opines that it is usually a defensive or a surprised bite. A mamba may not inject a lethal dose of venom, in fact, it may not inject any venom at all. This bite is referred to as 'dry bite' or a 'cold bite' and it occurs quite frequently, between 30 to 50% of the time.

'Mqhanganyi's condition depended on what kind of bite she had sustained as any of the two types of attack above would result in bite marks. Hadebe did not provide a full description of the mamba attack so the reader would not grasp the full effects of the bite. In some cases, the bite marks are difficult to spot unless bleeding had occurred. In Mqhanganyi's case there were 'two bite-marks of a full-grown mamba,' (*amaxeba amabili emamba empofu eyayisikhulile*). The wounds were already swelling up. Besides, the fact that the mamba was full-grown made the venom lethal.

Hadebe provided these details so that the reader could grasp the healing power of Shembe. However, Mqhanganyi's condition was critical as described by Dreyer & Dreyer (2013:45-52) and also of the possibility of death if treatment was delayed, as described by Laustsen *et al* (2015:126-142).

5.3 Mqhanganyi's snakebite

Immediately when Peter tied the scarf as was directed by Shembe, the venom drained from the wound into the ground, as if the wound had given way to Shembe's presence. Hadebe's use of the words 'immediately when' demonstrated the power of Shembe over the venom. Hadebe use these words to convince the reader of Shembe's dedication and power. This dedication was also demonstrated when Shembe had shouted to Peter, "Take it and bind it around the girl's wound – you must tie it above the wounded part. Do you understand exactly what I am saying?" (*Ulithathe uyibophe ngalo intombazane; uzobopha ngasenhla kwenxeba. Uyezwa kambe?*") The slow rhythm of Shembe's words and the emphasis on "Do you understand me exactly" indicated the seriousness and the intensity of Shembe's concentration on the healing aspect. He did not want mistakes to occur in this treatment. Even though Hadebe had not expressed the seriousness of Mqhanganyi's condition as illustrated by the first-aid information on mamba bites earlier, nevertheless, he compensated for that in his expressive manner of illustrating the frightening condition of Mqhanganyi and by foregrounding Shembe's concern.

The immediacy of the venom draining away when the power-laden scarf was applied to the wound, resembled the casting out of evil spirits when the powerful exorcist pronounced his incantation. It also showed the power of the scarf as a healing instrument when used properly.

5.4 The role of the scarf

Shembe's scarf is used as a special instrument to fight evil spirits. As stated earlier, the scarf was also used in the battle against a goblin (Gunner 2002:177). It was used even though it did not work because of the lack of faith of the two ministers, nevertheless, it was intended to be the central weapon to the fight against a goblin. (Gunner 2002:177). Shembe gave specific instructions how

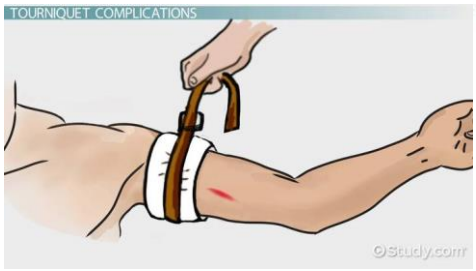
it was to be used. However, the fear of the two ministers dominated their actions and they ran away without having made a full attempt to assist. Nevertheless, the scarf was a powerful instrument with a potentiality of its own. An example was provided of how it was used religiously when Johannes Galilee, son of Shembe and his successor as church leader, demonstrated it to Sundkler and his wife at Ekuphakameni, Sundkler (1948:30-31), where he held a healing session for women suffering from 'the sickness of the womb' (*isifo sasesinyeni*). Strictly speaking, even though the sickness is regarded as a demoniac attack by evil spirits residing in the wombs of childbearing married women, the women experienced physical suffering as well. The demonic purpose was to attack and kill unborn children in the womb and deter the wives from practicing their maternal roles of childbearing; in this way marital unions were destroyed through evil intent.

According to Johannes Galilee, the scarf was passed over the women and placed on the womb or on the shoulder. Each time when Johannes Galilee cracked the scarf like a whip in the air. the possessed women broke into screams and confessed their sins. It was as if the demons in the women were the ones confessing their sins. The fact that it brought about the healing of the mamba bite was that the implication of the evil spirit was assumed. The power of Shembe over other traditional healers could be seen when the use of the scarf was compared with the use of other traditional healing techniques to the mamba's bite.

For instance, a popular method is 'the cutting of small incisions on the skin' (*ukugcaba*). Sloan *et al* (2007:1386-90) argue that this 'scarification' was performed in over thirty per cent of cases studied, usually with a razor blade or a sharpened cow horn around the bite site, with herbal mixtures being rubbed in, but the success rate was minimal. 'Antidote for snakes' (*isibiba*) was also found to be one of the most common treatments for a snakebite and although its effects were unclear, eighty per cent of victims used it prior to arriving at the hospital. Permanganate, paraffin, breast milk and snuff were also common treatments. An earlier study found scarification rather than *isibiba* to be the most common traditional treatment. Even with the use of these, few people survived a full mamba snake bite. Consequently, Hadebe's description of the use of the scarf as an immobilising pressure bandage was useful. The scarf used as a pressure immobilising instrument had its own way; it was not routinely useful. In fact, it could be dangerous if used carelessly.

Mason (1963:223) argues that "It should not be used to treat the bite of an adder because it may increase the size of the swelling produced by the venom of this type of snake and thus possibly do more harm than good."

The classic 'pressure-immobilisation technique' demanded special equipment and training and is considered not practicable for general use in South Africa and a tight, arterial tourniquet should never be used. The dangers of tourniquets include the development of ischaemia and gangrene if applied for more than about 1½ hours, (Muller *et al.* (2012:371).



A tourniquet

Figure 1

A pressure immobilization bandage

Figure 2

University of Australia. (6th September (2018) https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=jSDZbZcWAdQ

The pressure immobilisation bandage technique was identified as the only evidence-based first-aid technique effective in curtailing the spread of the venom. However, additional studies suggest that the application of this technique is not recommended for novices. Quarch *et al.*, (2017) on line argue that even though the tourniquet is popular, it can be dangerous. One has to be careful how to loosen it because if it is loosened too fast, envenomation complications can occur. Thus, it had to be gradually loosened so that the antivenom could block the venom in the blood.

5.5 Joyous dancing and leaping

Dance in the AICs is interpreted as the outward expression of the inner consciousness of man in relation to his relationship with God and the myriad existential challenges facing him. When a person dances, emotions such as happiness, sadness, violence, fury and expectations are often reflected in the dance. For example, the dance performed during a thanksgiving service was quite different from that done during invocation. This is because during thanksgiving, the excitement and eagerness of the moment translates into joyous dancing while rage, vigour and passion reflect in the dances associated with invocation. Every prayer meeting of the AICs is accompanied by prayer, dance and song (Olukayode *et al* (2015:7).

In this section the discussion centres on Hadebe's portrayal of Shembe's power through dancing and singing, accompanied by drums in an often tense and ecstatic healing atmosphere. Among other prominent elements of this dynamic setting, Hadebe showcased the power of faith demonstrated by both Shembe and Mqhanganyi. Shembe was clearly in a trance thus he was already 'stomping and leaping in front of the crowds (*esegida engqibitha ngaphambi kwamaviyo*). This activity is reminiscent of (1 Sam 10:5). "After that you shall come to Gibeath the Philistine; and there, as you come to the city, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying"

(אַחַר כֵּן תָּבוֹא גִּבְעַת הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם נְצִבֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וְיִהְיֶ֨ה כְבֹאֲךָ֜ שָׁ֗ם הָעִיר֮ וּפָגַעְתָּ֣ חֶבֶל֒ נְבִיאִ֗ים יֹרְדִ֤ים מֵהַבָּמָה֙ וְלִפְנֵיהֶ֔ם
נֵ֖בֶל וְתֹ֣ף וְחָלִ֑יל וְכִנּ֣וֹר וְהֵ֔מָּה מִתְנַבְּאִֽים׃)

(**NOTE**: The Hebrew translation used here is taken from שמואל א 10:6 Hebrew OT: Westminster Leningrad Codex)

Also it is reminiscent of (1 Sam10:6) "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee and thou shalt prophesy with them and shalt be turned into another man".

(צלחה עליך רוח יהוה והתנבית עמם ונהפכת לאיש אחר׃)

Being turned into 'another man' implies being in a state of ecstasy or trance. The passage states that the priests were in ecstasy, which befitted the mood, the atmosphere and the state in which Shembe was in, according to Hadebe's description. Hadebe appended the same mood to Mqhanganyi, thus "As it was, at that very moment that the daughter of Labhabha stood up when she heard the sound of the drums. She stood up as she saw the Lord of the Nazaretha dancing. She

too, this girl who had been bitten by a mamba, stood up and danced for Jehovah, without the slightest shyness." (*Kwathi kusenjalo kuwo lowo mkhathi, yasukuma intokazi kaLabhabha—uma izwa udumo lwezigubhu. Yasukuma isibona iNkosi yamaNazaretha isina. Nayo-ke le Ntombi yasukuma yamsinela uJehova ingenamahloni*). Thus, Mqhanganyi arose to meet Shembe in this whirlpool of ecstasy. Ecstasy expresses a deep yearning for gaining access to Almighty God. It is knocking at the door of heaven and conveys unity with the divine on two levels: a deep desire to address God and a feeling of having arrived in the presence of God. The ecstasy, which simply is a means of gaining access to a larger and mysterious realm where secrets are divulged, may set in at this stage. In the course of this state, there is the clearance of obstacles on the way to the healer. To Mqhanganyi, this is her victory over the dreadful effects of the neurotoxic venom. The appalling physical and mental description of a person bitten by a mamba as detailed in Dreyer & Dreyer (2013:45-52) above is too terrifying to contemplate. Having escaped from all this was the reason for Mqhanganyi and Shembe to be jumping with joy at the conquest of such an enemy.

Shembe expresses such feelings in the Sabbath Prayer (*Umthandazo we Sabatha*) (Shembe & Shembe (1995:15),

Mbongeni uJehova maNazaretha	Nazarites give praise to Jehovah
Wasibusisa phezu kwemizi yezitha zethu	He blessed us more than our enemies' homes
Ngokuba umusa wakhe Uhlezi phakade	For His mercies endures forever (Shembe. & Shembe (1940:15).

Olukayode (2015:6) quoting Ogunrinade (2012) postulates thus:

> Dance is further interpreted spiritually as shaking off or getting rid of the evil spiritual adversity that have spiritually attached itself onto the body of victims, thereby causing them misfortune than rather than opportunity to achieve goodness. The AIC believes that dancing while praying could get rid of these adversities.

The singing of hymns elevates the human spirit to a high state of closeness with Jehovah. The drum, repeatedly mentioned above, was a special instrument to Shembe. In the case where he

referred to ‘the Children of Israel crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land with the tabernacle,’ (cf Josh 3:14-15) he spoke of his Church crossing the Tugela River with a drum. This to Shembe was a reversal of Blood River where the AmaZulu died at the hands of the Boers on (16 December 1838) on the banks of the Ncome River. A drum for him symbolised the tabernacle that contains the ‘Ten Words of Yahweh;’ a covenant with his people which is expressed emphatically.

It is also reminiscent of how “David were with all the house of Israel, were making merry, coming into Jerusalem ‘with all their might’ with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals (2 Sam 6:5), [RSV]. Karkou *et al* (2019) opines that Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) is an effective intervention in the treatment of adults with depression. Tovermina *et al* (2018) online argues that “Dance movement has the effect of bringing people back to themselves; it ‘untangles’ their depressed moods”. It is proven that dancing in a group is particularly effective to the depressed mind. The theme of moving from isolation to connection emerges, first in the therapeutic process working with groups, and then in the creative process working with the dancers. The reason some people join dance groups is because they suffer from depression and seek the company of sociable people who express merriment and continuously contemplating movement. People who were formerly isolated find their joy not only in the company of others but in trying new movements as they think of dance manoeuvres.

Dancing during worship, and this depends on the type of worship, that is, the tempo of the dance’ is determined by the type of spiritual exercise being performed. The body movement, the sound generated while clapping and the sights produced through dance and gesticulation are believed to be appealing to the object of worship and to God. (Olukayode *et al* (2015:6). This is obvious in the description of Hadebe that this vigorous dancing is associated with thanksgiving, invocation to Jehovah and prayer for empowerment. At this moment Shembe must be empowered with a healing energy.

The quick body movements represented in Hadebe’s narrative in the mounting of pressure and suppression or repression of evil forces. This act of dancing portrays joyfulness, dominion and victory over malevolent forces. This is clearly the feeling prophets experiences when they see progress in the healing act which portrays victory over the spiritual enemy. It is a feeling that God approves and He is accompanying the prophet in his\her efforts to bring down the fighting evil

spirit that attacks the patient. Hadebe narrates the acts of 'dancing and singing' (*ukugida and ukungqitha*) as gesticulation forms of non-verbal communication whereby the body is used to communicate particular messages to Jehovah that involve inner feelings, hopes, fears, dreams and longing for the end to come.

5.6 The final triumphant ending

This section discoursed on how Hadebe portrayed Shembe's power to destroy the enemy. It was also seen in (Gunner 2002:169) how Hadebe related Shembe's pulverising of the Wesleyan Church by just pointing a finger at it and saying, "All that will slither down like wet walls" *(konke lokhu kovuma phansi njengezidonga ezinethileyo*). Hadebe illustrates the final victory of Shembe by his announcement of the death of the mamba. This happened during the church service where Shembe's power was palpable. The end of the mamba was as mysterious as its appearance at the Mlambengwenya River. Its death was unbelievable as it caused much confusion in the church where Shembe's power base was grounded. The announcement of the mystery of the death of the mamba was as unbelievable as the announcement of the six grinding stones (Gunner, 2002:181) where Hadebe prays in his heart "I, Meshack Hadebe, doubted in my heart and I thought, this is terrible because it's not the truth" (*Mina, Meshack Hadebe, ngadlinza ngenhliziyo ngathi le nto yimbi ngoba ayisilo iqiniso*).

What made Shembe's announcement doubtful is that he said, "Wherever this snake is, today it is dead *(lapho ikhona le nyoka namhlanje ifile*). The congregation believed but were sceptical, and their disbelief challenged Shembe's power which had to be addressed and overcome. Hadebe explained that a strong smell of something decaying rose near an *umsenge* ['forest cabbage tree'] tree and assailed the church. The decay was the final destruction of the snake and victory for Shembe. The offensive smell symbolised the evil nature of the snake. That it had decomposed so fast after the attack. It had died that very day and was discovered the next day and far from where it happened, at the Mlambengwenya stream, was a mystery.

This mystery could be connected with what Hexham & Oosthuizen (1996:92-93) reported that during one of the festivals on Mt Nhlangakazi, Shembe prayed that no Nazarite Christian would die from a snake bite. If bitten by a snake, the poison should turn around and kill the snake instead.

However, it begs the question why it had not died at the Mlambengwenya stream where it had bitten Mqhanganyi, and why it did not die next to the place where the services would be held the following day. This can be seen as a literary devise by Hadebe to show that any enemy of the Church of the Nazarites will be destroyed by Shembe whose source of power is Jehovah. Again, one would like to know whether black mambas are territorial or not. The information from the Pretoria National Zoological Garden stated that mambas are not territorial although they tend to remain in 'one area' and as many as five have been reported in the same tree. With this information, it could be true that it had travelled the distance in that time after the attack. The final word of Hadebe thus, as the people were searching around for the cause of the smell, imagine, they found a huge swollen mamba just beyond the *umsenge*; it was dead, stinking, a feast for green flies. (Gunner, 2002:191, par., 5).

This scenario describes the ugliness of the incident. The terms 'swollen' which could also express anger and hatred; the stinking, which symbolises, sinfulness, and is repelling. Green flies which symbolises death are used by Hadebe to imply Shembe's might and destruction of the 'enemy.' His followers believed themselves to be immune from snakebites, since he had prayed for this privilege on the Holy Mountain. Consequently, anyone who killed a snake was fined. Likewise, he could call upon water snakes to vacate pools in which he wanted to baptise his congregants. In (Gunner 2002:159), mention is made of an enormous snake which sprang up and came towards Shembe while he was baptising someone but deviated at the last moment; remained unperturbed and continued with the baptismal ritual. Understandably, the snake could not harm Shembe because (Gunner 2002:159 it was said of Shembe, "he is of heaven and who would demonstrate that he was indeed of God."

Tishken (2002:186) relates an incident where a girl, bitten by a mamba, was brought to Shembe, who stood up and shouted, "You mamba! I do not call all of you; I call only the one who bit this girl." He called three more times and the mamba appeared before him. He then asked it why it had bitten the girl. This interview was followed by a pronouncement of death over the mamba and after its death it was disposed of. There were numerous snakebite cases treated by Shembe, according to Tishken. For example, he healed a young girl bitten by a puffadder by sucking blood from her leg and spitting it out. After that treatment the girl was perfectly well again and walked away of

her own accord. The Church tradition has a number of stories from individuals who claim that they were saved because of that prayer on Mt Nhlangakazi; they were bitten, but suffered no ill effects. Tishken (2002:186) concludes his testimony by arguing that, "when it came to snake bites, not only was Shembe a great healer, but his healing powers even extended so far as to heal people from faraway, in his absence".

Finally, Hadebe's substantial different titles for Shembe, seventeen in all, indicate the power bestowed on him, thus, 'The Prophet,' 'The Prophet of Jehovah,' 'The Prophet of God,' 'Lord Shembe,' 'Father Shembe,' 'Grandfather,' 'Grandfather Shembe,' 'The man of God,' 'The messenger of God,' 'The man of Jehovah,' 'The messenger of Jehovah,' 'The-one-sent-by-God,' 'The Lord of the Nazare tha,' 'The man of heaven,' 'Lord of heaven,' 'God of Ekuphakameni,' 'The Almighty God.'

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 5 serves to demonstrate the overwhelming power of Shembe as a prophet and healer, which Hadebe repeatedly pointed out in various ways throughout his testimony. In this narrative, Hadebe sought to demonstrate Shembe's divine power by its juxtaposition with the lethal nature of the mamba's venomous bite, which clinical experiments confirmed as predominantly neurotoxic and deadly. This fatal propensity of the mamba bite manifested in the speed the devastating effects developed after Mqhanganyi was attacked. Thus, as was stated by Dreyer & Dreyer (2013:45-52) regarding the effects of a mamba bite, Mqhanganyi's condition was deemed to be critical. There was the threat of imminent death if the treatment of such a bite was delayed, as in most cases of mamba bites. However, Hadebe neither provided a full description of the mamba attack, nor clear details of Mqhanganyi's plight, leaving the reader unable to grasp the full import of the lethal bite. This shift of emphasis was deliberately not placed on the mamba's actions or Mqanganyi's wound, as neither were intended as the central focus in Hadebe's testimony, but placed squarely on Shembe the healer and his healing power. Hadebe purposefully provided these details in such a way to ensure the reader would focus on the spiritual healing power of Shembe, rather than on the physical, condition of Mqhanganyi and her plight.

Again, through the effect of the scarf, which caused the venom to drain to the ground, Hadebe revealed Shembe's power, considering the fact that in the usual application of a tourniquet, the venom hardly would 'drain to the ground.' This hyperbole reinforced Hadebe's determination to validate the prophetic power of Shembe. Furthermore, this astonishing application of the scarf was accompanied by the words 'immediately when,' which further heightened the understanding of such prophetic usage. One of the literary characteristics of the Gospel according to Mark was the apparently inordinate use of *εὐθύς*, an adverb meaning 'immediately' or 'at once' It occurs fifty-nine times in the NT, forty-one of these being in Mark's Gospel, and eleven times in Chapter 1, mostly describing Jesus' repetitive movements and urgency. Similarly, in Hadebe's usage, the term 'immediately' suggests urgency.

In the application of the scarf Shembe's power was miraculously transposed – from Shembe to the healing artifact – as seen in the application and effect of the scarf which could, therefore, best be described as a power-laden artifact.

This miraculous power was evident when considering that the classic 'pressure-immobilisation technique'— even though the amaZulu knew of and had used the tourniquet technique in snake bite treatment, it was a procedure which demanded special equipment and training, and was considered not practicable for general use by inexperienced persons. The dangers of tourniquets included the development of ischaemia and gangrene if applied incorrectly, thus this knowledge, in Shembe's case, was supposed to be essential before undertaking such an application. Nevertheless, it was hardly regarded as such in Hadebe's testimony.

The fact that it brought about the healing of the mamba bite was also the implication of the presence of an evil spirit. Consequently, the power of Shembe over other traditional healers could be seen when the use of the scarf was compared with that of other traditional healing techniques as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Furthermore, Hadebe portrayed Shembe's power through dancing and singing, accompanied by drums which promoted a healing atmosphere; the same power was transferred to Mqhanganyi, who stood up when she saw Shembe dancing, and who was able to join him in the dance. Among other prominent elements of this dynamic setting, the passage states that the party was in ecstasy,

which befitted the mood, atmosphere and the sanctified state in which Shembe found himself during this time.

Hadebe illustrated the final victory of Shembe by his astute announcement of the death of the mamba during the church service, where Shembe's power was the most palpable. The mystery around this death caused confusion and disbelief among the congregation, which challenged Shembe's power. However, the state of uncertainty about the truthfulness of Shembe's public statement to the congregation served as Hadebe's literary device to strengthen Shembe's prophetic prowess when the death of the mamba was proven. In addition, the obnoxious description of the decaying snake symbolised its evil nature, and its inexplicable demise once again underscored Hadebe's unequivocal authentication of Shembe's prophetic power.

CHAPTER 6

JESUS AND SHEMBE AS HEALERS: A COMPARISON

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter a comparison is made between Jesus and the healers of his time in the first-century Mediterranean region and a similar comparison is also made between Shembe and the healers of his time in the Nyuswa South Durban district. These comparisons are supported through the portrayal of these two characters in the two texts (Mark 8:22-26) and (Gunner 2002:187-191) under review. The comparison will take into consideration their influence and ranking against the healers of their time and their respective localities. This will require the chapter to go beyond the boundaries of the selected texts above. The chapter will also argue for a methodology as to how this is to be effected as Mark and Hadebe might differ in some aspects in respect of their cultural backgrounds. Inspiration and guidance for this aspect of the study was drawn from Ukpong (2000:24) who argued that a key commentator on the comparative method referred overtly to the goal of comparative interpretation as "the actualization of the theological meaning of the text in today's context so as to forge integration between faith and life, and engender commitment to personal and societal transformation." It should be pointed out that it is not the intention of this study to compare the capabilities of the two healers, but to determine how the two texts portray them. In explaining the biblical exegesis Nyiawung (2013:1) argued that from the perspective of biblical interpretation, there is no superior context or culture. His argument is based on the fact that present methodology is compelled by the awareness that scripture speaks to people differently, depending on their context. This line of thinking is that biblical texts have meaning only when they are confronted within a given context. The confrontation of a biblical text within a cultural context is the activity of the reader who serves as a facilitator. Pilch (1991:182) defines healing in the first-century Mediterranean world as an anthropological term for 'the tendency to utilise modem, Western, and scientific medical concepts and models to interpret apparent health concerns in all cultures of all times without regard for cultural differences'. He further states that medical anthropology identifies this flawed methodology as medico centrism' (Pilch (1991:183).

He also maintains that,

> health or well-being is but an example of *good fortune.* Alternately, sickness is but one example of a wide range of *misfortunes.* The key lies in understanding the relation of sickness and healing to *fortune* and *misfortune*, not a modem idea, but one quite frequent in and more appropriate to other cultures.

Ngubane (1977:22)[7] argues that,

> an English term "disease" requires attention in its *isiZulu* equivalent meaning is "*isifo*" which means, "a serious derangement of health, disordered state of an organism or an organ, any particular form of this with special symptom and names." In *isiZulu isifo* applies, as well to a disease that is manifested by somatic symptoms, to various forms of misfortune, and also to a state of vulnerability to misfortune and disease.

The concept of healing for a prophet such as Shembe requires attention as it has some traits taken from both the OT and the ATRs. For example, Africans believe that izangoma/ dingaka are entrusted with the gift of healing the sick. This is derived from the African understanding of a traditional diviner or healer who uses *ditaola* (bones for divination) that are inherited from delegated ancestors, *badimo bagolo* (ancestor predecessors). The healing power originates from God, and the notion of a prophet reveals the same view in the Bible. The prophets' duties were to advise the sick on what their ancestors expected to be done in order to be healed (cf. Mashabela, 2016:6).

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[7] Ngubane 1977 is speaking from Nyuswa, the area where Habebe and Shembe were ministering. Even though much might have changed in the past thirty years some aspects in terms of illness and healing remained the same.

Healing within the cultural context resonates with the fundamental needs of an African. These fundamental needs include addressing healing as more than just a physical ailment, but as the totality (including salvation) of a person (Mashabela (2016:abstr). For example, Hadebe described Shembe when healing a paralytic (Gunner 2002:161, par., 8) declaring that "*Namuhla zonke izono zakho zithethelelwe* (Today all your sins are forgiven). The nature of this remark places Shembe on par with Jesus who, in healing a paralytic in (Mk 2:25b) utters similar words.

However, it must be noted here that Shembe, according to Dube (1936:22) had a vision after being struck by a lightning bolt that he should no longer use medicine from healers. This instruction was applied even to medical practitioners, vaccinations and injections. This meant that he, also unlike other African healers, should not use medicine of any kind when healing, which also confirms his superiority over all other healers.

Some literary comparisons are also found in certain texts such as Branch (2014:1) who examines comparisons and contrasts in (Mk 5:21-43) narratives of different kinds of healing that took place in Caper'naum. In (Mk 5:22-24) there is, for instance, a request made by Jairus, a synagogue ruler, for the healing of his daughter, who is dying. This narrative is interrupted by (Mk 5:25-34) that of a haemorrhaging woman who is also begging Jesus for healing. While the woman is still speaking she is interrupted by the story of Jairus (Mk 35-43) which continued. The methods applied here are the literary and canonical methodologies. A literary approach involves looking at character, conflict, diction, point of view, setting, time and plot (see Lostracco & Wilkerson (2008). In the examples elements of character in the interlocking stories are examined. The narratives of the haemorrhaging woman and the restoration to life of the gravely ill and then dead daughter of Jairus, invite literary and canonical examinations. In these interlocking stories, Jesus fulfils the prophecy in (Is 53:4) 'He took upon himself our infirmities' (see Spivey *et al* (2007:55) Thus Mark employs a literary method to demonstrate that Jesus is above all of his contemporaries. The status of Jesus in (Mk 1:1) is stated that Jesus is the Son of God.

In some aspects the comparison of Mark and Hadebe share a common literary technique. In so doing, the chapter reflects on how both Mark and Hadebe utilised the Scriptures, the Old Testament and the Prophets. In the case of Mark, it was the OT that was appropriated while in the case of Hadebe, it was the OT and NT that was appropriated. In the case of Mark, the whole of the first-

century Mediterranean area, particularly the Greco-Roman area and Palestine, were considered as the area of influence. In the case of Hadebe, mostly the area of Nyuswa, a district situated between Pietermaritzburg and Durban was deemed influential. However, since African culture was almost similar in Southern Africa and in some parts of central Africa, this area was influential in Hadebe's testimony. Hadebe's narrative was written between 1922–1935 and this period of the socio-cultural life of the AmaZulu should also be considered.

In the introductory section the grounds for comparison were laid by defining the procedure, explaining the concepts healing, illness, the area and the era when comparisons could be considered, including its protagonists.

6.2 Healing

6.2.1 Jesus as a healer in the Gospel of Mark

Dube (2018d:1) argued that most authors agreed that Jesus was a healer. In the Gospel of Mark there are nine texts in which Jesus healed various different kinds of illnesses, namely, (Mk 1:29-31, 40-45; Mk 2:1-12; Mk 3:1-5; Mk 5:22-43, 25-34; Mk 7:31-37; Mk 8:22-26; Mk 10:46-52), four episodes in which Jesus cast out demons or unclean spirits (Mk 1:21- 28; Mk 5:1-20; Mk 7:24-30; Mk 9:17-29) and five summary-type episodes in which Jesus healed different illnesses and cast out demons or unclean spirits (Mk 1:32-34, 39; Mk 3:10-12; Mk 6:5, 53-56). In these last five texts, Kingsbury (1989:65-88) quoted in Van Aarde (1993:28) opines that the summary-type statements in Mark are used by the narrator to illustrate the power and authority with which Jesus taught. Kingsbury arrives at this conclusion by witnessing the effects the healings had on the spectators thus:

> They were amazed (Mk 1:27), the whole city gathered at the door to see his healings and exorcisms (Mk 1:32-24), there were so many that they crushed Jesus (Mk 3:9), and they laid the sick before Him so they could be healed (Mk 6:53-56). Jesus' healings and exorcisms should be understood in terms of his role as eschatological prophet (cf. Kee (1973:402-422).

However, an important notion is that despite the remarks made by these authors, nowhere in the Gospel does Mark say anything about any other healer. As a matter of fact, in (Mk5:25-34) in the story of the haemorrhaging woman, he states the opposite.Another important fact is that groups of people in the Mediterranean world would also select direct relationships as the central worth, that is, they would order their behaviour according to a hierarchical perspective or dimension. Thus, the crowd was startled to observe that Jesus commanded unclean spirits with authority and power, and that they obeyed him. (Mk I:27). From their perspective, this power over spirits placed Jesus in a position higher than their own. A society that attends to hierarchical ordering is always interested in learning 'who is in charge'. In matters of health and healing, this is a fundamental concern (Van Aarde (1993:31).

Some passages in the Gospel describe Jesus as a physician (Mk 2:17) 'And Jesus said to them,' "those who are well have no need of a physician,'" (*καὶ ἀκούσας ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς [ὅτι] οὐ χρείαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ*). However, none of the healing texts in the Gospel presents him as a physician of the Hippocrates kind. Craffert (2008:214) argues that he was more of a shaman type healer. Jesus was more of an Old Testament prophetic healer who called to God the Father to heal sicknesses. as described in Psalm 103:3. For example, Elijah called on God in the healing of a widow's son. The writer of (1 Ki 17:17-24) wrote "Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried out to the Lord, 'O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again.' And the child arose. [NRSV].

Jesus was versatile and adapted to the healthcare system wherever he found himself. When he was in a Greco-Roman district of Bethsaida (Mk 8:23) he applied spittle in healing a blind man. The use of spittle was common in first-century Mediterranean districts, even the early Christians practised this. The healings of the blind man (Mk 8:22-26) and the deaf mute (Mk 7:31-34) would probably have qualified him as a physician in Bethsaida. Again, in (Mk 7:34) he pronounced what appeared to be an incantation, "be opened" (*Ephphatha*.) This suggests that the patient was a Gentile. It is not easy to establish whether this is how healing was done in this area, as the Gospel is silent on this.. Interestingly, Jesus did not use this technique in Palestine.

Some of the healing episodes of Jesus in Palestine drew on elements of culture and religion which resulted in the question of being asked about his commitment to the law of Moses, especially by

the Jewish leaders. (Mk 3:2). And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on a Sabbath. (²*καὶ παρετήρουν αὐτὸν εἰ τοῖς σάββασιν θεραπεύσει αὐτόν*)

Their concern for 'doing work on a Sabbath,' suggests that they were Jewish. Again, they were Pharisees who immediately left after they had witnessed that Jesus was indeed healing on a Sabbath (Mk 3:6a). Another healing which had Jewish influence is that of a paralytic. The healing took place in Caper'naum in a house, probably in Jesus' house. Among the crowd were seated scribes (Mk2:5b).

Jesus said to the paralytic, "My son your sins are forgiven" [RSV inter linear Greek] (*τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι*). This statement caused some disturbance among the scribes because in their view, only God could forgive sins.

The healings described so far illustrates Jesus' peculiar and extreme power over disease. Craffert (2008:214) describes Jesus as a shaman-type healer because shamans interpret reality from the perspective of a spiritual world view. As part of their healing methods, shamans do not consider physical causes such as germs, viruses and bacteria, but spiritual causes. Thus, when Jesus was healing Simon Peter's mother-in-law (Lk 4:38) of her fever, he treated the sickness as if it were a spirit. **39** 'And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.' [RSV Interlinear Greek] (*καὶ ἐπιστὰς ἐπάνω αὐτῆς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πυρετῷ καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν·*).

The Gospel of Mark comes from a culture in which the spiritual infuses with the ordinary; for these people causes of diseases and sicknesses were sometimes regarded as punishment from God. For example, blindness in the Gospel of John is described as sin caused by someone thus, "Rabbi, who sinned this man or the parents, that he was born blind?" (*ῥαββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ;*) The Gospel of Mark creates the impression that Jesus was an itinerant healer. (Mk 1:38) thus, 'And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also; for that is why I came out."' (*καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· ἄγωμεν ἀλλαχοῦ εἰς τὰς ἐχομένας κωμοπόλεις, ἵνα καὶ ἐκεῖ κηρύξω· εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐξῆλθον.*). In some societies, an itinerant or a distant healer was regarded as powerful.

6.3. Shembe as a healer

Circumstances of how Shembe became a healer is not included in Hadebe's account. This could be gleaned from other sources. Hadebe relates to an adult Shembe who had been doing healing for a number of years already. In fact, Hadebe's family came to meet Shembe when Hadebe was a child. He grew up close to Shembe and learned his trade from this very close relationship with his guardian and mentor after having witnessed Shembe in his healing ministry, As for healing according to Dube (1936:23) Shembe started before he was baptized and in his own words he said, "To pray for the sick people I started before I was baptized." (*Ukutandazela abantu abag'ulayo ngakuqala ngapambi kokuba ngib'apatizwe*).

6.3.1 How Shembe became a healer

There are various versions of how Shembe was anointed a healer. The first and popular version is that Shembe was anointed by Jehovah on Mount Nhlangakazi in 1913. It is said that Shembe undertook a pilgrimage to Mount Nhlangakazi and had an encounter with Jehovah. Papin & Hexham (2002:209) maintained that Shembe remained on the mountain for some time until Jehovah appeared and anointed him and told him to "Go and teach all nations the way God and o Heaven; Jehovah is making a covenant with the black people." Following this experience Shembe composed *Isihlabelo* 71 and inserted the hymn into his hymnbook (*Izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha* 1940) at the point when Jehovah anointed him (Papini & Hexham (2002:209). The hymn reflects on the everlasting love Jehovah had for Shembe which began even before Creation:

Nkosi yami ubungithanda	My Lord you loved me
Zingakaqini izintaba	Before the mountains were firm
Kwaphakade wangigcoba	Even before you loved
Ngi ukuqala kwendlela yakho	I am the first of your ways
Ngingumsebezi wakho wasendulo	I am your ancient work
Ingakaqini imimango	Before mounts and valleys became firm
Nemithombo yamanzi	And the springs of water

Ingaka mpompozi ngamandla Before they strongly gushed (Shembe (1940:66).

During this time Shembe lived in the cave at Nhlangakazi mountain which became his spiritual retreat, just as Moses went to Mount Sinai for his retreat and commission. He waited there in prayer and meditation similar to Elijah (1 Ki19:8-18), and must have lived in this cave for some time. During this time Shembe encountered spirits that enticed him to join them but he rejected their advances until the true spirit of Jehovah arrived. According to (Gunner 2002:25) Shembe became very thirsty and searched for water until he reached the homestead of the headman of the village, Mr. Khuzwayo, who lived at the foot of Nhlangakazi mountain where he was offered some water.

The second version is that Shembe was 'ordained as a healer' by the Holy Spirit. Papini & Hexham (2002:195) stated that Shembe's gift as a healer was first noticed when a white minister of the Wesleyan Church in Ntabazwe, Harrismith asked him to lead the service. As he started "singing, a powerful spirit came: people threw up their sickness and bewitchment, which amazed everyone in the church that day". After the event Shembe commented, "Indeed the Spirit of the Lord was upon me after that." Prompted by a dream, he read (Mk 16:17-18), and thereafter "[a]ll those on whom Shembe laid hands in the name of the Lord were healed. That amazed everyone in the area, as there had never been anyone healed by prayer in all that place, and they wondered that he who healed by prayer was no mission Christian: he wore a fur girdle."

Baum (2005) online argues that the way Shembe became a healer and prophet is common in Africa, for example, figures such as Simon Kimbangu (1889–1951) of the Congo, John Maranke (1912-1963) of Zimbabwe, and Alice Lenshina (1924–1978) of Zambia, all claimed prophetic revelations, which led them to create independent African churches. Ecstatic visionaries associated with African *Ṣūfī* orders, such as Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (1853–1927) of Senegal and Usuman dan Fodio (1754–1817) of Nigeria, are not considered prophets by African Muslims, but they share many characteristics with African Christian prophetic figures.

Hassan (2020:607) argues that,

> Ahmadu Bamba lives as a hero of anti-colonial resistance and also as a miracle worker who defied the French colonial government, gave destitute peasants and former slaves new perspectives, promoted the spread of Islam and the Muridiyya.

Even though Bamba was a well-known visionary and a provider of the poor yet he was criticised for his spiritual views.

For instance Hassan (2020:607) continues to argue,

> His category of work display a tendency to conflate religion and race, suggesting that the encounter between Islam and ‘‘black’’ Africans led to the degeneration and even debasement of Islam, with Sufi variants as its characteristic expression.

African prophets, unlike the Old Testament prophets (1 Samuel 19:18-24) who were trained in the school of prophets and *izinyanga*, and *izangoma* who are trained, do not have any formal training but claim to be anointed and installed directly by God. It would seem that Shembe believed in this ordination. Dube (1936:23) reported him as saying *“Ukutandazela abantu abag’ulayo ngakuqala ngapambi kokuba ngib’apatizwe”* (I started praying for the sick before I was baptized).

The third version is when Shembe had an encounter with Jehovah after being struck by lightning. The story is a cross-cultural event of African belief with the Judeo-Christian religion.

According to Dube (1936:20-21), Shembe said:

> I saw approaching out of the clouds a huge lighting at that very time came from the direction of the Pondoland something as big as a fly it flew before the lighting, it came upon me, it changed and became big; it grew wide wings, lighting went past and stroke on both sides of me.
>
> (*Ngabona kuvela emafwini isideku esikhulu, sombani ngaleso sikati kwaqhamuka ngaseMampondweni into engangempukane yandiza pambi konyazi yafika pezu kwami yapenduka yaba nkulu, yaba namapiko abanzi uMqhanganyi wadlula washaya ngapa nangapa kwami.*’).

The description of the event is African in nature, like that of a mythical lighting bird called the *inyoni yezulu* or *impundulu,* which are sent by sorcerers to strike people dead (cf. Ngubane, (1977:34). In Xhosa and Zulu mythology an evil spirit most often appears in the form of a bird, or a lightning bird. However, Shembe placed the event in a Christian setting because he stated '*Lati izwi Tandaza umtandazo wokuvuma.*' (the voice said, "Pray the prayer of confession or acceptance"). It is, therefore, a cross-cultural concept. It is similar to Paul's vision who saw a ball of a blinding light, and communicated directly with a divine voice (Act 9:3-9). In biblical poetic literature, lightning is considered to be the arrows of God, which He hurls to the earth in His anger (e.g., 2 Sam. 22:15; Ps. 144:6; Zech. 9:14). Both of these incidents described Paul and Shembe's conversions and they used these to explain this effect. According to Dube (1936:22) after this incident Jehovah came to Shembe again, warning him not to consult with traditional healers. From that day onward he did not consult *izinyanga* nor use their remedies. This incident seems to have had a great influence on his healing. In fact, it signalled a turning point in Shembe's life and he left all his wives but one (cf. Dube, 1936:10).

6.4 Illnesses treated by Shembe

All of the healing narratives that Hadebe recorded have an African cultural inclination that which Ngubane (1977:24) categorised as *ukufa kwabantu* (the illness of the African people). There are three critical stories that Hadebe recorded that are important for this study.

6.4.1 A woman with a demon in her womb

The healing took place at Nhlangwini at Tsitsa Shibase's homestead. According to Hadebe's account, Zemethe had a demon in her womb which killed her unborn babies (Gunner, 2002:175). In this tale, while Shembe was sleeping in Zemethe's house, Jehovah gave him a revelation about the demon and He instructed him to kill the demon, which he complied with, thus,

> the Lord of the Nazareth said, "you will conceive children." Truly as the Prophet foretold, Zemethe conceived children. She gave birth to three boys and one girl; it ended with four children.

(*Yathi iNkosi yamaNazaretha, "Usuzobathola-ke abantwana." Nempela njengokusho koMprofethi, wabathola uZemethe abantwana. Wathola abafana abathathu nentobazane eyodwa kwaphela abantwana abane.*).

Johannes Galilee Shembe, the son and successor of Shembe, who was also a healer, briefly explained the activity of these demons to Sundkler and his wife when they visited a healing session at Ekuphakameni, where there was a group of women who were in the church during a healing ceremony. According to Sundkler (1948:230) one woman cried and threw herself to the ground. The prophet touched her with his fingertips, first upon her shoulders, then in the region of the umbilicus, and at last allowed his long veil to rest over her womb. Johannes Galilee, who was in the process of healing barrenness, explained to Sundkler that, "She cannot get children I think she has a snake in her womb." Another woman arrived and was also crying, and J G Shembe explained, "I remove demons. I am amazed to find that in the case of women the demons take their abode in the shoulders and in the womb. And in the case of men the demons reside only in the stomach." (Sundkler, 1948:230)

According to traditional religion the existence of these demons was a reality. In this particular healing Hadebe demonstrated the power of Shembe by the fact that he received his healing instructions directly from Jehovah. He also had the ability to heal in a dream realm, meaning that he has a dualistic existence. In Hadebe's stories dreams are akin to a physical reality; in fact, in Shembe's worldview they were corporeal. There are several incidents where this is documented, for instance, in (Gunner, 2002:155) Hadebe saw Shembe in a dream and a voice explaining his pre-existence, which Hadebe recounts during the Nhlangakazi pilgrimage (Gunner, 2002:157) and Shembe reacts to this story as if it were a reality.

6.4.2 The healing of MaSikhumba

The same kind of demon that attacked Zemethe also attacked MaSikhumba, the daughter of Sikhumba Cele and the wife of Chief Nkuku Luthuli (Gunner, 2002:193). The healing took place at Nhlangwini, on a Sabbath in 1935 shortly after Shembe's death. When MaSikhumba was about to give birth, the child was stillborn. She was suffering from terrible stomach trouble which caused her to pass blood day and night. As she was the mother of the whole nation everybody was upset.

Believers from every church prayed for her with endless prayer, but death looked set to strike again. There was one church which had not yet paid MaSikhumba respect, and that was the AmaNazaretha church. It was clear that matters were hopeless as believers (*amakholwa*) from various churches had stopped praying and were distancing themselves from the illness. The diviners also stopped praying, driven away by the seriousness of the illness. The Mission Churches also came, but were defeated. Ibandla lamaNazaretha, in desperation sent four young men, Meshack Hadebe, Mdluli Mlita, Guduza Lushaba and Mbizo Hlongwane to pray for MaSikhumba.

Meshack led the prayer by saying;

> Let us pray to one God of Ekuphakameni, to reveal Himself show his power, and show if He is the Almighty God. Let us pray to him, Shembe, with a single voice, let us beseech him, let us beseech him to be the God who will raise up the woman from her distress state. We employ you kill the demon. The demon cried out, "Ha! My Father I am dying!" and MaSikhumba was healed. (Gunner, 2002:195, par.,5)

The power of Shembe, in Hadebe's story was even effective after he had died. Since Shembe, according to Hadebe, was pre-existent (Gunner, 2002:179 his death did not mean the end to his earthly activities. The constant mentioning of all healers being unable to overcome the illness repeated by Hadebe was to emphasize Shembe's superiority over all other healers; it also confirmed his complete mastery over sicknesses.

6.4.3 Chasing Evil Spirits

Shembe was also credited for chasing evil spirits. It was said that when Shembe visited the home of Lutebe Mbhele, he was approached by many people who wanted to talk to him because they had various problems. The perception among most of them was that their saviour had arrived each one wanted to discuss their problems with him. A man called Mjwaha had all eight of his huts bar one and the kitchen burn down and the family was left destitute with nowhere to go but to the hills. tMjwaha had approached all the doctors hoping they would help him against the evil spirit but they all failed. When Mjwaha heard about Shembe's arrival he reported the dreadful incident and

pleading with him for help. The man of God took pity on him and sent two of his ministers, Zachariah Nene and Willie Hlophe to assist. He gave them his scarf and said, “Take my scarf, here it is, and go to the hut that is still standing and rush in boldly with it.” But, when the two ministers arrived at the hut, they heard a rumbling sound and felt a strong wind. They rushed out in total confusion and ran away because the creature was fighting them with all its might. The creature ran after them but when it saw Shembe, it shouted after them, ‘even if you escape it is because of that one there.’ There were some boys herding cattle who heard the demon, and stuttering in fear, it said to them, ‘even if they too escape, it is because of that one-ne-ne over the-re-re-re.’ In this story Hadebe demonstrated that demon[s] feared Shembe, that he even had power over them. The fact that many exorcists had been defeated in the past and the case had become hopeless, revealed Shembe’s superiority over other healers.

In all three stories Hadebe did not refer to sorcery and witchcraft. Even though he writes in such a way that some people may conclude that sorcery was to blame, he did reveal who or what had bewitched the patients. He was careful to refer to a goblin and not the Tikoloshe. However, the manner in which the concept of a demon was used was relative to biblical demons in their taking up habitation in living creatures. However, Hadebe did is not want to admit to or reveal the nature or identity of these demons. The impression created was that they were African cultural demoniac spirits that could be sent to do harm to people.

Shaijan (2019) online defines a goblin as a small, grotesque monstrous creature that appeared in the folklore of multiple European cultures. First attested in stories from the Middle Ages, they were ascribed with confliction abilities, temperaments and appearances depending on the story and country of origin, ranging from mischievous household spirits to malicious, bestial thieves. A distinction between evil spirits and spirits sent by sorcerers such as a bird used in witchcraft (*impundulu*), spirit possession (*indiki*), lightning (*izulu*), pollution and defilement (*umkhokha*), lightning bird (*inyoni*)—is very important to such a study. The understanding was that these creatures differed from those demons or demonic spirits referred to in the bible. He also pointed out how relevant and in-depth knowledge of witchcraft practices was for cross-cultural ministry in KwaZulu-Natal.

We believe that most African Christians make a distinction between demons as portrayed in the bible and witchcraft. They believe that the demons portrayed in the bible exist, and are natural, that is, they have always been there and they will always be there; some also believe in the existence of African cultural demons.

6.5. The theme of healing in the Gospel of Mark

In both the healings and exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark, there is this notion of restoration to the original condition of a human person at the time of creation and before the fall caused by sin, because healing is connected to the forgiveness of sins. For example in the healing of a paralytic forgiveness of sins is involved (Mk 2:5); healing is symbolic of purity of body and soul. Exorcisms are preceded by a discussion between the demonic force and Jesus (e.g. 1:24-26; 5:7-9) and here those possessed are restored to their normal condition body and soul.

Van Eck & Van Aarde (1993:46) argue that,

> Understood in the terms above, the man's words to Jesus in Mk 1:40 (If you choose you can make me clean'), as well as Jesus' answer to him in Mk 1:41 ('I do choose. Be made clean!'), [it is a…addendum], A choice which, if it was made positively, would also render them part of the new household of God.

The theme of healing and exorcism in the Gospel of Mark is to make the kingdom of God whole. According to Mark the healings and exorcisms in the narrative epitomise the idea of wholeness which Jesus had come to achieve.

6.5.1 The exorcisms

In the first instance of an exorcism in the synagogue of Caper'naum (Mk 1:21-28) which is the first exorcism in Mark's narrative, Mark demonstrates that Jesus has the authority to set things right in the synagogue, an authority which was supposed to be exercised by the Pharisees and

scribes, but they could not exercise that type of authority because Jesus is the Son of God (Mk1:1). He has been given authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18).

Mark shows that Jesus is equal or even superior to the authorities of the synagogue. In the synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit who started crying out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth. have you come to destroy us? 'I know who you are, the Holy One of God'". Jesus rebuked him and took control by driving out the unclean spirit out of the man in the synagogue. Jesus restored the synagogue back to God and made it whole. This idea is similar to the restoration of the temple when the sellers took control and conducted their business there (Mk 11:17) thus "And he taught them and said to them, "Is it not written my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of robbers."

(καὶ ἐδίδασκεν καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ γέγραπται ὅτι *ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν;* ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτὸν *σπήλαιον λῃστῶν.*).

6.5.2 Restoration in Healing

6.5.2.1 Simon-Peter's mother-in-law

The restoration to the original human condition is equally important to Mark as that of the temple. Immediately after the exorcism in the synagogue (Mk 1:25) Jesus went to the Peter's house where he restored his mother-in-law to health. By Jesus going immediately after the restoration of the synagogue to Peter's house, Mark connects the healing of his mother-in-law directly to the restoration of the synagogue. Jesus at the same time restores Peter's house to proper order when healing his mother-in-law and when she immediately resumes her role in serving food to the visitors (Mk 1:31); everything is as it should be. The fact that she resumes her normal role serving the visitors shows the wholesomeness of the healing; everything returns to the state in which they should be. This is the purpose of healing in Mark's Gospel. Another element of this is the concept of the encounter with God the creator. Since healing takes a person to a state where purity. which was a natural human condition at the time of creation, is the core outcome, the encounter with God becomes an issue of healing. Some of those healed recognised and experienced this elevated state and consequently chose to be connected with Jesus by following him or becoming his disciples (e.g. Mk 10:52).

6.5.2.2 The cleansing of the leper

The leper's request for cleansing was motivated by the stigma that separated him from his family and friends, and worse, that it had separated him from the Temple. To be separated from the Temple, according to the laws of Leviticus meant to be separated from God. The Jerusalem Temple symbolised the abode of God. In the African sense, to be cleansed means to remove all those misfortunes that prevent one from living a good life. It means all the misfortunes that hinder one's progress as well as those issues that prevent good relationships with others, should be removed.

After cleaning this person of leprosy, Jesus instructed him to go to the priest and make an offering to complete the cleansing process, (Mk 1:44) *ἀλλὰ ὕπαγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου ἃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς.* (But go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for the proof to the people). Thus, Jesus restored the man back to the temple after the priest had sent him out. This is restoration towards a relationship with God again. Mark showed that Jesus had equal authority as the Pharisees and the scribes who controlled the Temple. When they sent the leper away, Jesus restored him back to the temple. This is why he instructed the leper to go and show himself to the priest and pay the offering that Moses commanded. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is the composer of the law and Moses its editor. That accounts for why Moses appeared with Elijah and Jesus at the transfiguration. Moses represented the law, while Jesus was its composer.

6.6 The theme of healing in Hadebe's story

Robert (1936:29-30) argues that healing in Isaiah Shembe's perspective was more of a conversion from African experience to Afro-Biblical encounters with Jehovah the God of the Old Testament. It was also an encounter between the two cultures or religions rather than a matter of a physical or chemical reaction in the body. The roots of this meeting and change could be traced to Shembe's encounter with Jehovah when he was struck by lightning while still a youth and a voice, which he later recognised as that of Jehovah's, admonishing him to shy away from traditional doctors and western medical practitioners.

According to Kumalo & Mujinga (2017:126) on that occasion Jehovah told him that he should not submit his wounds to the treatment of either an African traditional doctor nor a western medical practitioner. In the account of Dube (1936) which this story originally came from, it was not mentioned that when Shembe later became a healer, he should not use aids but only invoke Jehovah. Thus, Shembe used a method of a scarf as his aid in (Gunner 2002:189, par.,3) on Mqhanganyi, the girl who was bitten by a mamba. Nevertheless, avoiding all medications became a giant leap in Shembe's future healing ministry and also mapped out part of his religious culture that singled him out from other AICs and traditional African healers. It characterised his healing perspective as salvation, that is, an act of healing or being healed is actually an encounter with Jehovah.

Even though the healing power which was given to Shembe might have been made overtly on this occasion, there had been some instances when it was communicated to him that he had a gift for healing, such as one day prompted by a dream, in the case of the healing of Zemethe Tsitsa Shibase' daughter (Gunner 2002:175) which was extensively discoursed on in Chapter 4. Papini & Hexham (2002:195) assert that Isaiah Shembe became a successful healer the day a white minister of a Wesleyan church asked him to lead the service. As he started "singing, a powerful spirit came upon him; people threw up their sickness and bewitchment, which amazed everyone in the church that day," a transformation, Shembe commented, "Indeed the Spirit of the Lord was upon me after that." This then seemed to have been the occasion when Shembe was given an overt sign that his methods of healing were approved by Jehovah. Johns (2004:403) suggests that he had been praying for people to be healed even before he was baptized without any signs revealed to him. Praying for people by laying on of hands, which he did prior to this event, was not as convincing as when people started to vomit.

Papini & Hexham (2002:194) remarked that when this happened at the Wesleyan church, "he was still wearing traditional garb; it was before he wore trousers" and he was shocked to be called upon to lead the service because "he had always been the man in the back in his skin loincloth (*ibheshu*)." In his African attire, the church traditions emphasized that despite his tremendous spiritual power, their leader was still one of them.

The fact that it happened when he was not a minister and not even a confirmed member of the church created the impression that it was true that the Holy Spirit inspired him and was guiding him. It must be noted that while his position as a healer was important, he did not become a church leader because he healed, but he healed because he had become a church leader. This could be construed from the fact that in 1908, Shembe moved from Harrismith to Natal and its urban centre, Durban. His accounts emphasize his success as a healer and preacher, producing large numbers of converts whom he handed over, rather indiscriminately, to Baptist, Wesleyan, or American Mission Board congregations. Besides individual healings that Shembe conducted he had two main centres where healing was publicly conducted on a large scale at Ekuphakameni and the Nhlangakazi holy mountain shrines.

6.7 Source of Authority

6.7.1 The authority of Jesus

In the most overt and direct manner the authority of Jesus comes from God portrayed in the clouds in (Mk 9:7) thus.

> 'And a cloud overshadowed them and a voice coming out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son: listen to him,'" (Mk 9:7) [Interlinear Greek]. (*καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ*).

In this text of transfiguration, it is not clear that the command 'listen to him' was heard and understood by Peter, James and John, to whom it seemed it was directed at since it was in the 2nd person plural, present tense and these three Apostles were the only people present. This is one of the literary devices where there is a play on words between the audience and actors in the text. Mark is directing this remark to actors while in most of the narrative he is informing his readers. However, it would also seem that it could be directed at the readers who are also Mark's audience.

In (Mk 8:29) Jesus asked his disciple "**29** who do you say that I am?" (*καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπηρώτα αὐτούς· ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι;*) and Peter answered "You are the Christ" (*σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός.*).

Jesus responds by saying that Peter's answer was provided to him by the Holy Spirit which suggests that the authority of Jesus comes from the fact that he is the Christ.

In (Mk11:28) the chief priest, scribes and the Elders noticed that Jesus acted with authority thus (and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" (*καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ· ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς; ἢ τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἵνα ταῦτα ποιῇς;*) [RSV interlinear Greek]

The things the chief priest, scribes and the Elders are referring to are miraculous healings which could only be accomplished by someone endowered with divine authority.

In (Mt. 28:18) Jesus succinctly says, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. (*ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα*) Matthew's input is significant to the literary shifting of paradigms in Mark because they are not related since they come from different authors (texts) in different contexts.

In this case Jesus ordered a demon to come out of a man; the demon obeyed and the bystanders reacted thus, "And they were all amazed so that they questioned among themselves, saying "What is this? A new teaching with authority!" (**27** *καὶ ἐθαμβήθησαν ἅπαντες ὥστε συζητεῖν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς λέγοντας· τί ἐστιν τοῦτο; διδαχὴ καινὴ κατ' ἐξουσίαν·*.)

Mark revealed two important ideas to the reader which guided his readers all through the narrative. First, is that

Jesus (Mk 5:9) asks the demon's name and because the demon was overpowered, revealed it as 'Legion (meaning many).' For Mark, the admission by the demon concerning the superior power of Jesus is the main theme in telling this story which shows Jesus authority.

6.8 The authority of Shembe

Hadebe used literary devices to show that the authority of Shembe came from Jehovah. In the first instance he used dreams as a medium to show that Jehovah himself who appeared to Shembe

pronounced Shembe as his messenger (Gunner 2002:159) in the text of the paralytic. In the context of Zemethe Shibase where a demon inhabited her womb. Jehovah instructed Shembe kill it. Thus, he directly gave authority to Shembe to carry out a healing and the procedure he should follow, (Gunner 2002:175, par.,4). This proximity between Shembe and God made him superior over all other healers. While other healers prayed for days, fasting in preparation for healing services in Shembe's case, God directly told him what to do and how to do it. This relationship is the main source of authority in Hadebe's testimony.

Moreover, Hadebe described the relationship between Shembe and Jehovah as that of a son and father. Jehovah himself said that he sent Shembe which Hadebe repeated over and over in the narrative in the words 'the one sent by God,' 'the one who is sent,' and 'Jehovah's messenger.' Some of Hadebe's stories illustrating this authority usually had three important components namely; the protagonist (Shembe), his opponent[s], and the witnesses as bystanders who acted as spokespersons for Jehovah and always had the last word. In June 1924 Shembe and a group of men gathered at Nhlagwini, Tsitsa Shibase's homestead to prepare for baptism and went to dig a baptismal fount. As they were digging Shembe pointed out that there were six gridding stones under the ground which he had put there when the Father (presumably God) and themselves were creating the world. Hadebe doubted this, thinking what could Shembe know about the creation of the world. Similarly, Sidwana Shibase, an elder of the outstation also doubted the same. When the first stone was found Shembe turned to Sidwana and exclaimed, "Shibase, Shibase! Do you now believe that I am the one who has been sent?" Do you believe now that you have seen the stones?" "People who heard this exchange believed and said, "Without a doubt Isaiah Shembe is a great Prophet, greater than all those who came before him" (Gunner 2002:183, par., 12).

Hadebe's inclusion of these people here is similar to Mark's use of the bystanders in the exorcism of the demon in the synagogue of Caper'naum (Mk 1:27) 'And they were all amazed so that they questioned among themselves, saying "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirit, and they obey him'. ([27]*καὶ ἐθαμβήθησαν ἅπαντες ὥστε συζητεῖν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς λέγοντας· τί ἐστιν τοῦτο; διδαχὴ καινὴ κατ' ἐξουσίαν· καὶ τοῖς πνεύμασι τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις ἐπιτάσσει, καὶ ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ.*) Both authors are using this literary devise to support their beliefs that their protagonists were indeed superior.

According to Hadebe this is the main reason Shembe was superior to all other healers. That he was sent by God to do healings was repeated as a refrain throughout all of his testimony, that the reader should keep in mind that Shembe had been given power by God to do what he was doing. The grammatical device Hadebe used to emphasize terms such as, 'the one sent by God' 'the Prophet of God,' 'the man from heaven.' 'the one who is sent.' Another device is by providing supporting biblical texts.

In the major healing such as the healing of a wicked man (Gunner 2002:159) Shembe was preaching, kneeling down. His sermon was about how light has come to the world; the people of this world still chose darkness rather than light. He scooped up those word from the Gospel according to John 3 v 19-20. As he was preaching he stopped and said, "It is amazing, I was fast asleep a little while ago, but I was awoken startled by the sound of people's footsteps, they were carrying someone evil. I heard those footsteps and I asked Jehovah about it. I said, "Father what is that thing?" Jehovah answered me and said, "That sound you hear is the footsteps of people carrying a wicked man whom I, Jehovah, your God, hate. Those steps are coming from over there, on the other side of the Mthwalume River."

The messenger of God said, 'The footsteps of an evil man woke me. "That man," said the voice of Jehovah, "is an offence to Jehovah's sight." So, said Jehovah. "You Shembe, are my messenger. When I sent you and you were preaching across the Nkosini, that person you heard the footsteps of those carrying him was insulting you in every way possible. He did not know he was insulting me, Jehovah, of the congregations."

6.9 Types of illnesses healed

6.9.1 Types of sickness Illnesses Jesus healed according to the Gospel of Mark

In the Gospel narrative Mark mentioned only five sicknesses (blindness, deafness, skin disease, paralysis, dumbness) related to senses, but in the summaries (Mk1:32-34; Mk 3:10-12 & Mk 6:53-56) Jesus healed all types of sickness. People came from afar, being carried.

He is an itinerant healer[8], and wherever he goes; Judaea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, Transjordania, and the regions of Tyre and Sidon Mk 3:7-8). He heals people from all races. The idea that he heals without discrimination also demonstrates his divine authority. In (Mt 5:45b) it says, "he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" [NRSV].

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the second is the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law which happened on the same day as the exorcism in the synagogue). Davis (1995:70) suggests that the types of problems Jesus healed were produced by a 'conversion disorder' which was known in the first-century Mediterranean region as conversion hysteria and then conversion neurosis which was recognized in psychiatric medicine. These disorders, according to Davis, could occur as a condition of guilt and when the patient refuses to accept guilt but interiorizes it the guilt then manifests itself as self-punishment such as blindness, paralysis or dermatitis.

Davis's speculation presumes that by pronouncing forgiveness the sufferer who conceives guilt could be released from the interiorised psychological pressures as Jesus sometimes did, and thus be healed. This might explain the understanding of the contemporary psychosomatic illnesses but may not relate to the socio-cultural life of the people of the first-century Mediterranean world. To assume that this could be the case is not any different than the shifting of paradigms where one assumes that even though the socio-cultural life of the first-century Greco-Roman regions was different from the modern industrial life of the 21st century South Africa, psychosomatics causes of illness would still be the same. One assumes that it is better to accept these illnesses as portrayed by the authors

[8] According to the *Odyssey* a group of physicians existed called *demiurgic*, who were itinerant members of a medical craft. They relied on their experience and skill to treat wounds, broken bones, and diseases symptomatically by employing traditional treatment passed on by apprenticeship. In the sixth century BCE, groups of physicians began to assemble in several cities throughout the Mediterranean. Although they did not train physicians, they offered apprenticeship to aspiring doctors. Associated with one of the best known of these medical "schools," that of Cos, off the coast of Asia Minor was the physician Hippocrates (c. 460–c. 380 BCE).

6.9.2 The type of Illnesses Shembe healed

According to Hadebe (Gunner 2002:159) Shembe performed many miracles in the district of Mthwalume. This is the place he first came to settle at when he left Durban. Later he had a number of outstations around Mthwalume village.

In (Gunner 2002:191, par., 6) Hadebe writes,

> Indeed, the miracles that were performed by Shembe on behalf of his God are amazing, things that he did right in front of our very eyes. We can't possibly describe everything; it would use up all the pieces of paper in the world and the writer's minds would go crazy with the sheer number of his miracles. Here we have just picked out the main bits you can dance and still give room to others. Men! It's big, big, thing and it's a great enigma as well.

In his testimony, he selected four different illnesses, namely two sicknesses that had to do with childbearing, one exorcism, one snakebite which could be termed an accident, and also one paralysis. All these sicknesses were understood as having to do with demonic attacks. But two were specifically regarded as *isifo sasesinyeni* (the sickness of the womb), discussed earlier in the chapter. The first was of Zemethe Shibase, daughter of Tsitsa Shibase and married into the Njilo clan (Gunner 2002:175, par., 2-5) who was attacked by a demon in a form of a bird in her womb which Shembe killed on Jehovah's instructions, (Gunner 2002: 175, par. 4).

The same type of demon, attacked MaSikhumba Cele, the wife of Chief Mlomubomvu Luthuli (Gunner 2002:193), it attacked particularly her womb and her stomach. She passed blood day and night and was approaching the end of her life. This demon was killed by four young men led in prayer by Hadebe.

The attacks from demonic spirits were usually blamed on people who controlled them and sent them to their enemies. However, Hadebe avoided mentioning this aspect of the sickness. The treatment was usually regarded as casting out the demon, hence in fact was less of healing but more of contesting with the demon for possession of the patient as it controls the victim from inside the body. In this way, it could be correctly regarded as healing because as in the case of MaSikhumba it caused physical deterioration. Hadebe also reported on the terrible snakebite

suffered by Mqhanganyi discussed at length in Chapter 4. Even though this should be termed as an accident, the way Hadebe reports the incident is more of a demon attack than an accident.

6.10 Methods of healing

6.10.1 Jesus' methods of healing

The healing of Peter's mother-in-law was shown to be an instant healing. Dube (2018b) argued that Mark contrasted this healing to that of the patients who had slept for days waiting for the visitation of the gods at the temples of Asclepius and Apollo. Since Asclepius and Apollo were regarded as gods, Mark emphasised shows who the real God was in Jesus. Another story where Jesus healed instantly was that of the leper who came hurriedly to him and begged for healing (Mk1:43-44). Jesus healed him instantly and ordered him not to go into the town but he went everywhere telling the people how he had been cured. As a result of this Jesus could not enter the town but stayed outside when people heard about his whereabouts they kept coming to him.

Ferngren (2009:50) argued that in Asia, Asclepius was known for various healing shrines. Several extra-biblical writings make references regarding Jesus. The only plausible claim concerning Jesus' fame as a healer comes later in the 3rd century from Celsus, a 2nd century Greek philosopher, whose manuscript is referred to in Origen's rebuttal – namely *Contra Celsum* or 'against Celsus'. Gallagher (1982:41) quoted in Dube. (Dube, 2018b) opines that in this, Celsus had written, among others, claiming that Jesus had accumulated fame as a magician after studying in Egypt. However, even though Gallagher claims this, there are no reports in the Gospel of Mark about Jesus ever been to Egypt. It is conceivable that Mark was pitting Jesus against the Greek and Roman gods even though he did not directly mention this in his healing narratives. Pliny in Rome was also reputed for healing with spittle. In healing the blind man of Bethsaida, it could be surmised that Mark had Pliny's strategy in mind. But there is no evidence in the Gospel for these arguments. Guelich (2018:67) suggests that such narratives possibly functioned in early Christian missionary work as a marketing strategy concerning the power of Jesus. There of course, a great possibility of truth in Guelich's suggestion. Nonetheless, these are suggestions that sound realistic but are not mentioned specifically in the Gospel.

Cotter (1999:13) also views Mark's intention in some of the healing as comparing Jesus with the ancient gods. Heracles who accomplished marvellous deeds at Gadira and is believed to be second to none of all gods may be Mark's comparison with Jesus. And on the other hand, in Messina in Sicily he frees men from all diseases and those who escape the dangers of the sea attribute the benefaction equally to Poseidon and Heracles. One could list many other places sacred to the gods, and other manifestation of his power. Only gods such as Heracles, like Mark's Jesus in the healing of the leper (Mk 1:40-45), were known to suddenly appear and rescue people in their time of need. Unlike in Matthew and Luke who introduce Jesus from his genealogy, Mark's Jesus appears when he comes to be baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan (Mk k1:9-11). Unlike in (Lk 2:41-52) where Jesus is portrayed as a twelve-year-old boy, the Gospel of Mark contains no such reports. The intention is clear that Mark's Jesus is a God-man. He is not even the son of David, (Mk 12:37) thus **37** *αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ λέγει αὐτὸν κύριον, καὶ πόθεν αὐτοῦ ἐστιν υἱός;* ("David himself calls him Lord; so how is he his Son?").

6.10.2 Shembe's healing methods

In Shembe's healing, music is central which serves as part of Shembe's healing. Songs as sung at healing rituals are generally songs of worship for the members to sing when praising God. They are songs performed with expressions of joyful body movements in praise of God. Such a performance in the healing ritual is expressed by Hadebe in (Gunner 2002:191) saying,

> Shembe arrived with a group of his followers, stepping out and leaping in front of the dancing bands, dancing joyously for God. (*Wafika uShembe watheleka anamaviyo ache, esegida engqibitha ngaphambi kwamaviyo, esinela uNkulukulu ethokozile*)

Hadebe's description provides a full expression of prayer as it is danced and sung. Meditative prayer is well expressed by the phrase ' already dancing in front of his followers, dancing for God' (*esegida engqibitha ngaphambi kwamaviyo, esinela uNkulukulu*). Dance combined with words placed the emphasis on prayer. In *izihlabelelo zamaNazaretha* Shembe used features of the hymns to reflect on a number of issues that were personal to him and black people in general. Even though

it could be argued that this feature is found in all nationalities it is easily recognisable in the AICs because it is usually expressed with body movements.

Bate (1999:21-24) quoted in Modiko (2011:21) opines that the way Shembe healed was always accompanied with emotions aroused through music, the sermon and prayer. The prophetic element in Shembe can also be seen in the similarity between the prophets of old and Shembe in a similar musical performance. “After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, at the place where the Philistine garrison is; there, as you come to the town, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the shrine with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre playing in front of them; they will be in a prophetic frenzy.” (1 Sam 10:5).

אַחַר כֵּן תָּבוֹא גִּבְעַת הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם נְצִבֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וְיִהְיֶ֨ה כְבֹאֲךָ שָׁם הָעִיר וּפָגַעְתָּ֜ חֶבֶל נְבִיאִ֗ים יֹרְדִים֙ מֵהַבָּמָ֔ה (
וְלִפְנֵיהֶ֖ם נֵ֣בֶל וְתֹ֑ף וְחָלִ֥יל וְכִנּ֛וֹר וְהֵ֥מָּה מִתְנַבְּאִֽים׃)

The reverence to heaven and Old Testament visions can be detected in the AIC’s singing with expressions such Alleluia! Alleluia Amen! Amen!

Bate (1999:18-21) continues to say that,

> In the African Independent churches there is more variety in the way healing services are organised but a similar attempt at emotion arousal always occurs before the healing. This is achieved by means of music, dance and prayer but there is more participation by all present than in the charismatic-Pentecostal type. This is clearly a reflection of the communal and participatory nature of African traditional culture and its ritual forms.

6.11 Conclusion

This investigation has shown that Jesus and Shembe were indeed superior to their contemporary healers because both were presented as Sons of God. Their proximity to God gave them their authority to heal and the bystanders to witness this authority. From this perspective their healings are unparalleled. Their methods of healing differed but the endings were similar. Both Mark and Hadebe used specific techniques to sometimes achieve specific purposes and both related their

healing to that to the Old Testament Prophets even though Hadebe included Jesus. In the introductory section, the grounds for comparison were laid, by defining the procedure, explaining the concepts healing, illness, the area and the era when comparison could be considered and the protagonists who were the contestants.

Mark's Jesus was a healer. There are several texts in which he healed different kinds of illnesses and cast out demons or unclean spirits. the summary-type statements (e.g. Mk 6:55-56) in Mark were used by the narrator to illustrate the power and authority with which Jesus taught. The author used different methods to indicate that Jesus was an outstanding healer, one of the common ones was referring to the reaction of the onlookers. For example, "and they were all amazed" (*και εθαμβηθησαν παντες*) (Mk 1:27), "They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (*καὶ ἐξεπλήσσοντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ· ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων, καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς*). (Mk 1:22). He used the numbers of the onlookers thus, "the whole city gathered at the door to see his healings and exorcisms (Mk 1:32-24), there were so many that they crushed Jesus (Mk 3:9), and they laid the sick before Him so they could be healed (Mk 6:53-56). But nowhere in the Gospel does Mark say anything like that about any other healer. The case of the haemorrhaging woman makes this idea abundantly clear. Jesus was more of a Shaman type healer (cf. Craffert (2008:214). In the Bible he was more of an Old Testament prophetic healer who called to God the Father to heal sicknesses as described in Psalm 103:3. The healings described so far illustrates Jesus' extreme power over disease.

Hadebe likened Shembe's situation to those of the extraordinary biblical prophets like Jesus, Elijah and Elisha. It is not only the situations that are similar but the power of Shembe is equated to these biblical healers / prophets. For instance, in (Gunner 2002:161, par.8.) a wicked paralytic brought by some people on a stretcher to Shembe who heals him through mere words, by saying "your sins are forgiven," Hadebe is also saying that Shembe's situation is like that of Jesus who also healed a paralytic in a similar manner (Mk 2:5b). Like these men of God Elijah and Elisha, God (Jehovah) is close to h Shembe, he calls him 'his father' and Jehova calls Shembe his messenger. Hadebe used OT scriptures to draw parallels with the acts of Shembe and to intimate that the life of Shembe was portrayed in the bible. He used the bible healing contexts to reflect that of Shembe in his healings.

Jehovah listens to Shembe as God listens to Jesus. In the case of the healing of the paralytic by both Jesus and Shembe, the pronouncement of the forgiveness of sins is publicly declared. Hadebe persuades the reader to look at (Mt 9:2) and here Jesus forgives a paralytic his sins even as Shembe forgives a paralytic his sins after he heals him. Hadebe maintains the two-healing context are similar. In the Gospel of Mark healing restores a person to her regular life like in the case of Peter's mother-in-law who immediately after she was healed from fever resumed her role as the woman in the house by serving Jesus, John and James with food. In both Jesus and Shembe healing becomes salvation. The word "salvation" refers to the act of saving someone from risk, harm, or destruction. Mark demonstrates that Jesus has the authority to put things right in Caper'naum in the synagogue with authority over a man with unclean spirit which authority was supposed to be exercised by the Pharisees and scribes. The concept of healing for a prophet like Shembe requires attention for it has some traits that are taken from both OT and ATR. For instance, Africans believe that prophets are entrusted with the gift of healing the sick.

Healing from Hadebe's perspective was more of a conversion from African experience to Afro-Biblical encounters with Jehovah the God of the Old Testament and an encounter between the two cultures or religions. In both Mark's Gospel and Hadebe's testimony the source of authority for Jesus and Shembe comes from the Supreme Being, that is, God and Jehovah respectively. The types of illnesses both treat are culturally constructed; Jesus heals five sicknesses that Mark has recorded and all have in common the fact that these are somatisation disorders. All the illnesses except the girl bitten by a snake that Shembe heals, fall under the category of illnesses of black people (*isifo sabantu*). The healing method of Jesus is 'touch' and 'saliva" which were common to all healer in the first-century Mediterranean regions. Songs as sung at healing rituals are generally songs of worship for the members to sing when praising God and Shembe's healing method was through the use of song, dance and prayer as music was key to the purpose of healing.

CHAPTER 7

THE USE OF SACRED SCRIPTURES BY MARK AND HADEBE

7.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to demonstrate the use of cross-cultural interpretations in the Gospel of Mark and the narrative of Hadebe. Both authors use sacred scriptures to explain to their followers particularly converts—who may not understand the language and the culture—about the religion they have been drawn to. In addition, both religions are fairly new and are still being established in their respective localities; thus, each country, nationality and denomination would prefer its own biblical version.

The writing of the NT might appear to have been an uncomplicated task when one is not acquainted with the process involved in the interpretation of earlier writings by various scholars, which may explain the many biblical versions in existence today. Among these, the more accurate versions were usually those with contents which were transmitted orally. The interpretation of a work is complicated even more when the work involves a cross-cultural interpretation which bring with it not only the issue of the words and their equivalents in the language of origin, but other issues such as culture and socio-historical aspects. For these reasons and for a long time interpreting biblical scripts have been regarded as a communication activity which merely involved the conversion and transference of languages and their linguistic meaning of the original utterances. However, practitioners and researchers began to realise that interpreting content and context was a bilingual as well as a bicultural communication activity bridging the cultural gap for those who did share the same language or cultural background (Angeleli (2004:intro).

Interpreters who work in community settings with participants from different cultural backgrounds may be met with difficulties in conveying the source message into the target message accurately due to cross-cultural differences. Such cross-cultural differences can range from pragma-linguistic differences at discourse level to socio-pragmatic differences which go beyond the utterances. Pragmatically, a person whose work is to interpret the biblical message either at the level of writing

a new bible version or at the level of preaching, the first problem that such a person encounters is not so much about the language but the accuracy of the message.

The few studies that have examined cross-cultural differences in community interpretations clearly show that there is no consistency in the way interpreters approach possible cross-cultural misunderstandings. During the discussions pertaining to cross cultural interpretation in Toronto in 1995 much of the time was dedicated to open discussions and at times heated debates about whether the role of the community interpreter included cultural mediation. (Roberts, Dufour, & Steyn, 1997) In such meetings, even though the topic for discussion is clear in the minds of the participants, there are problems where the meeting is carried out in multiple languages. Often the meanings of words do not correspond when interpreted or translated into that of the other languages. Words can also be used purposefully to confuse the issue under discussion and lead to deviances in meaning

It is for this reason that community interpreting has sometimes been labelled 'cultural interpreting' (e.g. in Canada) or 'cultural mediation' (e.g. in Spain and Italy) to denote the need for interpreters to perform cultural mediation for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change. There are opposing views regarding this stance; according to Morris, on the one hand interpreters are seen as 'mechanical conduits' who are not involved in anything other than 'switching' words from one language to the other (Morris (2008), on the views of some members of the judiciary about court interpreters). On the other hand, according to Kaufer & Putsch (1997) quoted in Hale (2014:introduction), interpreters are seen as advocates and gatekeepers who are free to censor the content of the interlocutors' turns to fit within what they consider appropriate or relevant (Kaufer & Putsch (1997). Similar arguments may be made at the level of writing a new biblical version or even at the level of simple preaching where a person believes that a certain explanation would sound much better to a certain community which they believe will provide a clearer understanding of the socio-cultural circumstances.

The first view is almost impractical because language and culture are intertwined and accurate interpreting cannot be achieved at the basic word level. This is due to the fact that words in interaction only take on meaning according to the context, situation, participants and culture. The

accuracy of translation is enshrined in what Hale labelled 'pragmatic equivalence'[9] in translation studies (Hale (2007), for a discussion on pragmatic accuracy.

Some studies undertaken on cross cultural difference in communities have shown that there is 'no consistence in the way interpreters approach cross potential cross cultural misunderstanding,' (Hale (2007:323). In all these debates the accurate meanings of the terms 'culture' or 'cross cultural' remain unclear. Felberg & Skaaden (2012) quoted in Hale (2014:322) warns against using cross-cultural difference as a tool to explain any kind of misunderstanding. Sometimes these cross-cultural differences are blamed for the communication problems between speakers of different languages, including those caused by poor communication skills. the interpreter's incompetence or unethical behaviour, the service providers' inability to use the services of an interpreter, or their misunderstanding of the interpreter's role. However, the problem may rest elsewhere unbeknown to the speakers.

Scollon and Scollon (2001) highlight the misconception that those who speak the same language shares the same 'culture'. They argue that people have access to many cultures at any given time, which means that cross-cultural differences can occur where people speak the same language and who live in the same country. Hofstede (1980:38) agrees that there are subcultures within cultures which are 'shared only by others of the same educational level, socio-economic status, occupation, sex or age group'.

Mark and Hadebe are new to the religio-cultural situation they inhabit. Mark had been following Hebrew scriptures as it was used by the scribes and Pharisees in the Temple of Jerusalem and the synagogues. Now as a follower of Jesus, and away from the Temple of Jerusalem and the synagogues, he finds himself having to teach the Scriptures to the followers of Jesus in the new cultural situation of Rome and Alexandria. Hadebe is following Shembe who has been a follower of the Baptist church of William Leshega and the Methodist church in Harrismith, where Sesotho had been the dominant language of communication and life was different in the Free State farming community. He left Harrismith and was domiciled in Nhlanzini, where the dominant language was

[9] Equivalence in translation is the core concept of western translation theory research, which was first proposed by R. Jakobson in 1951 in the paper On Linguistic Aspects in Translation. He believes that equivalence with differences is the most basic problem in language, and it is also a basic problem that linguistics care about. "Equivalence with difference" reveals the direct asymmetry of language, which is the true core of translation.

isiZulu with his followers. He was faced with the situation of having to use the bible in a way that it suited the cultural situation of his followers in Nhlanzini, thus creating problems of cross interpretation. Under such circumstances it was possible for a preacher to proclaim their own *evangelium*.

However, both Mark and Hadebe did not arrive empty handed into their new cultural situation; they came with some remnants of the Scriptures they have been following where they came from and they formed hybrid teachings for their followers who were different from those they in the churches they come from. Consequently, it can be seen how Mark appropriated the Hebrew Scriptures to suit the context and similarly, Hadebe appropriated the New and the Old Testament for his purposes.

The introduction illustrated the problems encountered in the use of Scriptures when communicating with people who do not share the same language the bible is written in or where the interpreter is commissioned to write a new biblical version to suite the target audience of the time.

7.1.2 Mark's appropriation of the Hebrew Scriptures

Mark describes the situation of the followers of Jesus, part of which is his own community, as 'new wine into old wineskins' (*οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς·*) (Mk 2:22b). Metaphorically he thinks of it as new life distinct from Judaism. Zion (2018:2) argues that "the New Testament comprises two religions, one a venerable Messianic Judaism, part of Jewish life in Palestine during the late Second Temple period (516 BCE-70 CE) and the other a nascent Christianity". But he still uses references from Hebrew scriptures to teach his audience who are Gentiles. Jeremias (1962:117-118) quoted in Brown *et al* (1968c:27) explains the metaphor, "*New wine into old wineskins* as, "Wine may be a symbol of a new era (Gn 9:20; 49:11-12; Nm 13:23-24). Jesus refers to himself as the one who dispenses the new wine at the Messianic banquet".

Mark, in the prelude of Jesus as a God-man, appropriates (Is 40:3) the calling of King Cyrus (600–530 BC) who ruled Persia (Iran) from 560–530 BC and was the wealthiest and most powerful leader at the time. Isaiah's prophecy about King Cyrus of Persia would one day make it possible for the Jews to return home from their exile in Babylon according to the Book of Ezra. Isaiah

predicted this great event, even mentioning Cyrus by name (Isa. 44:28; 45:1), some 150 years before Cyrus's time.

Mark appropriates (Is 40:3) and uses this text through John the Baptist for the coming of Jesus in the prelude (Mk 1:3)' His sword makes dust of them, and his bow scatters them like straw He pursues them and advances unhindered, his feet scarcely touching the road'. (*φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους* αὐτοῦ,) Thus, Mark recalls the exploits of the Persian king Cyrus and uses these religiously for the kingdom of God. For Mark, the use of the conquering power of Cyrus could be likened to the coming of the Kingdom of God. The effect that this interpretation of the Persian history had on the listeners of Mark fills them with confidence in the power of the Kingdom of God. The proclamation and inauguration of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15) is where people are healed of diseases, demons are cast out, and miracles happen all the time. The Kingdom of God was embodied in Jesus himself, displayed in his incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection.

7.2 The Prologue in the Gospel of Mark

The prologue to the Gospel of Mark (Mk 1:2-3) 'As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' " (Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ·*ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδόν* σου· *φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους* αὐτοῦ,). The text commences with a reference to the Book of Isaiah (Is 40: 3) 'A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'

(קוֹל קוֹרֵא בַּמִּדְבָּר פַּנּוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה יַשְּׁרוּ בָעֲרָבָה מְסִלָּה לֵאלֹהֵינוּ :)

However, (Mk 1:4) is actually a historical interpretation because Mark is referring directly to John the Baptist's ministry who appeared in the wilderness and baptised HIS congregants in the River Jordan. However, Isaiah's prophesy was not about John the Baptist as he could not have known him since he was not yet born. John the Baptist is introduced by Mark in his appropriation of the

text. One also may question who Isaiah was referring to as he does not make this clear. Mark only mentions (Is 40:3), but a close examination of the prologue reveals brief references to the words Mark uses which are also contained in (Ex 23:20) and (Mal 3:1) even though Mark does not overtly mention them.

7.2.1 Verse 2: The Lord and his Messenger (Exodus 23:20; Malachi 3:1)

In this text Mark appropriates the term 'messenger' in the two OT texts (Ex 23:20) and (Mal 3:1). The two texts present the messenger in different circumstances from which Mark will use the term messenger. In the two texts the use of the term' messenger' is abstract. However, Mark appropriates idea and uses it for the historic figure John the Baptist who becomes a forerunner for Jesus. In this verse Mark alludes to (Exodus 23:20) thus, "I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared."

(הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָךְ לְפָנֶיךָ לִשְׁמָרְךָ בַּדָּרֶךְ וְלַהֲבִיאֲךָ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הֲכִנֹתִי:)

In (Is 40:3) the messenger is an Angel. Mark uses the idea of the messenger in his Gospel but here his messenger is John the Baptist. According to Brown *et al* (1968c:24) "John's ministry has a place in the Gospel only as the divinely ordained prelude to God's saving act in the coming of Jesus the Messiah". Mark presents this prelude as the fulfilment of OT prophecy.

In the text, "*As it is written in Isaiah*; *the prophet*," (*Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐᾳ τῷ προφήτῃ·*), (Mk 1:2), this citation (Is 40:3) has been adapted by Mark from (Mal. 3:1) and (Ex 23:20) (cf. Brown *et al* (1968c:24). Brown *et al* (1968c:24) argues the text, "Look I am sending my Messenger," (*ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου*) (Mk 1:2b), is identified as Elijah in (Mal. 3:1). Mark applies the text to John the Baptist based on the supposition that Jesus is now the *Kyrios* (the Lord) and John the Baptist is his messenger (the forerunner).

The context of (Mal 3:1) reads as follows,

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the ways before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

(הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָכִי וּפִנָּה־דֶרֶךְ לְפָנָי וּפִתְאֹם יָבוֹא אֶל־הֵיכָלוֹ הָאָדוֹן ו אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים וּמַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם
(חֲפֵצִים הִנֵּה־בָּא אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת׃

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The text in (Mal 3:1) refers to the coming of two messengers. The first messenger arrives at the Temple. His arrival is preceded by another messenger sent by God. The difficulty here is that the Hebrew term(my messenger (מַלְאָכִי) is the same as the meaning of Malachi's name in (Mal 1:1). Yet Malachi is predicting a future individual. The subject of the ending of Yahweh's speech, "Look, he is coming," is thus ambiguous.

The most important observation in this text is that (Mal 3:1) makes no mention of a messianic figure (Watts,(2007:119). Consequently, the Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) have made four important changes to accommodate this requirement. (**1**) (Mal 3:1) is quoted in (Mt 11:10), (Mk 1:2–3), and (Lk 7:27), with changes that identify Jesus with 'the Lord,' (אֲדֹנִי) and, therefore, with the Yahweh of Armies, whose temple he would enter and whose priests he would cleanse (cf. Mal 3:2–4) (see Beale (2011:392). (**2**) Each NT quotation of (Mal 3:1) changes Malachi's "I am sending my messenger" to "I am sending my messenger ahead of you" (probably alluding to Exod 23:20) Beale (2011:392). (**3**) And also changes "clear the way ahead of *me*" to "prepare your way ahead of you." Davies & Allison (1991:250) quoted in Clendenen (2019:87) conclude that "So Jesus has replaced Yahweh."

Although a few scholars consider the phrases "my messenger," "the Lord," and "the messenger of the covenant" as referring to the same person, Jacobs (2017:275) most identify two or three agents Gibson (2016:275). There is also the difficulty of who the 'Lord' is (הָאָדוֹן) in the text Clendenen (2019:85) argues that it is referring to Yahweh. Miller (2007:12-13) quoted in Clendenen (2019:85) is of the view that Jesus and the Gospel writers in (Mt 11:10–14, Mt 17:10—13), (Lk 1:17 Lk 7:27), as well as Paul in (Ac 13:23–25), interpret both passages (Mal 3:1, Mal 4:5) as fulfilled by John the Baptist, and the one whose way he would prepare for, as Jesus the Messiah. Gibson (2016:174-6) observes that verbal and semantic parallels between (Mal 3:1) and (Is 40:3) suggest an identification between "my messenger" and the "voice" that cries out, "Clear the way

of Yahweh in the wilderness." Another difficulty is that (Mal 4:5) further identifies this special messenger as 'Elijah the prophet' The New Testament change shows how this prediction is fulfilled. (**4**) The last change made by (Mk 1:2-4) and (Lk 1:17 and Lk 7:27) is by declaring that John the Baptist is this messenger mentioned in (Is 40:3-5). In appropriating (Mal 3:1) there are four segments that Mark's prologue is divided into. Below is an exposition of what Mark has done with the three Old Testament texts (Exodus 23:30, Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3). The words in the three text (Mark, Exodus and Malachi) is the same with a small addition of "your face" in Mark, "angel" in Exodus. Exodus refers to "an angel" whereas Malachi and Mark refer to a have "messenger."

7.2.1.1 First segment

Mark 1:2-3 Behold I send my **messenger** before your face
Exodus 23:20; Behold, I send an angel before you
Malachi 3:1 Behold I send my **messenger**

7.2.2.2 Second segment

Mark: Who will prepare your **way**
Exodus: to guard you on the **way** and bring you to the place that I have prepared

Malachi: and he will prepare the **way** before you.

7.2.2.3 Third segment

Mark: the **voice** of the one crying in the wilderness "Prepare the **way of the Lord**
Isaiah 40:3 A **voice** cries: "in the wilderness prepare the **way of the Lord**

7.2.2.4 Fourth segment

Mark: make his paths **straight**
Isaiah: make **straight** in the desert a highway for our God

Exodus and Malachi do not appear in the last segment. Although there are many small variations, the major fact is that Mark has added and avoided from his sources – he has only added Isaiah at the end of the prologue and yet he is the only one who appears in the entire prologue by name.

Exodus and Malachi, who play pivotal roles at the beginning of the prologue, do not appear by name. In other words, Mark has appropriated from the Old Testament three texts for the building up of his prologue, but has only shown one, while the other two are alluded to. The reason for this action is not clear; Exodus is the oldest text and should be popular and Malachi is the youngest and also the closest to Mark. One would have expected it would be the one that would appear by name. In terms of content, some authors believe that Isaiah is the closest to the New Testament, particularly Isaiah 53.

The oldest version should take precedence. However, the oldest version refers to the 'angel' which is foreign to the texts and the term 'voice' which interests Mark. The angel is not the object of this enquiry but the similarity in the words. In conclusion, Mark has appropriated the terms "messenger" and "voice" spoken about in (Ex 23:20) and (Mal. 3:1) to describe John the Baptist whom he has adopted for use in the prologue. The term "Voice" is popular in the Gospel of Mark and in some instances is alluded to God when it appears from the clouds (cf. Mk 1:11; Mk 9:7b).

7.3. The broader context of the idea of the messenger

Mark has only appropriated the terms 'messenger' and 'voice' and these originate in Malachi and Exodus. These terms are very important to Mark because they describe John the Baptist, the only actor in the prologue. In post-exilic Israel, God informs his people that he was going to send an angel which can also be translated as a *messenger*, to lead Israel through the wilderness and into the Promised Land. Mark alludes to this verse of *Yahweh sending his messenger* to prepare a way for Israel, who is called God's *son* (Ex, 4:22-23; Hos 11:1). Mark refers to this Son of God at the beginning of his Gospel and who disappears into the desert. Consequently, Mark includes echoes of Exodus in his first chapter.

Matson (2013:1) observed that,

> Traces of certain passages in the Exodus appear in certain points in the Gospels accounts. that is, as echoes and allusions, rather than explicit citations. Such echoes, though, are a powerful means of evoking previous texts often in very creative ways. As a result, we can affirm that the Exodus

narratives remained central for the Jesus community, but in ways which emphasize Jesus' unique relationship with God.

God ensures that Israel's exodus will be successful, and he will guard them and conquer any wicked nation standing in their way. Various speculations have been made regarding the identity of the angel whose place Mark substituted for John the Baptist. Hopler (2019) online speculates that it was God Himself showing up in the form of an angel. Two Jewish sacred texts, the Zohar and the Talmud, identify the mysterious angel as the powerful Archangel Metatron in their commentaries, because of Metatron's association with God's name and his task as a celestial scribe who was appointed to keep records in the Book of Life about the choices made in heaven and on earth.

Hopler (2019) online citing from Miller (2009) online opines that the key to discovering the angel's identity was his name: "The angel is not identified. ... the one thing we are sure of is that in (Ex 23:21), God says 'my name is in him.' ... He is represented by his proper name, Yahweh." Hopler (2019) online also citing Myers (1996) in his book, "A Study of Angels" opines that, "it was the Lord himself who appeared to him [Moses]." Myers notes that the angel speaks as God, such as when the angel declares in Exodus 33:19 that "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence." He writes: "The identity of the presence that went with the children of Israel" is "both the Lord and the Angel of God."

(וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי אַעֲבִיר כָּל־טוּבִי עַל־פָּנֶיךָ וְקָרָאתִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ וְחַנֹּתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אָחֹן וְרִחַמְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם:)

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Mark appropriated from Malachi the image of John the Baptist because Malachi was one of the last prophets who prophesied after Israel returned from their Babylonian exile. He addressed what seemed to be the 'failure' of Israel's return from exile. Therefore, with reference to the time frame aspect Malachi was very close to John the Baptist.

Isaiah spoke of a new exodus, Ezekiel saw a glorious new temple, Haggai promised prosperity, and Zechariah promised the restoration of Israel. However, Mark only recognises Isaiah for his narrative. It is perhaps that Malachi said God would return and put the world to right and rescue/restore his people. Which pronouncement is close to the teachings of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. According to (Mal 3:4-5) Yahweh would send a messenger (a new Elijah figure) to prepare the way *for the Lord himself* to suddenly come and visit his people, to judge and purify

them. Malachi's prophecy was that God was sending a messenger because of the people's faithless behaviours. In this passage, Malachi himself alludes to the Exodus passage, but gives the passage a twist: he says it is not the nations who will be judged to prepare the way for but the Lord will send his messenger and they will purify the sons of Levi. The sons of Levi are the priests. He will refine them until they present a pleasing offering to the Lord.

7.4. Verse 3: The Herald in the Wilderness (Isaiah 40:3)

This section illustrates how Mark appropriates the first part of Deutero-Isaiah (and the prophecy of prophet Malachi) which declares that the liberation of Israel from their exile in Babylon marks a new beginning in which Yahweh will establish a new relationship with Israel. Yahweh's new relationship with Israel is a renewal of Israel's mission, a mission that involves the redemption of the nations. Mark uses these sentiments to declare the coming of the Messiah whom he calls 'Son of God.' Mark's herald of this message is John the Baptist.

In (Mk 3) it is declared, "The voice of the one crying in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his ways," (*φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ·ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους* αὐτοῦ,). This verse comes from the opening verses of (Is 40-55) thus,

(.קוֹל קוֹרֵא בַּמִּדְבָּר פַּנּוּ דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה יַשְּׁרוּ בָעֲרָבָה מְסִלָּה לֵאלֹהֵינוּ:)

Here Isaiah prophesies about the restoration, deliverance, and redemption of Israel from their Babylonian exile. There will be a messenger who, like Malachi's messenger, prepares the way for the Lord. And the place he heralds from is the wilderness, the place of new beginnings for God's people. However, in this part (Is 40:3-5) Isaiah was writing a message to the future exiles in Babylon, assuring them of God's power to restore the Israelites (Is 40:1-2). He is referring to 'a voice of one calling in the desert' commanding the construction of a 'superhighway' that was to run through the desert between Babylon and Jerusalem. Consequently, Mark has appropriated the figure of John the Baptist directly from these sources, that is, Exodus, Malachi and Isaiah which in these texts does not function as a human character but a mystical character, as some say it is God himself and others insist it is an angel like Metatron.

7.5 On the cleansing of the leper

Leprosy was heavily stigmatised in the ancient Israel community. People with leprosy were removed from the community and were prohibited from having any contact with other people. Mark's report on Jesus touching and healing someone with leprosy emphasised the revolutionary nature of this healing. To understand the difficulty of healing leprosy, one must look back in history to see what this entailed. The Hebrew bible reports two occasions where lepers were healed: Miriam's seven-day leprosy (Nm 12) and Elisha's healing of Naaman (2 Ki 5:1–15). The second story is of particular interest, as it describes the ability to heal a leper was the sign of a prophet (2 Ki 5:8). According to the rabbis, the difficulty in healing leprosy was akin to raising a person from the dead (cf. Witherington (2006:178). The words of Aaron pleading for his sister supports this sentiment, 'Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb.' [RSV]

(אַל־נָ֣א תְהִ֗י כַּמֵּת֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּצֵאתוֹ֙ מֵרֶ֣חֶם אִמּ֔וֹ וְיֵאָכֵ֖ל חֲצִ֣י בְשָׂרֹֽו׃ .)

The words of Aaron show the extent to which leprosy was abhorred and feared. Another OT text where leprosy was likened with death is in the case (Job 18:13) thus, 'By disease his skin is consumed the first-born of death consumes his limbs,' [RSV].

(אכַל בַּדֵּ֣י עֹורֹ֑ו יֹאכַ֥ל בַּדָּ֝֗יו בְּכֹ֣ור מָֽוֶת׃)

Chilton (2000:877) argues that the Pharisees refused any attempt in healing leprosy because of the elaborate laws in the *Mishnah.* Biblical laws on purity have been extended in rabbinic *halakhah*, as at least one third of the *Mishnah* deals with ritual purity (Hayes (2007:750). The importance of purity regulations is particularly evident in the writings of the Qumran community, with their strong emphasis on purity in their Purity Texts (4Q274–279; Q281–284; Q512–514). Socially, leprosy was associated with spiritual impurity and a significant social stigma was attached to it (see Ellingworth (1992:463). It was for this reason that leprosy was dreaded in the ancient world. It was regarded as a terrible and defiling disease, as those who were infected were physically and ceremonially regarded as unclean (see Talbert (2010:112). People diagnosed with leprosy were excluded from the community (cf Lv 13:45–46, Nm 5:2–3) as once they were pronounced lepers

they were asked to leave the community shouting :יִקְרָא טָמֵא (unclean, unclean) to warn people that they should not come close to them (Lv 13:45). The LXX version is: 'He must shout: "unclean!"' ('*ἀκάθαρτος κεκλήσεται*'). "If a person has a skin disease that spreads, he must warn other people by shouting, 'Unclean, unclean!" [NRSV].

(וְהַצָּרוּעַ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע בְּגָדָיו יִהְיוּ פְרֻמִים וְרֹאשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה פָּרוּעַ וְעַל־שָׂפָם יַעְטֶה וְטָמֵא ו טָמֵא יִקְרָא:)

The unfortunate part was that lepers were not protected by the law nor cared for. Roth (1994:108-109) points out that no law existed to take care of lepers. Their plight was worse religiously because they were regarded as impure and unholy as (Lv. 11:44) commanded people to be holy, thus, you shall be holy because I am holy.'

(וְהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים כִּי קָדֹוֹשׁ אֲנִי:)

Thus, in the Hebrew bible purity is linked with righteousness (cf. Chilton (2000:877)]. Leprosy was usually viewed as God's punishment for sinful behaviour (cf. 2 Ki 5; 2 Chr 26:16-21; Nm 12:10-15); it was associated with death and people perceived it as a living death (see Davies & Allison (2004b:11).

It was in this milieu that the healing activities of Jesus had the effect of transforming the Jewish religion. Neyrey (1986) online opines that in Mark's gospel, a description of Jesus was given ,who seems to eschew all boundaries set by the culture of his day. While Mark presents Jesus challenging the Jewish purity system, he also describes him as reforming systems in favour of other core values; (the law of love of neighbour). Jesus appears to be away from his home ground most of the time (gentile country), dealing with people he should avoid (lepers, the blind, menstruating women, corpses), crossing boundaries (healing on the Sabbath) and not observing customs regarding places such as (gentile country, cemetery, temple) and times (the Sabbath). He made sinners 'holy' and the sick 'whole.' Because of the lack of bodily wholeness, lepers, the blind, the lame and eunuchs were regarded as not whole or unholy Israelites (see Lv. 21:16-20). The image of Jewish society, according Douglas (1966:114), "has form; it has external boundaries, margins, internal structure". This describes people, places, times and food, which Douglas calls maps (Malina (1981:131-137). These boundaries limit people according to the imposed purity rules.

As the rabbis regarded the cure of a leper on a par with raising a person from the dead, the supernatural healing of lepers was expected as one of the signs of the messianic age (cf Hagner (1993:198). Consequently, the story of the healing of the leper presented Jesus as the messianic prophet (cf. Davies & Allison (2004b:11). Since Jesus mostly healed people by speaking to them, (cf. Osborne (2010:285, 351), by touching the leper Jesus crossed the purity laws and rendered himself polluted.

In the NT it is Jesus who does the healing of leprosy. Jesus does this healing in (Mk 1:40-45) where he says to 'the cleansed leper' "Go and show yourself to the priest and make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses for a proof to the people." (*ἀλλὰ ὕπαγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου ἃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς*) These steps that Jesus is following come directly from (Lv 14:2). 'This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought unto the priest.'

(..בזאת תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת הַמְּצֹרָע, בְּיוֹם בזאת תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת הַמְּצֹרָע, בְּיוֹם טָהֳרָתוֹ: וְהוּבָא, אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן)

Mark is describing the revolutionary activities of Jesus; how he encountered leprosy. In order to understand fully how Jesus revolutionized the encounter with leprosy, one has to understand what ill effects leprosy had on the people (Jews) of the time; socially, religiously and culturally. The disease affects one's skin and nerves with severe destructive effects. The physical impairments caused by the illness and the devastating effects on the skin and nerves caused prejudice, fear and segregation in all societies since ancient times: patients with Hansen's disease were socially isolated and forced to live in poverty and in isolation

7.6 On leading people astray (Is 66:24) and (Lv 2:13)

One of the strongly- worded warnings of Mark in his narrative is leading converts astray (Mk 9:42-50). He had made this warning before in (Mk 8:14-21) about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. Where he says "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." (*βλέπετε ἀπὸ τῆς ζύμης τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ τῆς ζύμης Ἡρῴδου*.) Jesus instructed his disciples to be careful of the teachings of the Pharisees and of Herod as they are false. Jesus taught about the

kingdom of God which was to bring the world under the control of God. Consequently, he viewed the wrongful teachings of the Pharisees and the political influence of Herod as challenging the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the plan God had for the world since He created it.

However, the next time Jesus warned against it, it was about making obstacles which were put in front of the 'little ones'" aimed at bringing them down. The 'little ones' were the newly baptised catechumens who were still not sure of the conditions of being a committed follower of Jesus Christ. Again, Jesus protects the teaching of the kingdom of God, this time to show Jesus' earnestness, Mark makes a cross-interpretation from quotations taken from the Old Testament (Is 66:24) and (Lv 2:13). Isaiah 66: 24concludes the Book of Isaiah and (Is 66:24) reads, "And they shall go out and look at the dead bodies of the people who have rebelled against me, for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." [NRSV].

(**כד**וְיָצְאוּ וְרָאוּ--בְּפִגְרֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים, הַפֹּשְׁעִים בִּי: כִּי תוֹלַעְתָּם לֹא תָמוּת, וְאִשָּׁם לֹא תִכְבֶּה, וְהָיוּ דֵרָאוֹן, לְכָל-בָּשָׂר.)

The text speaks about the punishment of those who are rebellious against the will of God. In the context of the community of Mark these people are obviously those who are working against the spreading of the kingdom of God. These could be those who were persecuting the Christian movement such as Nero (64 AD). This could also be during the time Mark was collecting his material for the Gospel in Rome. (Lv 2:13) 'You shall season all your cereal with salt; you shall not let the salt of the covenant with God be lacking from your cereal offering; with all your offering you shall offer salt.' [NRSV]

(.וְכָל־קָרְבָּן מִנְחָתְךָ בַּמֶּלַח תִּמְלָחּ וְלֹא תַשְׁבִּית מֶלַח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל מִנְחָתֶךָ עַל כָּל־קָרְבָּנְךָ תַּקְרִיב מֶלַח: ס)

Mark is alluding to the reading thus: salt is a symbol in various contexts, it is used metaphorically to signify permanence, loyalty, durability, fidelity, usefulness, value, and purification. Mark, in the case of the persecution of the Christians during the rule of Nero (64 AD) in Rome, needed to enthuse his community to stability. Besides in (Mk 9:50) Jesus' warning against leading astray reads, 'salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another' (*καλὸν τὸ ἅλας· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας ἄναλον γένηται, ἐν τίνι αὐτὸ ἀρτύσετε; ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἅλα καὶ εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις.*). But (Mt 5:13) appropriates

the metaphor from Jeremiah and employs it differently. He directs it to his followers or his own community thus, "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltness be restored?" [NRSV]. (Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῇ, ἐν τίνι ἁλισθήσεται;)

On the subject of "clean and unclean" Mark writes, 'And he said, "What comes out of a man is what defiles a man."' (*ἔλεγεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκπορευόμενον, ἐκεῖνο κοινοῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον.*) (Mk 7:18b) Mark appropriates (Jer 17:9) to emphasize this fact thus, "The *heart* is *more deceitful than all else* and is *desperately sick*; Who *can know* it?"

(עָקֹב הַלֵּב מִכֹּל וְאָנֵשׁ הוּא מִי יֵדָעֶנּוּ׃)

Mark quotes this Old Testament text to demonstrate to his converts that what he is saying comes from the Law of God as it is pronounced by the Prophet Jeremiah.

7.7 Hadebe's cultural interpretation

This subsection of the study illustrates how Hadebe interprets the bible texts to speak about the conditions of his community in Mthwalume between 1923 and 1935. Hadebe's intention when appropriating a text was to assimilate his protagonist with the main actor in the biblical text, that is, Jesus, Elijah and others. In doing so, however, it is not only Shembe who is brought into the biblical context but also the African context which Shembe represents, and this what Hadebe was aiming to do. This is so because Shembe is living in an African culture from which he cannot separate himself. In the interim Shembe does not become a Jew; the biblical context into which he goes takes on an isiZulu content.

7.7.1 Hadebe's appropriation of the Bible

Hadebe tells a story of a wicked paralytic brought by some people on a stretcher. As he (Shembe) heals him by mere words. he says, "Today all your sins have been forgiven." Then Hadebe adds, 'you, reader take a look at Matthew 9 v 2. This verse reads thus, "And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart

my son; your sins are forgiven.'" (Gunner 2002:161, par.,8) The scene and words Hadebe described are found in the Gospel of Matthew and the circumstances are similar to Hadebe's account of the wicked man's text. Thus, Hadebe is taking the context of Matthew's text without considering the text and its context and using it in his context in Mthwalume, in March 1923. Ukpong (1999:314) explains this technique thus :Creating an encounter between the biblical text and the African context. This involves a variety of ways that link the biblical text to the African context such that the main focus of interpretation is on the communities that receive the text, rather than on those that produced it or on the text itself.

Hadebe's action should be understood as bringing his context to the text and the context of the original biblical text to fit his context as a reader. By saying that "your sins are forgiven," Radebe is also saying that Shembe's situation is like that of Jesus. In the same event, as Shembe was asleep a short time before the healing, he heard footsteps of people coming from a distance away. Shortly thereafter as he was holding a service he stopped his sermon and said to the congregation that a moment ago when he was sleeping he heard footsteps from across the Mthwalume river. He asked Jehovah, whom he calls, 'his father,' about it and Jehovah explained that it was the footsteps of a wicked man he hates. Furthermore, Jehovah said to Shembe that he was His messenger. He then explained the phenomenon of the footsteps that m heard from such a great distance. He likened the occasion to that of the Prophet Elijah who heard the footsteps of the wife of Jeroboam, the king of Judah, as she was leaving her home, and the prophet was there, far away in Shiloh. Hadebe then adds, 'Read the book of 1 Kings 14 v 2-6.' These verses read, "And Jeroboam said to his wife, 'Come, please disguise yourself so that no one will recognise you as Jeroboam's wife, and go to Shiloh; the prophet Ahijah is there, the man who said I was to be king over his people. The wife did this but Ahijah could not see, his eyes were dimmed with age. But Yahweh had told him, 'Jeroboam's wife is now on her way to ask you for an oracle about her son as he is sick.' Again, Hadebe is likening Shembe's situation to that of the Prophet Elijah, in so doing he appropriates the text (1 Ki 14: 2-6) and uses it in the context of Shembe in Mthwalume. He neglects the original text and its context. He is only interested in its impact in the case of hearing the footsteps from a great distance, that is, its context.

He brought a particular context to the ancient Jewish setting of Shiloh (1 Ki 14: 2-6) and fitted it into an *isiZulu s*etting in 20th century Mthwalume. He was interested in the impact this ancient text

had on the context of the audience in Shiloh and he wanted to use that impact on the congregation in Mthwalume in the 1920s. According to Dube (1936:23) Shembe started praying for the sick before he was baptized and in his own words he said "*Ukutandazela abantu abag'ulayo ngakuqala ngapambi kokuba ngib'apatizwe"* (I started praying for sick people before I was baptized).

This is not the only method Hadebe uses to appropriate the status great biblical figures of the Old Testament. The other way is to tell an event that comes out of a dream where Shembe is seen as a heavenly figure likened to Jesus. One such a text is when Melika had a dream in which she had a word that had a clear message which said really Jesus has come back and lives among black people, he has taken their image, and built a holy place for them to live in and he lives there with them—and so the prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled. Look in Isaiah 26 v 1, 2, 5, 6. Rev. 21 v 1-2

Isaiah (26:1) reads thus, 'In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.'

(בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יוּשַׁר הַשִּׁיר־הַזֶּה בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה עִיר עָז־לָנוּ יְשׁוּעָה יָשִׁית חוֹמוֹת וָחֵל:)

In this text of a dream Hadebe likens Shembe directly with Jesus but also with God who has built a city for His people Israel. Hadebe is likening this city with Ekuphakameni which is built by Shembe for his congregation.

7.8. Conclusion

Mark uses these three Old Testament passages at the outset of his Gospel to set up the themes of his entire Gospel. He is drawing images from the Old Testament to portray his characters. The images he draws on are those of greatness, such as King Cyrus of Persia for the figure of Jesus. In this case, Mark does not mind whether the similarities are suited in all respects. Cyrus is powerful and the greatest king known on earth, the other qualities of Jesus are not accounted for here. Mark again appropriates the figure of Metatron, the great angelic messenger of God and likens him to John the Baptist; the comparable aspect is that they are both messengers. Except for the human characters, Mark also draws similarities to the circumstances in which the characters act. For example, he keeps in mind the good news of God's saving rule, the coming of a Messiah, a new

exodus, the end of exile, God returning to his people, and Israel being restored and purified. These images are Mark's way of telling the reader that the time of the Messiah and the fulfillment of God's eschatological promises to his people had arrived with Jesus: thus, now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:14-15)

Hadebe draws similarities between New and Old Testament characters and appends them to Shembe, such as Jesus in Caper'naum healing the paralytic and the prophet Ahijah in Shilo hearing footsteps of the wife of Jeroboam. Also, God directly informs the Prophet Ahijah. Hadebe's main technique is to present similar New and Old Testament circumstances and draw similarities from them as he had done between Shembe and the prophet Elijah, pointing out the similarities in the circumstances. In this way he shows that Shembe is a prophet like Elijah, or he is a healer like Jesus.

CHAPTER 8

CONVERSION AND COMPARISON BETWEEN MARK AND HADEBE

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 compares the idea of conversion in both Mark and Hadebe's religions by considering what the new members of these communities are taught during their initiation into the group. Besides being formally taught, reference is made to many activities in the movement that will assist in the edification of the content. The tuition goes beyond catechumenate into informal development. Concerning Hadebe, it is necessary to consider Shembe's understanding of the meaning of conversion and how he recruited and initiated people into the community. It must be mentioned that Hadebe himself was a convert of Shembe and underwent ministerial training. In the Gospel of Mark, the focus is on being a follower of Jesus after his death, since Mark himself was Jesus' follower. However, both Hadebe (as part of Shembe's church) and Mark (as a follower of Jesus) religions were breakaways from former religions, that is, missionary Christianity and Judaism respectively.

From these two perspectives, therefore, conversion could be understood as the adoption of a set of beliefs identified with one particular religious denomination to the exclusion of others. This concept could also mean changing from one denomination to the other within the same religion, for example, from Protestant Christianity to Roman Catholicism, (Rodney & Finke (2000). Here there are similarities because both belong to the same form of religion which uses the same baptismal formula of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Theologically, there are also many similarities. The difference may only be constitutionally in the running of the church.

However, conversion from Judaism to following Jesus is a complex matter since the followers of Jesus believed in the divinity of Jesus while Judaism denied it. Here there is a remote theological difference. The same could be said about Hadebe (being a member of the AIC) and missionary Christianity. Conversion from the missionary church such as the Baptist church to Ibandla lamaNazaretha is quite remote. Therefore, one may regard the two religions under discussion as examples of such conversions. The key topics under discussion are as follows: The Eucharist and sacrifice, sexuality, liturgy, the rise of the model (sacred history), and Catechetic.

8.2 The Eucharist and Sacrifice

The Marcan concept of the Eucharist is as remote from Hadebe's idea as it was from Judaism at its inauguration. The key differences are from its theological concept itself. The Christological formation of the Eucharist by Jesus is discussed below.

8.2.1 The concept of the Eucharist in the Gospel of Mark

The words of the Eucharist installation run like this,

> While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body. ' [23] Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. [24] He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many). (*Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν· λάβετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου.* [23] *καὶ λαβὼν ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες.* [24] *καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν.* [25] *ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ πίω ἐκ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.*) (Mk 14:22-25)

The words 'this my body' (*τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου*.) In this practice, Jesus is said to be the host, the Priest, and the victim. Christ made himself an offering, a sacrifice to God, a gift that was truly pleasing to his Father. This concept distinguishes the converts of Mark from those of Hadebe. Besides the logical difficulty of how this can be understood, there is a theological difficulty in to whom this sacrifice is offered since God, according to this theology, is Trinitarian, and Jesus himself is part of that divinity. These are questions that intrigue non-followers of Jesus' theology.

The Eucharist is both a Sacrament and a Sacrifice: as a Sacrament it is received as the soul's nourishment; as a Sacrifice it is offered to God for the needs of the world (Keenan (2012) online)

Generally, the theological character of the Eucharist is a mystery. It contains notions that Judaism rejected and regarded as idolatry. For instance, the concept of Jesus as the Son of God explained in words that transcends human understanding is difficult to accept in Judaism. Christian converts are expected to accept and retain these mysteries as an article of their faith. However, the understanding of Jesus as a new kind of priest different from earthly priests elevates the concept of priesthood as a representative of God to new heights close to God. This is found in the ideology of the Eucharist.

Christians believe, from the perspective of the Letter to the Hebrews in the Eucharist, the new Passover, Christ's death can be said to be recreated, not in the sense of happening again as it happened on Calvary (Heb 9:25), but of happening again in sacramental way, since Christ cannot die again as He died on Calvary, (Ker (2019) online). In this new sense Christ is a high priest (Heb 8:1). However, his priesthood is in the new sanctuary—which means in heaven—and of the true Tent of Meeting which is set up by God and not man (Heb 8:2). The priesthood of Jesus is different from regular priesthood because is done by an oath sworn by God who declared to him, "You are a priest forever of the Order of Melchizedeck not counted being of the same order ad Aaron" (Heb7:18). (Ker (2019) online) argues that He is the minister of the new sanctuary and He has his place at the right of the throne of divine Majesty (God) in the heavens (Ac 2:33). His priesthood is of a new kind.

The essence of God as creator cannot be expected to be reached logically by the human mind which is a created thing since God stands outside the sphere of creation. Thus, questions like how can an entity that is one can also be three or how a man can be born without a human father or how something dead can come to life again are to be avoided. They will offer nothing profitable to the converts.

Schoeps (1946:387) quoted in Oh (2016:6) online argues that,

> Jesus in many ways is parallel to Isaac in Genesis 22: Isaac carried the wood as Jesus bore the wooden Cross; Isaac obeyed his father as Jesus did; Isaac was prepared to be sacrificed on the altar as Jesus was to be crucified on the cross; Jewish tradition claims that Isaac died and was resurrected as Jesus did.

What happened on the night of initiating the Eucharist was a celebration since (Mk 14:26a) says "When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount," (*Καὶ ὑμνήσαντες ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος*). Since Christianity has its roots in Judaism, it was natural for the early prayers to be adaptations of Jewish blessings and prayers. Taft (2003:483) opines that "today many scholars maintain that the most primitive, original eucharistic prayers were short, self-contained benedictions without Institution Narrative or Epiclesis, comparable to the *Didache* and the papyrus Strasbourg.*"* Christianity is a hierarchical religion where there is special training and selection for different duties. As in the Jewish celebration of peace offering at the Temple, the person who officiated was a male bishop or a priest.

8.2.2. The Eucharist in Hadebe (Shembe)

The Eucharist is also celebrated in the Ibandla lamaNazaretha church, but in a way that is different from other Christian groups. The term 'Communion' (or Holy Communion) used to refer to the Eucharist rite began by a group originating in the Protestant Reformation (1500s). Others, such as the Catholic Church, do not formally use this term for the rite, but instead mean by it the act of partaking in the consecrated elements (Higgins (2018) online). The Eucharist in different denominations has two concepts namely (i) the Consecration where the elements of bread and wine are turned into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Churches like the Catholic and Lutheran believe that the elements of bread and wine are truly turned into the body and blood of Jesus Christ (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1377), and (ii) the Communion rite in Ibandla lamaNazaretha began with the washing of feet ceremony, followed by the distribution of the Holy Supper (cf. Becken, 1968a: 7, 9)**.** Holy Communion was significantly intertwined with a washing ceremony. Thus, Shembe recalled and enacted the event of the Last Supper. The important element here is the command "Do this in remembrance of me." Shembe believed that Jesus was divine but not equal to God the Father. He believed that the Holy Communion should be held in the night—not celebrated during the day—of the celebration (cf. Kau 1999:13).

8.2.3 Animal sacrifices

The Hebrew Bible holds that Yahweh commanded the Israelites to offer offerings and sacrifices on various altars. When the Israelites were in the desert, sacrifices were offered only in the Tabernacle. After building Solomon's Temple, sacrifices were allowed only there. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., sacrifices were resumed when the second Temple was built until it was again o destroyed in 70 CE. After the destruction of the second Temple sacrifices were prohibited because there was no longer a Temple, and the only place allowed by *halakha* for sacrifices. Consequently, Mark does not fall under the period of animal sacrifices as Jesus had introduced the Eucharist as its substitute.

The offering of sacrifices was briefly reinstated during the Jewish–Roman wars of the second century CE and continued in certain communities thereafter. Christianity has long opposed all forms of animal sacrifice, and the practices were declared no longer relevant and overall redundant. The only form of sacrifice — the "bloodless" sacrifice known as the Eucharist — has been firmly introduced into the Christian liturgy entirely replacing the Old Testament sacrificial system. (Kovaltchuk, 2008: 163). Christian denominations believe that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ permanently abolished animal sacrifice, primarily based on the teaching in the Epistle to the Hebrews that Jesus was the "Lamb of God" to whom all ancient sacrifices referred. (Kovaltchuk, 2008: 162-163).

There are several animal sacrifices in the Book of Genesis; (Gen 4:1-5), Cain and Abel; (Gen 8:20-21), Noah after the flood; (Gen 22), the longest account of a sacrifice in Genesis; (Gen 22:18) God reinforces the promise of blessing, posterity, and blessing the nations with an "oath" because Abraham "obeyed" his voice; (Gen 12:1-7), Abraham built an altar after God appeared to him (Gen 26:23-25), Isaac built an altar; (Gen 35:5-7),Jacob built at altar. Moses and the Israelites sacrifice a young bull after God had given Moses the laws that they should live by (Bible Gateway, 2011) [(Shange (2013:126)]. In Judaism, the *qorban* is any of a variety of sacrificial offerings described and commanded in the Torah. The most common usages are animal sacrifice (*zevah*זֶבַח), *zevah shelamim* (the peace offering) and *olah* (the holocaust sacrifice or burnt offering). A *qorban* was an animal sacrifice, such as a bull, sheep, goat, or a dove that underwent *shechita* (Jewish ritual slaughter). Sacrifices could also consist of grain, meal, wine, or incense. The offering of

sacrifices was briefly reinstated during the Jewish–Roman wars of the second century CE and was continued in certain communities thereafter.

8.2.3.2 Animal sacrifice in Shembe

Animal sacrifices are not equivalent to the Eucharist, neither Hadebe's religion nor Mark's Gospel advocated for this. Sacrifices were also often made to ancestors who communicated with God and passed on people's pleas and requests (cf. Thorpe (1991:40). Shange (2013:126) in an interview with (Viwe, interview with author, 2012) a member of Shembe's church was informed that animal sacrifices were offered to God through the ancestors. Unlike in the animal sacrifice of Abraham, where the human victim is placed on the altar as a peace offering, the offering of the ancestors to Jehovah is cooked and family and friends consume the meat. This practice is borrowed from isiZulu ritual practices. The idea of Communion, such as in the Eucharist is also upheld, but while the Eucharist Communion is with Jesus Christ who is both host and victim of the sacrifice, in the sacrifice of ancestors to Jehovah, the Communion is between family, friends, ancestors and Jehovah.

Africans were made to believe that they were making sacrifices to fake gods, thus making the practice of animal sacrifice a sin in the eyes of God and western churches. Rituals are often aimed at producing healing; the loss of such healing in the modern world might be responsible for the loss of community and unity seen today (cf. Somè (1997:22). This happens through working together and cooperating in preparation for the ritual. Dancing, singing and feasting during and after the ritual also help to create unity and a sense of community (cf. Somè (1997:42-43).

It is not known when the practice of animal sacrifices among Africans began to take root because of the lack of documentation by Africans, coupled with Western propaganda which made more difficult to understand the ATRs (cf. Lawson (1985:15). This concept was not derived from the bible and existed before the Africans south of the Sahara met with the missionaries. Most African religions are a product of the thinking and experiences passed down from generation to generation (cf. Mbiti (1975:12). In an interview between (Shange (2013:88) and Mpume (interview with author, 2012) it was discussed that the members of Hadebe's Church believed that "*ubuNazaretha*" (God's word) had always existed." The idea behind their religion was not created by Isaiah

Shembe; it was God working through Isaiah Shembe. Shembe restored ancient ideas and traditions that existed since the time of Moses and Abraham, continued by Jesus and later by Shembe. The implication for the above statement is that there exists an unbroken line between Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Shembe. Therefore, *UbuNazaretha* is the restoration of the ancient tradition of these prophets. Shembe did not start a new trend but restored ancient beliefs that always existed in the bible. His aim was to revive the faith and lead to ways that led to the revival of major religious, social and political tradition of these prophets.

This ritual is accompanied by dancing and most importantly through praise poetry (*izibongo*/ *izithakazelo*). The poet (*imbongi*) who leads the ceremony with dancing and song, recites the names of the clans' great people of the present and the past, thereby invoking the spirits of the clan ancestors to take part in the ritual. The aim is to appease and make request to the ancestors. But instead of battlefields, the poet refers to places Shembe travelled to and important places like Ekuphakameni, the first Shembe mecca (cf. Gunner 2002:101). As already mentioned, the Shembe theology also included ancestral spirits and non- living members of society. Commemoration services were held to honour the dead because they formed part of the community of believers (cf. Vilakazi, Mthethwa and Mpanza (1986:76). Unlike in the Eucharist the main celebrant was the head of the family. There is no affinity between the church and the diviner (*izangoma*). In Dube (1936:75) Shembe declared that his church had no relationship with diviners. In the Laws of Shembe (*Imiteto kaShembe*) (Dube (1936:75) stated,

> the diviners possessed with demon spirits, the AmaNazaretha should not play with them, should not go anywhere near such people, they should not be visited in their homes nor visited to theirs. (*Isangoma esetwese ubu-Dimoni makungadlalwa naso, makungangenwa nasemzini waso. Noma singena emzini wako, usixoshe*)

8.3 The rise of both movements

There are interesting similarities in the religious and historical causes of the beginning of the two movements. Both broke away from their religions and adopted different theological beliefs in similar circumstance, even though they were centuries apart in time and locality.

8.3.1 The rise of Mark's community

A number of scholars opine that Mark's Gospel was written in Rome predominantly for the gentile Christians before the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Romans in AD 70 and in the aftermath of Nero's persecution (cf. Matera (1987:7-11). The manner in which Mark writes about Galilee, and the way he describes her as the place of Jesus' activity, Galilee and the sea of Galilee had a special significance; it becomes a Christian Holy Land (cf. Matera (1987:11-12).

8.3.1.1 The socio-economic and political situation in Mark

Occupation of the foreign troop; the Romans and Herod and his successors imposed a tremendous tax burden upon its subjects. The people of Israel also had to pay tax to the temple. (cf. Mk 2:14-15). There was no love lost between the Jews and Samaritans (cf. Ford, 1984: 2-12, 65-95) The Latinisms found in Mark often referred to in support of the Romans hypothesis, indicate rather the expected linguistic penetration in the socio-economic and administrative spheres of the colonized culture of Palestine. Socio-political description of the conditions in agrarian Palestine, were very different from those in urban Hellenism (cf. Myers (1988:41). Mark's Gospel was probably written during the Roman reoccupation of between the first (66-67 A.D.) and the second (69-70 A. D.) and Roman sieges of Jerusalem (Myers (1988:57-58).

8.3.1.2 The Community of Disciples in Mark

Unlike Matthew (Mt. 16:18; Mt 18:17) and Luke (in Acts 8:11; Ac 9:31, for example), Mark never used the term *ekklesia* and lacks the early impression of church office which Matthew gives in his account on Peter (esp. Mt 16:18-20) or Luke in the depiction of the authority of the apostles (Ac 1:26; Ac 2:42; Ac 4:37). Mark has much in common with other New Testament writings on the theology and social settings of the early communities and on the life of the household and family (1983:31-32).

8.3.1.3 The True Family of Jesus

Jesus regarded his spiritual family as his true family, but this does not mean that he denied his natural family. He regarded his followers as family. In like manner. a religious community was like a family to Mark. His first family is a community (Mk 3:22-23). The second major text of Mark which sheds light on his understanding of community is contained in his response to Peter's statement (Mk 10:28). 'Peter began to say to him, "We have left everything and followed you."' (*Ἤρξατο λέγειν ὁ Πέτρος αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμέν σοι.*). Jesus rteplied, "Truly, truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left his house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mk 10:29-30). (*ἔφη ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐδείς ἐστιν ὃς ἀφῆκεν οἰκίαν ἢ ἀδελφοὺς ἢ ἀδελφὰς ἢ μητέρα ἢ πατέρα ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγροὺς ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου,* **30** *ἐὰν μὴ λάβῃ ἑκατονταπλασίονα νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ οἰκίας καὶ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἀδελφὰς καὶ μητέρας καὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀγροὺς μετὰ διωγμῶν, καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον*).

Mark's community was egalitarian in nature and the only visible structure of authority seemed to be that of mutual service; at the same time it was not a sectarian community dedicated only to the inner structure **(**Donahue (1982:578-581). The culture of worship became different, as the new movement that followed the teachings of Jesus welcomed different races and nationalities, which were formerly not accepted in the Jewish religion. The language, particularly writing, became predominantly Greek. During antiquity, Greek was by far the most widely spoken *lingua franca* in the Mediterranean world (cf. Irad (2011) online). It eventually became the official language of the Byzantine Empire and developed into Medieval Greek. The New Testament of the Christian bible was also originally written in Greek (cf. Aland & Aland (1995:52)

Some of the differences are recorded in the Gospel itself, for instance, the constant and persistence clashes between the Sadducees, (Mark 2:15–28; Mk 3:1–6; Mk 7:1–23), the scribes (Mk 2:16; Mk 8:31, Mk 12: 38) the Herodians (Mk 3:6) and the Elders of the people (Mk 8:31; Mk.12:12; Mk14:53), against the preference of customs of the Elders over God's law. These issues form part of the Sacred history facts the converts were taught to retain. They also helped converts strengthen

their faith in their following of Jesus and the martyrs of the movement; martyrdom was the cornerstone upon which faith was rooted.

In the new movements, the first consideration was how to formulate and teach a new body of beliefs and if possible these should differ from those where the movement originated from. The Didache was an early Christian treatise which first appeared in Koine Greek (cf. Cross & Livingstone (2005:482). The first line of the teaching reads 'The teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles or Nations by the twelve apostles,' (*Διδαχὴ κυρίου διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.*) (Encyclopaedia Britannica (1768) which is suggestive that from the very early times after its formation, Christianity was destined for worldwide mission. Some parts of the Didache contain the oldest catechism. It has three main sections dealing with Christian ethics, rituals such as baptism, the Eucharist and Church organisation. The opening chapters describe a virtuous way of life and the wicked way of death. The Lord's Prayer is included in full. Baptism is by immersion. Fasting is ordered on Wednesdays and Fridays including two primitive Eucharis prayers. The full text is written in 3049 words. There is no consensus about the actual date when the text was written. Some scholars estimate the date to be the third century AD while others date it to the first century, within a decade of the Council of Jerusalem 49/50 AD.

In the beginning the disciples frequented the Temple, or at least its outer court, both for worship (Ac 3:1) and for teaching the people about the new faith in Jesus (Ac 3:12-26; Ac 5:21,25,42), and healing miracles were related at the Temple precincts (Ac 3:2-10; 5:12-16), (cf. Taylor (1999:445). It seems that the Didache was first taught in Jerusalem. According to White (1993:40-52) quoted in Wepener (2013:3) catechumenate consisted of a shorter period of preparation for baptism, followed by a water ritual consisting of either sprinkling or immersion, and lastly possibly also an anointing and/or laying on of hands. The catechumens were expected to fast for two days prior to receiving the Holy Communion or being accepted at the table of the Lord. Water was to be used for baptism in this liturgical ritual and is also described; prescriptions on the use of the water are outlined, for example, to baptise if possible in running water (7.2). According to the Didache, only those who had been baptised had access to the Eucharist; that is, are allowed to receive Holy Communion.

8.3.2 The rise of the community in Hadebe

Hadebe's religion broke away from the William Leshega, African Native Baptist Church; a religion influenced by the missionaries. Shembe, the founder of Hadebe's religion, believed that Christianity should be taught to the indigenous people in order to improve their lives; however, he believed this should be done without affecting or changing indigenous culture, tradition and practices. He dismissed biblical texts that were against his Zulu and Sotho culture (Mthethwa (1989:246-247).

Consequently, his medium of instruction and liturgy became isiZulu, as the early members were predominantly AmaZulu. He taught and preached on the function of the Holy Spirit in his church and in the daily lives of people (cf Becken, 1968a: 7). Shembe was a Nazarene and a Sabbatarian, as well as strongly Ethiopianist (cf. Muller (1994:37, 137). According to Mashabela (2023: 189) it was not difficult for African people to join churches such as Ibandla lamaNazaretha because the church was "indigenous, spiritual, Pentecostal and Zionist at the same time." Shembe believed that religion should be conducted in the vernacular of the community and the time, thus his hymns were written mostly in early isiZulu and isiXhosa for which there is no translation. Translated hymns are found in missionary churches as many of the missionary Christian hymns were translated into the local vernacular so that the African people could easily relate to the hymns and the message behind them. He taught new hymns to his followers by first teaching them the dance rhythm underpinning the hymn text and tune (cf. Muller (1994:42). Another dimension of the Nazarite religious culture adopted from the isiZulu cultural tradition was the integral role of dreams and visions as communication from and with the spirit realm. Dreams are important in the bible; in the OT, for example, Jacob (Gn 28:10-17) and his son Joseph had dreams about his future role in the family structure (Gn 41:33; Gn 37:8, 10; Gn 39–41) and Joseph, the future husband of Mary's dream about not being afraid to take Mary as his wife (Mt. 1:20-21).

Dreams and visions formed an important part of theology and through dreams communication with ancestors was possible (cf. Oosthuizen (1968:3). Ancestors intervened through dreams and guided Shembe's life and continued to play the same role in his Nazarite daily experience (cf. Maxwell (2001:514). The ritualised worship of the ancestors was strongly criticised by missionaries, even though indigenous religious groups in South Africa cited several biblical references to justify their acknowledgment of the ancestral line (cf. Tishken (2002:82). This is what happened in South

Africa and throughout Africa when the colonisers exerted their dominance on the people, their land and their culture. This forced acculturation created many psychological issues for Africans (cf. Browne (2005:93). Kgatle and Mashau (2023: 288) have a different view on the role of the ancestors as they state, "Ancestors are human and remain humans in the afterlife and therefore cannot be worshiped." They reject the notion of ancestor worship in the context of African Christianity and Pentecostalism.

At this point, multicultural movements sprung up all over Africa and created what Dallas Browne (2005:94) calls "a new code of living." Shembe gained this knowledge after being struck by lightning. In isiZulu tradition, this is a sign that a person has been chosen by God to be a prophet, (cf. Shange (2013:38). Shembe was instructed to heal and evangelise IsiZulu-speaking people in the Zululand region and he set out to do so in the religious form consistent with African cultural traditions (cf. Hausse (1996:332). He and his followers created a discourse of "cultural truth" which challenged the ideologies of the state and the Christian missionaries (cf. Muller (1994:45). These experiences became part of sacred history from where converts gained knowledge of the religion they had joined. In addition, the Nazarites believed that a religious dance was created by the ancestors, and because of this it should be performed and never altered thereafter in order to preserve the goodwill of the ancestors. (cf. Muller (1994:43).

The accounts of heroism and piety related to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, that whenever Ibandla lamaNazaretha was confronted by the government or missionaries, its members went on their knees and performed a special prayer called *Isiguqo* (kneel) as a congregation. In cases where prayer was performed during times of hardship, Shembe had to obtain special permission from the local Durban municipality to enter black reserves (cf. Shange (2013:43). All of Shembe's movements were monitored closely because his organisation was deemed a political group and not a church or religious movement by the Apartheid government at the time. (Shange (2013:43).

Mpanza maintained that,

> the missionaries and government believed that the Shembe Church posed as a church in order to hide its political agenda (Mpanza 1999); as the result of that the missionaries were determined to crush the church and end its very existence. In 1931 Shembe was summoned to

> Pietermaritzburg where he was told to bring his whole church infrastructure to an end. (Shange (2013:43).

These events were not peculiar to Mark and Shembe. Scholars such as Wallace (1956:265) believe that new movements go through several stages, starting with the pre-movement stage. During the pre-movement stage, the movement feels the need for radical change and the creation of a satisfying culture; Wallace refers to it as the revitalization movement. The most essential items that the model needed immediately after its formation were the biblical interpretation and constitution for its believers. Even though history will bear evidence to the common occurrences of such experiences, new movements would like to include such events as edifying their religious course. Thus, they became an important source of education for converts in the AICs. In his religious formation, Shembe aimed to re-establish a sense of community and collective identity among the African people in the province of Natal, neighbouring Zululand, and Africa as a whole (cf Muller (1994:45).

Isaiah Shembe's healing rituals also relied on water as well as incense (*impepho*), usually burned during rituals to awaken the ancestors and also often used in rituals that take place during major gatherings such as the Nhlangakazi annual pilgrimage. The herb is often burned on the last day and members have to inhale the smoke; a practice also adopted from the Zulu and other South African cultures (cf. Becken (1968b:141). There were two major changes in Hadebe's religion; the first change was that the Sunday worship changed to a Saturday. Saturday as the day of worship was the issue that led Shembe as the founder of the Ibandla lamaNazaretha to break away from the Baptist Church (cf. Vilakazi, Mthethwa and Mpanza (1986:42). Saturday (the Sabbath) was the seventh day of rest according to the Old Testament, and refers to God's 'day of rest'. This important fact is also mentioned in (Lv 25:3-5) as all worshiping services were performed on the Sabbath. All forms of work including cooking, cleaning, and preparations for the Sabbath were to be done the day before. Shembe composed a book containing hymns, prayers, and theological quotations called *Isihlabelelo samaNazaretha* and published in 1940. Some of these hymns were composed by Shembe's son, Johannes Galilee Shembe. The book provided the congregation with doctrinal teachings (Fernandez (1973:43). It also drew on the bible; with edited versions of the Psalms of David and other Old Testament writers, and some hymns were also inspired by the Ten

Commandments. Most of Isaiah Shembe's hymns were not recorded in any collective copy or document. However, in the hymn book, there are a number of songs and prayers that encourage sons to respect their mothers and fathers (Vilakazi, Mthethwa & Mpanza (1986:73). The second major issue was the baptism by immersion conducted outdoors, preferably in flowing waters such as rivers. Ibandla lamaNazaretha as a form of religion contained elements of both African Zionist and Ethiopian practices. The Church was African-Zionist in the sense that it drew many of its practices and ideas from the Zulu culture. Shembe encouraged his followers to continue practicing their culture as a sign of their independence of thought and action (cf. Browne (2005:97). The sermons during the gatherings of July, September and January were also often preached in Zulu as African Zionist churches had very little connection to Western religions such as Christianity (cf. Madise (2005:3). However, the Shembe religion was also Ethiopian in its ideals and the promotion of a united Africa. It was so because it encouraged and welcomed members from many different cultures all over Africa.

The general idea behind UbuNazaretha was that God sent all his people a Saviour; a saviour to whom people could relate, a saviour who shared similar cultural ideas and practices with them. God did not send a black Saviour to deliver white people. God sent Buddha to the East, and Mohammed to the Arabs, and Africa is no different. God revealed himself to Shembe and made a covenant with him that Shembe's role was to save God's people. Shembe, like other messiahs, had a duty to fulfil; bring people closer to God by preaching the Gospel in a manner which people could relate to.

8.4 The theology of the two movements

Theology is not discussed here as a subject, only those elements of theology pertinently relating to conversion will be discussed.

8.4.1 The Theology of the Gospel of Mark

The central message of Mark's Gospel is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. (Mk 1:1); 'and the voice from heaven spoke to Jesus'. It was pointed out above that in (Mk 9:7) a cloud came

upon Peter, John and James and a voice out of it said, “This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.” Here God the Father appears with Jesus as God the Son. There is also God the Holy Ghost. who does not appear here.

However, Mark does not speak in such a way. The doctrine of the Trinity was first formulated among the early Christians and fathers of the Church as they attempted to understand the relationship between Jesus and God in the scriptural documents and prior traditions (Hurtado (2005:644-648). Most of Mark’s theological teachings are found in Jesus’ arguments with the leaders of the Jews. for instance, the matter of the Sabbath, (Mk 2:27) what makes a person unclean (Mk 7:20-23); and the meaning of death and marriage (Mk 12:12), letting go of God’s commands but holding on to human traditions (Mk 7:7-13).

8.4.2 Theology of Hadebe

The theology of Hadebe is the same as that of Shembe. The important role women played in the formation of the church is absent in Hadebe’s (Shembe) praise poetry (cf. Gunner (1988:223). The most powerful female divine character in Shembe’s theology is Nomkhubulwane, who is absent in all Hadebe’s religious discussions. This is ironic considering that the Ibandla lamaNazaretha places so much importance on fertility. Hadebe’s discussion scorns the sexuality (promiscuity) of Gretha and Christina (Gunner 2002:173).

The female menstrual cycle is for fertility and should not be rejected. Nomkhubulwane is an important character in the *Ibandla lamaNazaretha* ideology. She is the virgin goddess, believed to be the daughter of UMvelinqangi. Nomkhubulwane is also prominent in the isiZulu traditional mythology where she plays an important role in granting fertility to both the land and the female body, (Scorgie (2002:57). However, Hadebe never mentions this, and according to him female sickness are healed by Shembe. Sexual purity is a central theme in most Shembe rituals and gatherings (Kaarsholm (2006:5). uNomkhubulwane is believed to be the mother of all virgin girls; she is also known as the goddess of fertility. She protects young girls and the community and has also been known to give advice to young virgin girls, especially when selecting a husband **(cf.** Ngalwa (2004). Virgins were the only people allowed to communicate with this goddess.

The messages Isaiah Shembe received from God were communicated to him through uNomkhubulwane (cf. Shange (2013:51). The possible messages would be those songs Shembe heard sung to him in a sweet voice in his dream. In this connection, Sundkler (1976:186) writes,

> would hear a woman's voice, often a girl's voice, singing new and unexpected words. He could not see her, but as he woke up from a dream or walked along the path in Zululand, meditating, he heard that small voice, that clear voice, which gave him a new hymn. He had to write down the new words, while humming and singing the tune which was born with the words.

8.5 The status of males and females in both movements

8.5.1 Status of males and females in Hadebe

Hadebe situates women in the background and they hardly play any significant role in his text while Shembe placed young women as central performers and heroines in Nazarite religious ritual, history and discourse. What women converts are offered to learn is mostly roles that are subservient to males. Male converts on the contrary have much to learn even though they are not organised in Hadebe's story. Shembe located the wellbeing of the community in the maintenance of sexual and ritual purity of young female virgins; this was also the case in the general isiZulu culture and many other African cultures but these are hardly mentioned in Hadebe. The physical landscape, traditional culture and the female body were all sacralised at a historical moment of extreme social disruption and bodily violation amongst the African people of South Africa" (cf. Muller (1994:44). These are also neglected in Hadebe's testimony. Muller (1994:44) quoted in Shange (2013:41) opines that, "married women although 'defiled' by sexual intercourse in marriage were portrayed as the 'brides of Christ'; they were elevated to the position of 'royal wives' of the Nazarite king Shembe and therefore always given 'royal' treatment by Nazarite men".

In Hadebe's testimony, women are portrayed as sufferers of chronic sicknesses and in each case death is imminent. The sicknesses themselves have their origin from demonic attacks, illnesses of the black people (*izifo zabantu*) and are concentrated on the womb, diseases of the womb (*izifo zasesinyeni*). Only one female, an unmarried girl, called Mqhanganyi, the daughter of Labhabha

Nzama who was bitten by a mamba is healed, but the rest are young married women. Since the sicknesses are concentrated in the womb (*izifo zasesinyeni)* they are therefore aimed at destroying the women's productive organs, thereby indirectly affecting the continuity of the family lineage and the community. Hadebe's healing discourse is indirectly a fight against this insurgence. Muller (1999b:introduction) opines that Shembe placed the female body at the centre of his church. His belief in the power of the pure female body was derived from 'traditional Zulu beliefs regarding the power of virgins to safeguard the well-being of communities' (cf. Muller, 1999b:194).

Hadebe portrays the weaker aspects of the female body that easily falls prey to exterior attacks, enable the healings to showcase Shembe's power to heal but also the protection of his movement as a refuge for women. To see the movement as a protective healthcare centre—which in fact according to Muller, Shembe had succeeded to make —might be encouraging to the converts, particularly female converts. Men are reported to be healed by Shembe but none of them suffer from diseases that could be termed incurable (*isifo sabantu).* Only one man was healed and he was reported to be a paralytic (Gunner, 2002:161); the cause of his condition was reported to be a punishment from Jehovah. In fact, Jehovah informed Shembe about his hatred for him. Therefore, he does not resort amongst those who are regarded as under the illnesses of the black people (*isifo sabantu*).

Since Shembe does not use medicines, the healings may be viewed as partly exorcisms. This presents the church as a kind of clinic, a redeeming healthcare centre. Above all, it was a continuation of Hadebe's claim that Shembe was a co-creator with God (Gunner 2002:181), and the mediator in heaven (Gunner 2002:165). Hadebe's healing discourse is especially striking since the Nazareth Baptist Church is unique among African Independent Churches with regard to the number of oral traditions available. The founder of the church, Isaiah Shembe, as well as his successors Johannes Galilee Shembe and Amos Shembe, collected members' accounts of their miraculous deeds, sermons and other events, and compiled them into the *Acts of the Nazarites*, which have been published since the 1990s. These accounts provide evidence for the members' (converts) representation of their leaders and as a refuge for women, particularly those in distress. Hadebe provided an excellent account of how Shembe was a prophet whose authority rested on his charisma. He portrayed Shembe's extraordinary spiritual personal qualities that proved and manifested itself continuously in the faith and devotion of the adherents. The converts were always

assured of being afforded a safe haven. Hadebe in his female healing accounts was successful in putting this idea across. Sundkler (1948:109) considered Shembe a prime example of what he called the prophet type leadership in African Zionist Churches, based upon the leader's ability to heal in continuity with the healer/diviner (*isangoma*) in the Zulu religion.

In Hadebe's testimony most of the time women play a secondary role, and are presented as part of the family structure almost on a par with that of children. This is evident in the way women a are mentioned in secondary roles as a 'wife of' and a 'daughter of' even those who are married are still referred to as the daughter of the man. Granted that this manner of addressing women is part of the African culture, it is foreign to readers who are not Africans. Even in Hadebe's biblical citation women play a supportive role; for example. the wife of Jeroboam, the king of Judah, as she was leaving her home under the cover of darkness to support her husband and the prophet was there, far away at Shilo (Gunner, 2002:163).

This portrayal of women in this manner, in the church gives the impression of humility and obedience. One may say they are the true brides of Jehovah. An exemplary conversion was demonstrated by the attitude of Melika Hadebe who was non-religious, even though at the time Lesotho was already a religious country with Catholic and Protestant missions. The AIC religion began in Lesotho before it was brought into South Africa according to Shange (2013:39) and quoting Muller (1994:36). However, Hadebe does not refer to the church in Lesotho among his family. Melika first learned how to pray from a vision she had about Shembe, whilst still in her home in Mpharane, Lesotho (Gunner 2002:143). This vision made such an impression on her that she convinced her husband and they both travelled to Durban, Natal, under extremely perilous conditions.

Even when death visited them twice in the wilderness, they continued to their destination (Gunner 2002:145). Except for Meshack, her son, she was the only person who was a consistent visionary about the holiness of Shembe (Gunner, 2002:143) and this narrative should be of encouragement to the female converts in the story of Hadebe. In general, in Hadebe's testimony women are described ad as docile, obedient and fragile and this journey from Lesotho to Durban illustrated how fragile and susceptible to death they were under natural conditions and had nothing to protect them from the wilderness.. Hadebe's sister, Lwela, also called Sitshana was willing to be sold by her father to a white man for food (Gunner, 2002:147,). This degree of obedience is also a further

lesson to female converts. Respect for patriarchal authority is a hallmark of the Nazarite Baptist Church (NBC) (Echtler,2019). In the 1940s a chief came "to the prophet's place, not in order to become a Nazarite, but to study the ways of imposing *inhlonipho* (Zulu word for respect) on his people" (Sundkler, 1948:111) In the Constitutions of Shembe it stands that children should be obedient to their parents.

Melika had another vision, this time of people wearing white robes (Gunner, 2002:145). Her visions were accurate and foresaw events that would eventually prove her visions to be authentic. It was acceptable for women to have an opinion of their own, which I was obvious from Melika's willingness to journey to Natal (Gunner, 2002:145). Hadebe also portrays women as promiscuous. Two girls, Gretha and Christina, were driven by a strange curiosity to visit Shembe at Nhlangwini and Shembe, observing their mannerism, predicted that one of them—the girl of the Caluza family—would fall pregnant and would not know who the father of her child was. Indeed, she fell pregnant after Shembe had left Nhlangwini (Gunner, 2002:173). Hadebe's female characters can also be malignant, for instance, Sara Abraham's wife laughed and defied Jehovah twice (Gunner, 2002:183).

Most of the people healed in Hadebe's narrative were women; Zemethe, (Gunner, 2002:175), Mqhanganyi (Gunner, 2002:189); MaSikhumba the wife of Sikhumba Cele. Even though Hadebe mentions women often in his testimony, their role in the church is not mentioned. Only one woman was mentioned by name as a deaconess, Juliette Shibase (Gunner, 2002:185). However, nowhere in the testimony was it mentioned that she actively acted as a deacon. Other women in Hadebe's story are the mothers suckling their babies resting of gridding stones in the temple (Gunner, 2002:183), which is the Shembe's prediction of his future church. The well-being of the community rested on the maintenance of sexual and ritual purity of the virgins; this was the case in Shembe's community as well as the general isiZulu culture and many other African cultures. The initial community provided religious, economic, cultural and moral space as his early followers, most of whom were the marginalised: young girls, orphans and women (cf. Johns, 2004:403).

Hadebe's names of the women in his narratives are very difficult to discern. This is partly because his secretary wrote *Sesotho* names in an *isiZulu* autography. For instance, Posoli (Phosholi) Doti (Toli?) Ngwenya (Koena or Mokoena), MaNgwenya ('MaMokoena), Lothoyi (Lothoi), Mmako

(’Mako) MaMsiya (’MaMosia), MaMhlakwana (’MaMohlakoane), Basuto (Basotho), Msotho (Mosotho) Sitshana (Tshetsana). There are two reasons for this; ; (1) These are names of people in Lesotho but written in a South African autography and (2) In Sesotho words with a second letter as a vowel, that vowel is not pronounced but in writing it is written out.

The matter of menstrual blood and semen are seen as polluting substances. Menstruating women are not allowed to shake hands with the church officials and priests nor can they touch their clothes or food (Browne, 2005:99) However, Hadebe fails to mention the following; the reward for women maintaining this ritual of purity would result in the protection of all Shembe people, (Muller, 1999b:161). The role of women is important because they were amongst the first to join the Church. Without women, the Ibandla lamaNazaretha may never have grown into what it is today. Women still make up a large majority of the Ibandla lamaNazaretha Church. Women such as Sangiwe Magwaza were important in the recording of the Shembe history, but their roles were not acknowledged. Many women travelled with Isaiah Shembe while he delivered his message to his people. Some women even held independent Shembe services in their homes and travelled to other places, spreading the word (Gunner, 1988:217). An important part of early history has been lost because the women’s roles were not included in the Shembe praise poem (cf. Gunner, 1988:223). There is another side to the Ibandla lamaNazaretha, women against other women who did not belong to the Ibandla lamaNazaretha Church. For instance, Shembe believed that domestic work would deprive the Shembe women of their power to choose to respect the holy Sabbath. He encouraged them to make a living using their ability in arts and crafts; making mats, baskets, beads, or whatever the women could make. These goods were often sold to tourists at the Shembe festivals and gatherings (cf. Griffin, 1995:11)**.** He believed that empowering women created empowered communities. Much of the church’s ideology was based on respecting and honouring women but in practice this was not always the case. (cf. Griffin, 1995:4). Males, on the other hand, were most always portrayed as heroes. Even young men were shown as successful in healing sicknesses that well established churches and healers could not do. (Gunner, 2002:195).

8.5.2 The status of males and females in the Gospel of Mark

Mark portrays Jesus’ male disciples in a negative light as being obtuse. If male converts were to learn from them, the lesson would be dismal, discouraging and without much substance. In

contrast, women were portrayed in a positive light and rivalled the men successfully even though they did not have influential positions that men occupied Mark depicted the death of Jesus as the turning point between the old and the new age, the religious and social barriers between men and women, and between Jews and Gentiles, (cf. Miller, 2004:ii). Women and the Roman soldier became the only witnesses to the death and resurrection of Jesus and this was a breaking point in the culture of the first-century Mediterranean region.

Taylor (2020) online argues that,

> If you were going to make up a story but wanted to make it credible, you wouldn't choose women as the first public witnesses. Jewish women could offer testimony in domestic, family, and private law but would not function this way as public witnesses or public spokesmen.

Some authors saw Mark's purpose in these events as demonstrating the women's faith (cf. Beavis, 1988:8) Other authors argued that Mark contrasted the discipleship of men and women at this point and argued that while men fled, women stood firm. Fiorenza (1985:320-22) opines that those groups of women (Mk 15:40-41) who were at the cross are to be regarded as the true disciples, whereas men had fled at Jesus' arrest (Mk 15:40). Mark identified women with faith and piety, while Swartley (1997:20) sees women's faith in the key themes in the Gospel (Mk 5:24-34) Gentile mission (Mk 7:24-30) true piety (Mk 12:41-44) and Jesus' suffering and death (Mk 14:3-9).

Mark's writing was guided by the ethos of his time and place. Miller (2002:21) points out that the 'accounts of the healing in (Mk 1:29-30) the healing of Peter's-mother-in-law reflects the androcentric bias of the first century in which male names were revealed but the women remained anonymous.' She points out (Mk 5:21-43; Mk 7:24-30) as an example. in (Mk 5:22) Jairus is mentioned by name; (Mk 5: 25) a haemorrhaging woman is identified by her sickness; in (Mk 7:25) a woman is identified by her race "Syrophoenician," and in (Mk 1:30) the woman is

identified by the name of her son-in-law (Peter's mother-in- law). At the same time the woman is identified by her role in the family; as a cook and server of food to men.

Not all authors viewed Mark's identification of women as some of the authors above, for instance La Mar (2018) online points out how Mark valued the roles of women in Christ's life, particularly that of Mary Magdalene, because he mentions her and them by name several times (Mk 15: 47; Mk 16:1-8, Mk 9-10). Mark gives women the recognition and respect Jesus gave them in His words, in His relationships and in His actions. Unprecedented in its singularity, this respect must have been a special and unique hallmark of the early Christians in the first century. It is, however, true that throughout the Gospel of Mark the writer focuses on the twelve male disciples who accompany Jesus but does not give much prominence to this group of women who follow Jesus until the crucifixion (Mk 15:40-41) who followed and served Jesus in Galilee and who travelled with him to Jerusalem.

The early church was forced to step in line with the culture of the time. Munro (1982:234-236) asserts that Mark intentionally concealed their presence because he was uneasy with the prominence of women in the early church and he was attempting to downplay their role in Jesus' mission. In the previous pages Munro (1982:227-229) opines that women appear only in the private sphere of the home (Mk 1:29-31; Mk 5:35-43; MK 7:24-30; Mk 14:3-9). Schierling (1980:250-256) for instance, gives Mark a totally positive assessment from a narrative, thematic, and theological point of view; she argues that women are the ones who fulfil the Markan Jesus' criteria for discipleship. Turner (2023) online opines that these female disciples of Jesus both followed him and financially supported him and the twelve disciples Above all, they followed him to the cross and remained when all the others fled.

Mark associated women with service. After attending a synagogue service in Caper'naum (Mk 1:21) where he taught, Jesus accompanied by James and John went to Simon and Andrew's house. They found Peter's mother-in-law ill with fever. After Jesus healed her she stood up and served them (Mk 1:31b) thus, *καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός, καὶ διηκόνει αὐτοῖς*. (and the fever left her; and she served them) [NRSV].

Women also undertook the anointing of the body (Mk 14:3-9). In this story a woman arrives holding an alabaster containing a costly ointment, where Jesus was seated at the house of Simon the leper. After entering the house, she broke the alabaster jar open and anointed Jesus with the

oil. The expression *κατέχεεν αὐτοῦ τῆς κεφαλῆς*. (pour it over his head) suggests an anointment. In a similar gesture of women anointing, Mary Magdalen, Mary mother of James and Salome came to the tomb where Jesus' body was buried, to anoint it (Mk 16:1b) thus, *Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ [τοῦ] Ἰακώβου καὶ Σαλώμη ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν.* (Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him) [NRSV]. These women who had discovered that the body of Jesus was not there where it had been buried were the first witnesses of the resurrection. Mark also named a number of women including Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome, as those who were following him (and the members of his disciples) and ministering to him (Mk 15:40) They were playing a women's role of caterers , Mark thus also aligns women with Jesus' suffering and death. They are the last remaining disciples of Jesus, and the only witnesses to his death, burial and resurrection. During the crucifixion, they were watching from a distance (Mk 15:40) which suggests that they had followed Jesus to the end.

8.6 The notion of the written word in Hadebe and Mark

8.6.1 In the written work of Hadebe

Hadebe's contribution to this research in terms of its theology and thew African mythology (Gunner, 2002:181) forms an integral part of the history of Ibandla lamaNazaretha, and more so for its converts. As the sacred history of the church is preserved in his written work. The discovery of the value of the written word extended beyond the recording of sacred history. It became a font of where valuable ideas like song, dance and dream narratives were seen as cultural treasures to convey the message of cultural truth. These were accessible in the written word where converts could assess them without much effort. Oral tradition was helpful, but the written word surpasses other forms due to its timeless character. The inherent performance and cultural messages are constantly re-enacted through socio-cultural and religious conviction.

These cultural performances serve a number of purposes; they communicate both the daily and historical experiences of Ibandla lamaNazaretha, and this is done through the written and spoken language. Those converts who are able to read can perfect their knowledge of the movement beyond even some of their teachers. The written form not information from a single person but it

the collective experience all its members who are willing to contribute their experiences. Consequently, what the converts harvest from the written word is greatly treasured.

8.6.2 In the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is the only "canonical Gospel to use the term [Gospel] at the beginning as a summary of its own contents" (cf. Lane (1974:15). It is curious that Matthew and Luke did not continue with this format. Besides being the first Gospel written, and Matthew and Luke having used him as a source, Mark has a list of expressions that are peculiar to him. Thus, Mark 3:17 ("Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder;" omitted in (Mt 10:2) and (Lk 6:14); Mk 5:41 ("*Talitha cum*; which being interpreted, means Damsel, I say thee, arise"; omitted in (Mt 9:25) and (Lk 8:54); (Mk 7:11) ("*Corban*, that is to say, a gift"; omitted in (Mt15:5), and there is no similar narrative in Luke); (Mk 7:34) ("*Ephphatha*, that is, Be opened"; omitted in (Mt 15:29–31), and there is no similar narrative in Luke); (Mk 9:5) ("*rabbi*"; KJV "master"; (Mt 17:4) uses "Lord" instead, and (Lk 9:33) uses "master" [Greek *epistates*] instead); (Mk 9:43) ("hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched"); (Mk 10:46) ("Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus;" omitted in (Mt 20:30) and (Lk 18:35); (Mk 10:51) ("*rabbouni*;" KJV; "Lord;" (Mt 20:33) and (Lk 18:41) use "Lord" [Greek *kurios*] instead); (Mk 11:9–10) ("*hosanna*;" (Mt 21:9) keeps the usage, but it is omitted in (Lk 19:38); (Mk 11:21) ("*rabbi*;" KJV "Master;" (Mt 21:20) omits it, and there is no similar narrative in Luke); (Mk 14:36). The reason for this peculiarity is that Mark was writing for a different audience from the other gospel writers. Again, from the different languages and interpretations he uses, it seems that he was writing for an audience comprising different races. Mark's Gospel while having told the story of Jesus to the full, is the shortest of the Gospels; having sixteen chapters to Matthew's Gospel of twenty-eight chapters, and Luke's Gospel of twenty-four chapters and John's Gospel of twenty-one chapters.

One of Mark's peculiarity is how he perceived his community or audience. Mark shows Jesus' disciples as making significant mistakes: they do not understand the parables (see (Mk 4:13); this material is not found in the other Gospels); they do not understand what Jesus teaches (Mk 8:14–21); Peter rebukes Jesus for his teachings (Mk 8:32–33); they fail when they try to perform miracles (Mk 9:14–29); they argue about who is best (Mk 9:33–34); they ask for positions of honour (Mk 10:35–40); Judas turns Jesus in to the authorities (Mk 14:10–11, 18–21, and 41–46);

they fall asleep when Jesus asks them to be on the watch (Mk 34–41); Peter denies that he knows Jesus (Mk 14:29–21, 66–72); they all flee when Jesus is arrested (Mk 14:50–52) (cf. Stein (2008:31).

The obtuseness of the disciples, much like the leaders of the people who challenged Jesus serves an important role in the narrative as provided ample teaching opportunities for Jesus (which then became opportunities for the audience to learn from) and also allowed for Jesus to show his patience and faith in their eventual success. Dewey (2006:29) writes, "The very fact that Mark's story is being told suggests that Mark views failure as part of continuing discipleship." (cf. Stein, 2008:31).

8.7 Opposition experienced by the two movements

The communities of both Mark and Shembe were born during socio-political times in their respective areas; Shembe experienced opposition from the missionaries and the government while Mark was opposed by the Jews and the Roman government

8.7.1 In Hadebe

The missionaries disliked Shembe. So much so that they spread lies about him, for example, that he was able to fly. According to the story, Isaiah Shembe allegedly told his followers to go to Mount Nhlangakazi (this is the mountain where the annual January pilgrimage took place) where they would see him fly up to heaven. He ostensibly attached feathers to his back and when he jumped off the mountain, he hit the rocks and died (Meersman (2012) online. Shembe died on 2 May 1935 after standing for three hours in cold water in a river administering adult baptism (Oosthuizen 1968:1).

Besides these difficulties there was a problem of not been able to have enough land to provide for the congregation. The Land Act of 1913 as well as the Group Areas Act of 1950 put restrictions on where minorities could live. The Land Act also made it impossible for black people to own land. These acts made it difficult for Shembe to acquire land (Gunner, 1988: 214). Eventually, he circumvented these obstacles and acquired some piece of land in Inanda where he built his church

called Ekuphakameni. Missionaries attempted other methods one being to evict new Shembe converts living on Mission Reserves. Anglican ministers at Isipingo evicted anyone who was found to have joined the Shembe Church (Gunner, 1988:217). The Shembe mecca at Inanda became a safe haven for those who had been kicked out of their homes by missionaries and family members.

8.7.2 in Mark

Mark forms part of the early Christian movement which encountered opposition from Roman persecution of Christians and Judaism in its course. Some of the accounts appear in the Gospel itself, for instance, (Mk 13:14-23) contains Jesus' predictions of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and disaster for Judea, as well as Mark's version of Jesus' eschatological discourse. Even though this was too early for Mark's recording of his Gospel the events happened to the followers of Jesus anyway. Some accounts of Mark's composition was reputed to suggest Rome as the place of composition (Perkins, 2007:241). Therefore, some of the later followers of Jesus in Rome would have been witnesses to the persecutions.

In the early years of Christianity, the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry emerged as one of the major critics with his book "Against the Christians," along with other writers like Celsus and Julian Porphyry argued that Christianity was based on false prophecies that had not yet materialised. Under the Roman Empire, dissenting religious voices were gradually suppressed by both government and ecclesiastical authorities (cf. Martin, 1991:3-4).

8.8 Converts in both movements

8.8.1 Converts in Shembe church

The following information was gathered from interviews conducted by Shange (2013:59). Members of the church are often grouped based on age and sex. The different groups have meetings where they are taught about their religion as well as how to live godly lives. Two members called Limo and Mbali discuss the monthly gatherings organized for women by the Church. They are named according to the days of the month they usually fall on. The female youth meetings are called i25 because they usually take place on the 25th of every month. The female

elder meetings are called i13 or i14 because they take place on the 13th or 14th of every month. As Limo (interview with author, 2012) describes:

> We as youth women are treated in a decent manner. We have gatherings like i25 where we are taught life skills and how to behave as young girls of Ekuphakameni. At these meetings we are encouraged to celebrate who we are by staying pure and natural and avoiding things like extensions and straightened hair. We are protected from the bad things that happen out there.
>
> Mbali (interview with author, 2012) elaborated:
>
> There are gatherings for women; we call these i13 and i14, because they usually take place on the 13thand 14thof every month. We all gather and learn from each other regardless of whether you are married or not. I am very happy with the way we are treated. But the most important thing and what applies to everyone is respect.

Dumisani and Pinky discusses why they believe Shembe oral tradition is useful and the importance of learning from the elders of the Shembe Church: We are taught life lessons, like respecting the home and our families and our future families when we are older. We also taught the ways in which we can further the important Shembe values when we are older, then we are the ones leading the church as priests and counsellors (Dumisani, interview with author, 2011).

For Pinky, the Shembe religion is important because it teaches respect: We teach our children how to be respectful and humble people and to respect their elders. We teach them to understand that it is important to respect people because God is in people; God is in each and every single one of us. We teach children to be respectful in their mannerisms, their language and the way they address people. We teach them to be respectful in what they choose to wear; they have to respect themselves and their bodies. It is this way that Nazareth children are different from most, they understand and value respect (Pinky, interview with author, 2012).

8.8.2 In Mark

There is no precise information of what happened in Mark's community but the information from Luke in (Ac 2:42-47). In Ac 2:42 "they remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles." Ac2:46 suggests that this was happening in Jerusalem, because it stated that "They went as a body to the

Temple daily." However, it is not as if they is absolutely no information of what might have happened to Mark's early community. Schor (2009:474) opines that the first model proposes it should be called the 'apostolic mission model'. This model departs from the universal assumption that no conversion to any religion is possible without a process of convincing. Christians in the early church, at some or other stage in their lives, were convinced by someone they trusted to become Christians. The prime source of new Christian converts was the influence of individuals were perceived to possess some spiritual gift (cf. Schor, 2009:475) such the visionaries, martyrs, prophets, healers or learned men. This suggests that in the community of Mark there were others who promoted the developments of converts.

8.9 Conclusion

Chapter 8 discussed formal and practical information under which the converts of the two movements could learn and develop. It also discussed the differences and similarities of the rise of the two models and the forms of their development, theologically and liturgically, were analysed. The difference between the sexes and how they derive their information from established members and the reasons for departing from a religions were reviewed.. The views on these topics were to assist the converts to learn and develop their congregations based on the history and development of their religions. In the new movements the first step was to find a way to formulate and teach a new body of beliefs and if possible, these should differ from those where the movement originated from. In the early Christian movement, the Didache was the early treatise which first appeared in Koine Greek. However, there is no consensus on the actual date when the text was written. Some parts of the Didache contain the oldest catechism made up of three main sections dealing with Christian ethics, rituals such as baptism and Church organisation. The converts were taught virtuous ways of living and the wicked ways that led to death.

As discussed above, the Catechumenate consisted of a shorter period of preparation for baptism, followed by baptism by immersion, and possibly also an anointing and/or laying on of hands. The catechumens were supposed to fast for two days. Water was be used for baptism in this liturgical ritual was also described and prescriptions on the use of the water were outlined. According to the Didache, only those who had been baptised had access to the eucharist. In the case of Hadebe,

converts were taught about the Holy Spirit and its work in the church and the daily lives of people. Shembe was a Nazarene, a Sabbatarian as well as, strongly Ethiopianist. The healing rituals relied also on incense (*impepho*) which was burnt during the rituals to awaken the ancestors; it was used in rituals that took place during major gatherings such as the Nhlangakazi annual pilgrimage. The major changes in Hadebe's religion from missionary tradition were twofold; one was the Sunday to Saturday worship.

The fundamental tenets of the two religions were that Hadebe was part of Shembe's church, and Mark was a follower of Jesus, and these religions were breakaways from missionary Christianity and Judaism respectively. The distinction between the religion Jesus founded and Judaism where he belonged was acute in the concept of animal sacrifices versus the Eucharist. In the words of the Eucharist Jesus was the sacrificial victim and his followers were to consume him (Mk 14:22-25). Judaism regarded this belief as blasphemous and cannibalistic in attitude. The distinction between Hadebe and the African Native Baptist Church where his mentor Shembe originated from was that the African Native Baptist Church was a Christian denomination that observed the Holy Trinity, while Hadebe's Nazarite Baptist Church did not recognise the Holy Trinity and Jesus Christ was not divine, according to their faith.

These were the basic doctrines the converts recognised and learnt.Tuition for the converts was done formally by catechism and informally by learning from the confirmed members. In this practice there were no distinctions between the two models. From these two perspectives, therefore, conversion could be understood as the adoption of a set of beliefs identified with one particular religious denomination to the exclusion of others. This concept could also mean changing from one denomination to the other within the same religion, for example, from Protestant Christianity to Romain Catholicism, (Rodney & Finke (2000). Herin lie the similarities because both belong to the same form of religion which use the same baptismal formula of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Theologically, there are also many similarities. The difference may lie only in the constitutionally the running of these churches.

CHAPTER 9:

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

A Summary of the major Arguments

9.1. The findings

From the research in this thesis, it has become clear that in Africa south of the Sahara, the issue of dealing with hermeneutics as a special African subject appears to be a relatively new concept. Those who are interested and understand the scope of work in the advancement of hermeneutics are mostly intellectuals operating from universities. The Africans who had been actively involved in the field of the actual African biblical interpretation were also the founders of the AICs. There were the early founders who initiated their churches in the late nineteenth century and twentieth century such as Shembe, Lekhanyane, and 'MaNku, including many others who did not gain popularity. The reason for the popularity of these founders was not because of their expertise in the interpretation of the bible but rather, it was because of their healing skills.

Corresponding to the early church founders were authors such as Barrett (1968:1-7), Sundkler (1961:13-64), Turner (1967:ixv), and Oosthuizen (1986:1-20) who presented scholarly studies focusing on the reasons for the rise of the AICs. They discovered, among other reasons that the founders of AICs were dissatisfied with the biblical interpretations of the missionaries and . desired to interpret it in their way.

Unfortunately, those African innovators did not pursue religious collaboration with their fellow church leaders, where they could discuss problems in terms of bible interpretation, or obtain advice on the different directions they could take. Consequently, they had no way of knowing which problems and areas of biblical interpretation were commonly problematic and should be addressed, or how to make the bible their instrument. These lacunae limited the thesis in terms of the study of African hermeneutics, as the issues the thesis faced were not those raised by the leaders of the churches themselves, but rather, those of the intellectuals.

9.2 The limitations

The research only engaged with two central characters, namely Hadebe and Mark. There is thus a need for more authors to engage with the thesis topic. The topic was limited to the cultural conditions for South African black people, thus, as soon as the culture changed, so too did the solution. Religion and culture cannot be separated (Beyers, 2017:1), thus similar conditions do not apply to the white South African population. The South African whites form part of other whites in most parts of the Western world. The problems of African biblical interpretation are also temporal, that is, as soon as the culture changes, these too may become affected by those changes. Religion is often a major force in shaping values, norms, and practices as religion is a cultural expression (Boyer, 2001:47).

There is also lack of cooperation between academia and AIC leadership. The AICs play an important role in shaping the attitudes, values and ethics of their membership (Öhlmann et al, 2016:1). Academic institutions have not granted opportunities for these groups to train their ministers because the majority of their ministers do not have the minimum requirements for entry into the university programmes. The focus of institutions has been to do research in these churches from the perspective of outsiders. There are very few studies by members of this community on their community- one of those is Nkosinathi Sithole, a member of the Nazareth Baptist Church. AICs in South Africa have a high degree of transformative potential (Eisenstadt, 1968:20) as 'the capacity to legitimise, in religious or ideological terms, the development of new motivations, activities, and institutions.' This transformative potentiality cannot be translated into academics. Consequently, it is difficult for the thesis research to assess that transformative capability.

9.3. The contribution of this study

This thesis is a contribution to the ongoing search for a solution to the challenging quest of African biblical interpretation, where Africans form the basis of that interpretation. First, the focus would be on the contributions made by the three major objectives and the methodology used. Second, the focus would be on certain specific areas. The contribution related to the three major study objectives are as follows:

The first objective was to initiate a critical investigation into how the bible could be interpreted in such a way that an African could form the basis of that study. This indeed is an enormous undertaking that can only be achieved through many different approaches over a long period of time.

Using the theoretical reflection, it was shown how, in the last five decades, researchers were already relating the African to the bible. A number of authors and their relevant works in this regard are listed below: Ukpong, J., (1995) Reading the Bible with African Eyes; Adamo, D. T. (2018). 'The portrayal of Africa and Africans in the book of Jeremiah; Dube, Z. (2018d). ' Ukutwasa – The call of a wayside healer; Nyiawung, M. D. (2013). Contextualising biblical exegesis: What is the African biblical hermeneutic approach?; Ukpong, J. (1999). 'Developments in biblical interpretation in modern Africa; Ukpong, J. (2002) Inculturation hermeneutics: An African approach to biblical interpretation; Onwu, N. (1984-85). The current state of biblical studies in Africa; Nyiawung, M. D. (2013). Contextualising biblical exegesis: What is the African biblical hermeneutic approach? As the approaches of the above authors are varied, it clearly indicates the level of vision required in achieving this objective.

The second objective was to gain insight into the healing in the Gospel according to Mark and the testimony of Hadebe, in which an African plays a major role. It has been said that the Bible is an African history (Sinclair, 2017), and more pertinently, that Africans are mentioned 1700 times in the Bible (Adamo, 2016:6). However, most of the time, prominent Africans who appear in the bible are ancient Egyptians negatively presented in the Old Testament. Other Africans who appear are Ethiopians who appear in the New Testament with minor supporting roles like the Eunuch of Candace (Acts 8:27-39) or Simon of Cyrene (Mk 15:21). There is no absolute agreement that he was of black African descent, except that he was born in Cyrene, modern-day Libya, and may have been of either Greek, Roman or Jewish descent. Another consideration is that the Africans who appear in the bible are from North Africa. The object of the thesis is South Africa and Africa south of the Sahara, even though black Africans from other parts of Africa are also accepted. Hadebe's narrative describes an African as actively involved and making a major contribution, such as his creation story where Shembe and his associates appear alongside God in the creation of the world. This story, even though not exactly in line with the biblical creation myth, does make an impact on interpreting the biblical story of creation as myth.

The third objective was to understand the relationship between Mark's and Hadebe's cultural values. Even though Mark's Jesus and Hadebe's Shembe are viewed by their respective authors as powerful healers—and to some extend magical—and who have not undergone any training, they are in fact custodians of their indigenous knowledge of the healing trade. Jesus comes from a long line of Jewish prophetic healers, a profession he learned to practise and ultimately perfected. The same could be said about Hadebe's Shembe. The ability of Jesus to perfect his healing is obvious in his use of saliva, a methodology which is not common in his Jewish ancestry but common where he travelled in the Greco-Roman territories. It is also obvious how the patients of these healers were receptive to the treatment as being both customary and culturally acceptable to them. Furthermore, patients also appreciated the holistic nature of the traditional healer's approach, which attended to both physical and mental illnesses.

Even though the Gospel according to Mark was written long before Hadebe's story and it was also written far away from Hadebe's world, it was pointed out by Graffert (2008) in his hypothesis that there was the aspect of similarities in their cultural health-care system. in terms of their belonging to a traditional non-modern healing system. Their healing depended on a symptomatic assessment, that is, certain illnesses were known by the effects they had on the patient. Since healing is a cultural construct, as Kleinman (1980) has argued at least to this small extent, the causes of the illnesses in Mark's Gospel could be culturally compared to those in Hadebe's testimony.

9.4 Recommendations

In this connection, factors that could guide future development theory in African religion has not yet been afforded the attention it deserves in facing the impasse of African biblical interpretation. Thus, the thesis research intends to revisit the African value system and its ontology, as Hadebe's Shembe and his lineage stems from an ancient AmaZulu bloodline. The limitations have revealed that more research should be undertaken on this issue; the research should not only be based exclusively on academic pursuits, but should also be secular, spiritual and biblical.

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