

## ZIONIST SPEAKING

*Good words have power for the Xhosa*

– Koos Oosthuysen

A prominent part of the Christian religion has always been the institution of preaching. From the earliest times it played a basic role in the Judeo-Christian tradition (cf. Luke 4:16–21; Acts 15:21). Jesus himself devoted a large part of his ministry to preaching and sent out his disciples to preach in his name (Matthew 10:7). In the apostolic church preaching took place not only as a missionary activity, but also in the context of the assembled congregation of believers (Romans 15:4; Acts 18:24–28). In worship the original emphasis upon the word, the *logos*, has been maintained or revitalised in subsequent church history.

Within the context of missionary expansion – in particular in that of Protestantism – the centrality of the word has also been transferred from the West to Africa and elsewhere. Preaching, and especially thematic preaching, had become the order of the day with ritualistic elements playing second fiddle, if any at all. In the Xhosa-speaking environment a preacher, *umshumayeli*, had become a person who preaches the Gospel, although the word 'preacher' was traditionally used in a wider sense as well. In church circles there is no popular equivalent for a ritual officiant.

In the majority of the AICs, including the Zionists of the Cape Flats, as I argue in the final chapter, a synthesis between Christianity and the traditional African religion has been reached. Bengt Sundkler (1961:181) stated that from a Christian perspective such syntheses have an explicit ritualistic trend:

The African heritage shows itself in the fact that the anti-ritualistic programme of the mission is replaced by a tendency to move to the other extreme, to lay a *strong emphasis on the importance of ritual* ... Protestant missions brought the Zulu into contact with a form of Christianity which was centred round a Book. The independent Church changed the stress and evolved a form of religion centred round a set of rites (cf. Kiernan 1990:75–103).

The primacy of the word, centred on the Bible, defines a large part of traditional African missionary Christianity initiated from the West. In contrast, a kinetic expression of the Christian religion, motion in song, dance and ritual, has become the outstanding characteristic of the churches of the Spirit.

Has the word therefore been trivialised or even eliminated in these churches? Hardly. In many African cultures, and certainly in the Xhosa one,

there is a position and prestige attached to rhetorical skills and oratorical powers ... This emphasis has been syncretized within the cults [sic] with the Christian emphasis on preaching. The resulting sermons may not be as central and crucial to worship as they are to the Christian Church, nevertheless they cannot be ignored in the role they play in the member's religious experience. These sermons also provide an arena for verbal art – the artful use of words (Fernandez 1967:46).

In this chapter I examine some characteristics of the use and the content of words in the speaking of Zionist churches of the Cape Flats. In particular their sermons, but likewise commentary, in the sense of a series of continuous comments on events in the service in which this speaking takes place, are investigated. I refer to sermons and commentary together as 'speaking' or 'oratory', which, with the exception of a few loan words from Afrikaans, English and Zulu, is all in the Xhosa vernacular. The emphasis is on aspects of the nature and content of their speaking, in particular in the areas of communication and theology.

James Fernandez (1967:46) reminds us that speaking and especially a speech event 'is much more than that corpus which is the traditional material of linguistic analysis'. I thus pay attention to more than the transcribed text of the speaking itself. To state my intention clearly: the focus is on the Zionists' speaking within the framework of ritual, which I view as a standardised series of acts performed in ceremonious manner and concerned with the supernatural. I see the Zionist service as a public-speaking event within the ambit of ritual expression, well aware – and this I acknowledge forthrightly – that the focus on speaking is my priority as researcher and not necessarily that of the Zionists. To describe, analyse and evaluate the speaking I freely made use of the guidelines provided by Patrick McAllister (1986:12–15) as discussed in chapter 2.

## **Attending the service**

The following elaborate description of a typical Zionist service that took place on 8 November 1998 gives a representative impression of the interaction

between the speaking, specifically the preaching, and the ritual elements. Significant features peculiar to three other services I scrutinised are subsequently attended to.

## The setting

A mood of relaxed mid-Sunday movement prevails in Langa township. In a rectangular shack of 8 x 7 metres attached to the double-storey New Flats in Zone 5 (completed in 1976), the service of the Zion Reform Apostolic Church of South Africa (Reform Church) is about to start. In the proximity of the 'temple' people are continually passing and vendors are doing a bit of trade while the aroma of meat frying on a nearby makeshift 'braai' fills the air. Now and again a cracker goes off as reminder that it has been only a few days since Guy Fawkes.

Typical of the situation in Cape Town, this Zionist service is held indoors – unlike the frequent outdoor services of spiritual churches in, for example, Nairobi. Inside the shack, lacking a ceiling below the corrugated iron sheeting, the atmosphere is one of semi-formality and expectancy. The cement floor is bare except for a few well-worn mats along the sides. A single wooden pole in the middle of the floor helps to support the roof but also acts as one of the two focal points of the service: the *ritual* centre. The pole is a little exceptional in such temples and it is in this case given its importance by the drum placed on a chair next to it. The other central point of the temple – from where the most *speaking* is done – is a table which accommodates a home-made menorah with seven burning candles, while an eighth one is mounted in front of the lampstand. As in most Zionist services a pulpit – the epitome of Protestant Christianity – is conspicuously absent. Speakers though do from time to time refer to the table as a 'pulpit' [*ipalpiti*] or an 'altar' [*iqonga*].

The space between the drum and the walls of the room – in theological jargon: the liturgical space – is edged all round by chairs and benches. Men and women are seated separately, the former occupying the places to the left of the door as well as at the table. The room is gloomy. Besides the candles, three small windows and the door provide the only light. Colour is added by a square-metre web-like 'flag' of woollen cords with 24 hanging tassels, fastened at different points to the ceiling with similar multicoloured cords.

Woollen cords are practically the only decoration of the predominantly white robes and female headgear, which lack the typical Zionist stars, crosses and

other simple adornments. One rather striking exception is the clothing of the busy steward: a white long-sleeved dress covered by a bright red toga. Another is a woman with a long cape, dress and headgear, all maroon with numerous white stars and braid. Everyone is barefoot, having removed their shoes after entry into the temple. Some of the senior men have small towels that will later prove to be useful to wipe the sweat off their faces – this is summer time.

## The events

The sequence of events contains all the typical elements of Zionist services elsewhere in the Cape Flats townships. While the preliminary singing is done, the leader blesses someone's uniform at the pulpit. He does this with a short prayer, his open hands laid on the clothing in benediction.

After a word of welcome by a young minister who acts as a kind of master of ceremonies, as well as a few minutes of singing and circle dancing, the service is constituted: 'We are now in the service' (*Sisenkonzweni ngoku*). A hymn is sung (*Thixo akunanqaleko*) and a second set of candles is lighted, all held securely in the small hands of a group of white-clad girls. Then the 'Books of Worship' (*Iincwadi zobhedesho*) are opened. First the Law is read from Exodus 20. At the end of each commandment of the second table the congregation sings 'Amen' four times. The Beatitudes from Matthew 5:1–12 follows this. Each time the whole congregation joins in saying the second part of a particular Beatitude aloud.

The door is then closed for the communal prayers. A young minister reads a passage from Scripture, Luke 11:1–2, which is followed by the singing of the Lord's Prayer, the rhythm provided by the drum. All members are on their knees, the little girls, each clutching a candle firmly, kneel down in front of the 'pulpit' with heads bent forward submissively. All stand up for the last lines of the singing. Whereas the three readings from Scripture noted above are more or less standard Zionist practice, the customary saying of prayers aloud, uninhibitedly, emotionally and simultaneously by the whole congregation is not used on this occasion.

The next song is a slight alteration to what is probably the best-known hymn in all the country and also the national anthem, *Nkosi, sikelel' iAfrika*. The abbreviated name of the church, *iReform*, replaces *iAfrika* although the tune remains unchanged. The door is now opened.

Four women around the drum move their bodies and clap. Some begin to whirl round. First two or three, then gradually as many as 12 adults start dancing in a circle around the drum. A virtually uninterrupted 22-minute session of singing, hand-clapping and spontaneous joining of the circle dancing (*ukujikeleza*) around the drum follows, always moving anti-clockwise. The adults give way to the small girls who move at a considerably slower pace. Then the build-up of tempo, volume and enthusiasm reaches a peak. A kind of 'holy disorder' seems to reign. The middle-aged woman with maroon attire encircles the drum only twice but some individuals continue for scores of rounds, dropping out perhaps to rejoin a little later.

Those who are temporarily not in the circle continue with their individual dancing while maintaining the rhythm of the group. Outside the temple an interested young woman watches the events with such abandon that she starts to move her body to the rhythm. However, she does not enter. Besides the drum, music and rhythm are provided by a bell as well as several home-made tambourines (tins with loose stones inside) supplemented by a modern one. From time to time one of the dancers sounds three shrill whistles.

Toward the end of the session the young minister comments on the Holy Spirit's presence. After a few minutes of more dancing he indicates the end of the *ukujikeleza* period, and then hands over the guidance of the service to the president. A hymn (*'Nkosi yam, ubundithanda'*) is sung and he requests a second minister to read a scriptural passage which comes from Matthew 25:1-13, the parable of the ten girls. After another hymn (an enlivened version of *'Wazithwal' izono, Yesu'*), the first preacher reads the portion voicing what he expects to follow: 'Let me lay the foundation and we will see how the others build.' Practically all members of the congregation follow the reading in their Bibles in respectful silence.

Eight preachers – all men – preach in succession. Each time a preacher leaves the space in front of the 'pulpit' the singing, circling and hand-clapping start anew. One preacher in particular moves around preaching wherever his feet find space to go. Most remain more stationary although unmistakably not impassive. A short bench is placed in front of the table and anyone who wishes to convert is requested to come and take a seat. A few glances are cast in the direction of some visitors who, without uniforms, seem to be the only candidates. On this occasion there is no positive response and the bench is removed without any ado.

More singing is followed by a kind of pastoral engagement in which healing takes place and which lasts for about 20 minutes. The drumming, circle dancing and singing continue throughout. Some 20 people, mostly women, some with babies, seek healing. The three male healers are simultaneously in action, each with a different person. One of them holds his open hands to the flames of the menorah, engaging in serious prayer. Hands are laid upon the sick and diseased, some seized firmly in grips while shaken. One in particular, who has related a vision she had, is bound with a rope under her arms and is forcibly swung around. All the time the healers pray agitatedly.

Next, somewhat against the flow of the sequence of events, a prophecy by a young male member follows involving weapons (*izikhali*), a dark cloud (*ilifu elimnyama*), a person with bound hands and feet, as well as an axe. Humbly he admits that he does not know what the meaning of the prophecy is but affirms that he could not do otherwise than to reveal it. In three different speech events the president of the church interprets and explains all four elements of the prophecy. In the meantime a second and older man relates his prophecy in which a few very serious objections are made against the president of the church.

People now look uncertainly at the leaders for guidance. Some discussion takes place among the leaders, partly audible to the congregation. One after the other the male leaders explain that a prophecy in which a leader is involved should be dealt with in a special manner. One of them even considers vocally apply the *isisefo* practice in which other prophets test the prophecy (as described previously). The president, the highest-ranking office present, gives a final pronouncement on the issue which elicits a negative response from the objecting prophet (see the discussion on the issue of prophecy in the next section). Attention is now paid to some women who suffer from ailments.

The researchers are given the opportunity to greet the congregation just before the announcements are made. By this time people have already started to drift out. The benediction concludes the service which had lasted some four hours, without the regular communal greeting found at the end of most Zionist services.

## Additional features

Other noteworthy aspects of the service include a sense of celebration and an enthusiastic atmosphere created largely by the music, circle dancing and

paralanguage and the importance of being together as a distinguishable group of believers, temporarily separated from outsiders. A strong consciousness of communal participation prevailed throughout. The mild tension raised as a result of the young man's prophecy was defused with the leaders maintaining control of the proceedings. This was also shown when a drunken woman, apparently a diviner, entered the service carrying a large bag. One of the leaders immediately removed the bag while the woman dosed off on the liturgical space. After a while, and without causing any disturbance, she was firmly but gently escorted outside. Some two hours later, when the service had ended, she was still lying at the door of the temple, apparently sadly forsaken.

A missionary dimension to the service was the invitation accepted by a few young men who had stood outside the open door, most likely attracted by the reassuring sounds of the drumbeating. They entered and followed what was happening with noted interest: 'They came in out of inquisitiveness to see what happens here in the service.' Yet, on this occasion they did not 'sit down on the chair' intended for new converts. They eventually stayed for the best part of the service, even joining in the clapping. All those present, from the most vigorous to an old infirm man, usually participated in the various events, be it by singing, clapping or other forms of bodily movement. At times the tremendous sound volume became nearly overwhelming to the visitor.

There were two comical elements. A rather dignified male leader who, during the circle dancing kept on throwing his tambourine in the air with a majestic gesture, had to use a prancing movement to catch it again. Once he did not succeed. The impressively dressed steward became a little too ostentatious and, with closed eyes, running against the flow of the dance, bumped unceremoniously into other members. The congregation seemed to enjoy such incidents.

One woman entered into what I have referred to as an altered state of consciousness, possibly a trance. Several efforts to control her behaviour were ultimately successful and she eventually recovered well enough to rejoin the *ukujikeleza*. At one stage the possibility of using a whistle (which is reserved for extreme cases of evil possession) was mentioned.

Fifty-five people in all attended the service (besides the researchers). Twenty-seven were women, including a few teenagers and young adults, sixteen men and twelve children under the age of 10. Older children of the ages between 11 and 18 were notably absent.

## Review

A review of the service a few days after the event provided an opportunity to reflect on a number of issues which otherwise would have remained vague or unknown. Present at the interview, which lasted a little more than an hour, were four women and two men who had attended the service.

The matters raised included the following:

- In response to an inquiry about the significance of the flag, the consensus was that it is primarily there to shelter or protect the congregation as was the case with the Ark of the Covenant in ancient Israel. The flag is a permanent fixture in the temple but the Reform Church does have a second one that goes with it when visiting elsewhere. The alternative flag has the full name of the church on it and serves as a mark of identity, 'It shows that we are a particular people' (*singabantu abathile*).
- The question whether anyone lived in the temple, met the following response: nobody is allowed to live there, the exception being destitute groups of people, for example, those whose houses have been destroyed by fire. (On 7 March 1999 800 shacks burnt down in Langa, leaving 2 000 people homeless. On 29 December of the same year 1 000 people were again left homeless. On the following 6th of January 200 people lost all their possessions while on the 16th, 80 shacks burnt down, all in the same township.)
- The answer to the question of whether enough attention is given to children was that the Reform Church likes to give them a share in their activities, especially as choir members. Children of the age of 16 and even as young as 13 can be baptised on request. It is admitted that the attendance of young boys is not as frequent as the Church would like it to be.
- In response to the question why only men heal during the service, the reply was given that women do heal when there are no male leaders present or when the latter assign the task to them.
- The somewhat detached treatment of the drunken diviner, that is, in the observation of the researchers, was partly explained by the fact that she, in this condition, is a regular visitor to the services of the Reform Church, one who sometimes has a negative influence on the proceedings.
- The rather abrupt ending to the service, without the usual long line and everyone giving everyone else a handshake while singing and dancing, was

accounted for by the fact that the service was longer than usual. One respondent said: 'It is our regular custom that everyone, from the archbishop to the smallest child, greet one another.'

- The explanation for why the woman dressed in maroon encircled the drum only twice was simply that she has trouble with her legs.

## Other services

Three more services held in the Cape Flats, each with its own setting, purpose and features, are discussed here.

A service took place on 10 October 1998. The church involved was the Saul Prophet Apostolic Church in Zion, interestingly nicknamed *Siyaprofeta Apha Church in Zion* by the members themselves. The all-night service was held in the Gugulethu Community Centre, situated within a municipal complex. About 80 people attended.



A couple at Gugulethu being ordained for the ministry

The main feature of this service was the ordination of a minister and his wife. At a certain stage the couple were seated on two chairs in front of the table which serves as an altar or pulpit. Five senior men from the Saul Church and from visiting churches first laid their hands on or spread their hands, palms down, over the couple's new garments and then, after a muted and brief discussion on procedure, used the same gestures to bless those that were being ordained. The leaders were praying while the congregation danced around the drum. No oil was used as in the case of higher ranks.

A few other traits should be mentioned. Two of the five preachers of the day were women, likely because a woman was being ordained together with her husband. A kneeling woman read from the Scriptures. The preacher, who repeated sentences from the Bible, continually interrupted her and expanded on the text (see below). One of the preachers explained why they themselves do not do the reading: 'I never went to school.' As observed elsewhere, the names of people who were prominent on the occasion were included in the choruses sung, in this case those of the ordained and that of the bishop of the church. As the occasion was a festive one, the table in front had, besides the menorah with lighted candles, cool drinks and other refreshments.

The third service I deal with is one of the Holy Smirna Church in Zion of the RSA held in a Khayelitsha shack on 29 November 1998. Thirty-eight people attended it. This was a marriage service in which the couple were seated in front of the pulpit throughout the preaching and presentations, which consisted of gifts as well as words of well-wishing, advice and admonishment by no less than fourteen speakers, male and female unintentionally divided equally.

The extraordinary feature, however, was a cleansing ritual (*intlambululo*) at the beginning of the service. The menorah was placed on the floor in front of the altar/pulpit and opposite the drum. A few small girls went down on their knees and one after the other first greeted the congregation and then briefly bore witness to their spiritual condition, a few stating that there was no stumbling-block (*isikhubekiso*) in their lives to hinder their participation in the service. In succession six female members then went down on their knees individually and did the same, some adding appropriate verses from the Bible. It is not clear why the men did not participate.

Another notable incident was the archbishop's behaviour during the presentation of gifts. He was apparently not happy with the haphazard manner in which women offered their presents. So he interrupted the

proceedings and demonstrated what the proper course was by bending his body down and play-acting: 'Mama, here is your present.' Both his control of the happenings as well as his concern to teach members the desirable ways were thus exhibited.

Other than the customary usage among Zionists in which the doors are shut only during prayers, on this occasion the door was kept closed (apart from people entering and leaving the temple) for the duration of the three and three quarter hour service.

The final service under scrutiny had a meaningful ritual quality. It was held in a classroom of a primary school situated in another section of Khayelitsha and attended by about 110 adults (with men predominating slightly and exceptionally) and 15 children. On 28 September 1999 the Kushe Apostolic Church of Zion in South Africa held a service of condolence (*inkonzo yokhuzo*), or as a speaker put it, 'they are cleansing something that happened' (*bayihlambulul' into ebehlele*) in memory of the death of their founder and leader more than a year earlier.

The service had as background the customary Xhosa ceremony in which a ritual is formally performed when the relatives of a deceased kraal-head are allowed to return to the homestead from the forest to which they had moved after his death. The period of strict mourning in which family members were separated from the rest of society was now formally terminated. In the case of the service, the deceased's church and not his family were primarily, though not exclusively, addressed. The service was to be followed at the house of the deceased the next morning – firstly, by the formal 'removal of the board' on which he was indicated as the head of the church, and secondly, by the election of a new leader (which reminds one of the eldest son of the house who was traditionally installed as the new kraal-head).

Other noteworthy characteristics include a menorah with ten candles (contrasting the normal seven); the welcoming of a group of new arrivals who formed a single line and were then ceremoniously led in a circle by the master of ceremonies after which a round of loud collective prayers followed; the fact that senior members bared their feet and the rest did not; the public presentation of gifts in aid of the bereaved family (including an exceptionally high amount of R1 200), all accompanied by appropriate speaking.

The service took place at the end of the week in which South Africa had had its biggest-ever strike by civil servants and in which more than 15 000 people

died in an earthquake in Turkey. Yet, not a single word or reference to these events was heard in the Zionists' speaking during the all-night service.

In none of the four services discussed was the Apostles' Creed, widely used by churches in the West and by many African mainstream churches, recited or sung. This is in accordance with a general absence of the Apostles' Creed or any other formal statement of faith in Zionist church services and practice.

## In conclusion

The Zionist style of worship with its lively face-to-face interaction transforms a simple happening into a meaningful event of celebration, one in which the participants experience social cohesion, spiritual empowerment, a sense of comfort and protection, and even a measure of entertainment. Something of the atmosphere of traditional Xhosa gatherings is captured and this apparently suits the members of the congregation better than that of the style of worship in the mainstream churches.

To both members and visitors the Zionist worship service is in many ways a profound occurrence. This especially applies to the heart of the service, the sessions of enthusiastic circle dancing round the indispensable drum beating, usually accompanied by singing and clapping. Music is indeed a vital element of the service as indicated repeatedly. Attending a Zionist service reminds one of Walter Hollenweger's description of a slightly different but closely related context: the 'pentecostals are building a cathedral of sounds, a socio-acoustic sanctuary, which is particularly important for people who have no cathedral or have left it' (Anderson & Hollenweger 1999:170).

## Characteristics of Zionist speaking

The importance of words and speaking in Zionist services is universal:

Words are one of the symbolic forms through which people express themselves, their relationships, their principles, and their values, to themselves. Speaking is part of the celebration of society, since it is through speaking, in conjunction with other symbols, that 'society' is recreated in the minds of the participants. This is not always obvious or straightforward, because speech, like other symbols, need to be

interpreted and understood within the overall context in which it occurs (McAllister 1986:4).

The Zionists of the Cape Flats can be described as a 'speech community', a group of people who share the rules of speaking and of the interpretation of speech: 'Speaking within a community is participation in the community and indicates acceptance by its members. There is a link between speech and a sense of community' (p. 12). Within this social entity people communicate in a variety of ways, of which some forms and their important characteristics are examined here.

The speech used in the Zionist service differs from everyday speech: it is executed in a mode different from ordinary oral performance heard in people's homes, on their streets, while travelling, at work or during recreation. The object of interest here is therefore not the natural speech uttered by Zionists in the course of everyday living and which is an ordinary part of such living. It is the speaking in the formal setting of the church service. I attend specifically to speech in the four services described above, but likewise take into account my wider exposure to Zionist speaking over a few decades.

In which ways then does this speaking in the voluble Zionist service differ from their ordinary oral performance? In answering this question some of the most important features of the Zionists' speaking are considered. (Illustrations are, predominantly, though not exclusively, from the data gathered).

## The speech situation

On the macro level Zionists' speaking – a form of Xhosa oratory – takes place within the general socio-economic context which I have already described (see chapter 3). Historical factors contributed towards shaping the life circumstances of the urban Zionists and thus provide the broad setting for their speaking. Yet, as is the case with their counterparts in other urban areas, the speaking of the Zionists of the Cape Flats also happens within a local context, a specific speech situation. The example of such a setting in the Langa township is described above. A factor, which should be taken into account in this regard, is the continuous oscillation between the Xhosa-speaking hinterland and Cape Town, between the rural and urban contexts as described previously.

In the urban setting, as well as other instances, the context is a sacral one, set aside from everyday, secular life. The belief is therefore that those people included in the sacral context are connected to the supernatural, symbolically by their church attire, literally by the closed door, often by baring their feet. An implication following from this is that the content of the speaking (see the next section) is directly related to this sacred context in which it takes place. The content is largely influenced by the ideas and the beliefs appropriate to this kind of context – which is an explicitly Christian one as the frequently heard phrase ‘in the name of the Lord’ illustrates. Here Zion is found, here the faithful are gathered and incorporated, separate but simultaneously bridging the gap between two states of existence: on the one hand, the secular, the township as living place and the larger city as working place, on the other hand the sacred, the church as sanctified community.

Conversant with the sacral aspect of the context, the speaking, as mentioned earlier, also takes place within the context of ritual. The ritual very often consists of words and actions, while speaking can be used in rituals in a variety of ways. For example, speaking can be part of the performance of the ritual itself – compare a leader’s invocation of God while his hands are held towards the flame of a candle. Speaking can also be the explanations or directions to participants or to the audience in the ritual. For instance, the laying of hands on new garments or on the heads of those ordained during ordination. Speaking can comment on what is happening in the ritual as when baptism (performed outside) or a funeral takes place and someone often explicitly explains what is being done and why it is done. For instance:

Let me too say something on this occasion. I do this to explain why we have gathered at this place tonight. [We are here] due to the lord we know, Father M., who was the Founder Minister of the K Church. Today a year has passed since he died. Today is the day of his consolation service ... These issues, my parents, [give] the reason why we have gathered you here.

*Ndithi ngale ntsasa nam mandivule umlomo. Ndithi nje ukuyityhila ukuba kungenxa kungani na ukuba sikule ndawo ngobusuku banamhlanje. Kungenxa yenkosi eli esiyaziyo, uBawo M., owayengumfundisi umFounder ofounde iBandla laseK. Namhlanje umnyaka uphelile owashiyayo. Ke imini yokhuzo lwakhe ... Isizathu ke, bazali bam, eyokuba sizokunidibanisa kule ndawo zezo ndaba.*

In addition to the different rituals that might be enacted during the service, I view the entire Zionist service as a ritual, a standardised series of acts performed week after week in a ceremonious manner and pertaining to the supernatural. In both cases, the specific ritual acts and the whole service, speaking is an indispensable element. Complete and sustained silence surrounding a ritual act in a Zionists service is simply unthinkable.

A further point to note is that the context itself is part of the total communication process, a form of communication that helps the listener to interpret what is said and to relate certain ways of speaking to ideas and beliefs about the particular sacred occasion (cf. McAllister 1981:42).

### Sequence of speech events in the sacral context

Zionist services, besides singing, involve a great deal of speaking. They are dominated by verbal communication of various kinds. This speech is delivered according to a fairly well-established sequence of speech events. Sessions of singing, circle dancing and sometimes ritual, as it were, connect the different speech events which are all part of a total speech event (it is also possible to see the speech events as connecting the rituals). The order of events is not necessarily maintained rigidly while all services do not inevitably include all the elements mentioned in the following paragraph.

Once the service has officially commenced – ‘We are now in the service’ (*Sisenkonzweni ngoku*) or ‘The worship has already begun’ (*Imbhedesho yona seyivuliwe*) – the typical sequence includes the following: a word of greeting and welcome with special attention paid to guests and possibly an announcement of the type of service or the service’s aim; communal prayers said aloud, simultaneously and accompanied by drumbeats; the public reading of the ‘Books of Worship’ (*Iincwadi zeembhedesho*), which usually include the Law (more frequently quoted from Deuteronomy 27:15–26 than from Exodus 20); the Beatitudes; the introduction to, and then the singing of, the Lord’s Prayer – all with congregational response; comments by a senior man who takes control of the service; the Scripture reading of the day, done by himself or on request by someone else; the handing over of the service to another man (*ukunikela kubani*) who now controls the proceedings; consecutive preachers, male or female, which could number five or more; a healing session in which the speaking is normally not directed to the whole audience but to the individuals being healed, to God or to the evil spirits believed to be involved; prophecy which might be followed by a discussion of

how the ensuing issue should be managed (although a prophecy could be received and related at any stage of the service); an opportunity given to guests to greet the congregation, to explain their presence and to give their well-wishing; announcements; the benediction that winds up the speaking. All in all, the Zionists are indeed a loquacious speech community.

The speakers sometimes indicate that they are aware of the sequence of speaking events and that what they are saying is part of a larger connected line of speech events. One speaker, for instance, informs the audience that 'we proceed to another part of the service' adding the figure of speech 'we will give larger steps' (*siza kugxagxamisa*) to indicate that the service is to be advanced. Another speaker announces that he 'prepares the way for the older men with whom I came' (to the service) as 'they too will have something to say', while a third requests a brother 'to share' the service (*uyibambele nathi*) with his fellow speakers.

Responses to, and elaboration of, previous ideas expressed are part of the sequence in the total speaking event, which boils down to 'a chain of witnesses'. For instance, in the main example, that of Langa, the initial preacher is followed by a sequence of no less than seven others (besides other speakers and the speaking regarding the prophecy and healing) who all spoke on the chosen text. Only on very rare occasions will a single preacher do the preaching, as the custom is in most mainstream churches.

### Governing conventions for the speaking

The Zionist services are formal occasions, which do not, however, exclude informal moments of, for instance, muffled or even exuberant laughter, passionate indignation, deviation from the subject at hand, the expression of surprise or common chatter when something trivial or out of the ordinary takes place. Owing to this formality, conventional practices of interaction regulate what certain people say.

The person who starts the service, for example, is expected to welcome those present, usually in order of status and often beginning with the archbishop and ending off with the 'steward at the door' (see the elaborate example at 'Opening formulae'). He formally announces that the service has begun.

Other conventions of speaking at Zionist services, which often correspond remarkably with practices at traditional Xhosa beer drinks (cf. McAllister 1981:43), embrace the following:

- Speakers are not interrupted when speaking formally – listeners are attentive and silent, apart from their permissible and even valued interjections (see the following point). The intoning of a hymn (see later discussion) is an interesting exception.

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- Individuals express the audience's verbal response to the speaking in different ways. Utterances could be biblical words or phrases: *mayibongwe*, *malibongwe*, *Nkosi/Nkosi yam* ('Lord/my Lord'), *ngcwele* (holy), *haleluya*, and the one that occurs most frequently: *amen* – ten speakers of one of the services elicited this term altogether no less than 70 times. Exclamations or sounds, which more or less indicate approval, encouragement or pretended or genuine surprise, are repeatedly heard. Some of these voicing approval are *ah*, *ewe*, *huh*, *ja*, *kakhulu*, *kunjalo*, *kunjalo kanye*, *mm*, *ndiyakholwa*, *nkosi*, *nyani*, *unyanisile* and *yes*. Encouragement of, or agreement with, the speaker is shown by *eke*, *eyi*, *ha*, *hayibo*, *hee*, *heyi*, *khulula man*, *kwowu*, *ndiyakuwa*, *ndomva*, *oh*, *shh*, *siyabulela*, *su*, *wawu*, *yiva* and in a single case *yeha ke!* ('woe!'). This category includes the speaker's title, for instance *Mvangeli* or *Bhishopkazi*, reference to a relative or an aged person, *Mtakwethu* and *Xhego*, or a greeting when the speaker starts, *Bhotha Bawo!* Surprise is expressed by *awu*, *hi*, *hiyi*, *oe*, *oo*, *sheyi* ('fraud'), *si*, *siyi*, *thyini*, *tsii*, *uyeve*, *yeyi*, *yho*, *yu*, or *wawu*. In this regard a remarkable expression or call is *camagu* (the significance of which is discussed later). With the exception of the biblical ones, most of these expressions are a regular part of Xhosa speaking.

Sometimes a person in the audience anticipates words, such as well-known biblical quotations, and says them aloud before the speaker can complete his or her sentence. A short example is that of a preacher referring to Jacob's encounter with the angel.

Preacher: He said: 'I will never leave you until you bless me.'

Voice from audience: 'What is your name?.'

Preacher: 'What is your name?.'

Voice: 'He said Jacob.'

Preacher: 'I am Jacob.'

The frequency of utterances speakers elicit might indicate that some individuals have their personal 'supporters' who use distinct expressions or sounds and who possibly have emotional or other attachments to the speakers. It is exceptional for a speaker who has spoken for more than six

minutes to elicit no audible response from the audience whatsoever, as happened to a male speaker at the first Khayelitsha service.

- The control and authority of the leaders of this speech community are most important and are continually reaffirmed. The clearest indication of this is the regular 'handing over' of the control of the service to someone. 'Let me hand over to you ...' (*mandinikele kuwe*) is the common expression. A minister for instance once said: 'Now then, this service will be handed over to Father Bishop next to me, before he returns it to Father President. Father President will give our ministers a chance to speak.' It can even happen that a reluctant speaker at once 'hands the service back' with a few polite words.
- A senior speaker who normally leads the service may, and usually does, assign the task to someone else (as instanced above).
- Although juniors have the right to speak, precedence is given to seniors, and normally to men over women.
- A speaker acknowledges previous speakers with suitable remarks such as 'He spoke the truth when saying ...' or reference to what has been spoke.
- A visitor or a spokesperson for visitors is expected to take part in the speaking or at least say a few words.
- At Gugulethu there is an example of a leader who requests a woman reader to read the biblical text bit by bit, and who structures his speaking in the form of an exposition of the words or phrases as they are declaimed one after the other:

Reader: '... a man of only one woman ...'

Speaker: 'A man of only one woman! May it be thus. It must be clear to people that you are a man of only one woman.'

Reader: '... he must be sober ...'

Speaker: 'Wait a bit, Mama. A man of one woman! A man of one woman! How many do you have, Reverend Father? May the Lord be praised. Only one!'

*Umfundi: '... eyindoda yamfazi mnye ...'*

*Isithethi: 'Eyindoda yamfazi mnye! Kube njalo. Kufuneka abantu bengacace ngoku uyindoda yamfazi mnye.'*

*Umfundi: '... eyingcathu ...'*

*Isithethi: Yima, Mama. Eyindoda yamfazi mnye! Eyindoda yamfazi mnye! Bangaphi abakho, Bawo Mfundisi? Mayibongwe iNkosi. Mnye!*

- A speaker temporarily discontinues his or her speaking to allow newcomers to settle down or the removal of some or other disturbance. In the meantime someone spontaneously starts a song to bridge the speaking gap.
- If a speaker seems to carry on ceaselessly, convention allows someone, often a woman or young person, to commence with congregational singing. Yet, this is done at the risk of being mildly put in one's place if the interruption is thought to be inappropriate. In this situation, which can be quite humorous, young people often play a kind of game to see how far they can push their luck.
- There are certain conventional units of which a speech event is composed: greetings, welcome, apologies, homilies, narratives, expression of gratitude, requests, instructions, counselling and so forth. All speech events do not necessarily include these units. The following is an example of an admonition or instruction at a marriage ceremony:

How come, Brother-in-law? [The two of] you are fortunate because you were addressed by so many people. Many strongly wished for such a chance but were never given one till the chance passed them by. I then, come with this point: Today you are indeed a true father, but today you see these eyes and words with which you are addressed. You must be an example, a father with virtue. As long as you are alive your children should not go hungry due to your marriage. Today you are elevated to this position so that there at Jan's place you can be the head. As you are the head, you must be an example to your brothers and sisters. Also I say to you today: You must no longer leave this house [the church] in which you are today.

*Njani, Sibali? Ninoyolo nina, kuba kukuthethwa yile ngingiya yaba bantu, phezu kweentloko zenu. Abaninzi babelishote ithuba elinje, zange balifumane, bade baphelelwa lithuba. Mna nje ndiza nale ndawo: Namhlanje, ewe, ungutata, kodwa namhlanje uyawabona la mehlo nala magama awa phezu kweentloko zenu. Uze ube ngumzekelo, eze ube ngutata, utata onesidima. Bangathi balambe abantwana ngokuba nitshatile usaphila. Namhlanje ninyukela ngentla kwindawo enikuyo, ukuze ke naphaya kwaDyani ube yintloko. Nanjengoko uyintloko ube ngumzekelo kubanta-kwenu. Nam namhlanje ndithi kuwe: Uze ungabi saphuma kule ndlu ukuyo namhlanje.*

Whereas this example clearly reminds one of traditional instruction at public occasions, the following moves to counselling:

Eh, [my] girl, you need to pray. A dark path in a forest is not a good thing (speaker laughs) because no people go there, only zombies go there to the forest [laugh]. You need to pray to God in order that they do not take you and make a zombie out of you. They heard you singing nicely so they want you to sing for the zombies in the forest. So you need to pray. In this prayer you must be pure and God purifies you. Because when you go to a dark place you will be defiled because even a child does not like to go to dark places.

*E, ntombi, kufuneka uthandaze, intsunguzi yehlathi ayilunganga, ngoba akukho bantu baya entsunguzini. Kuyile izithunzela zodwa, apho ehlathini. Kufuneka uthandaze kuThixo ukwenzela bangakuthathi bakwenze isithunzela. Bakuwe uvuma kamnandi bafune okokuba uyokumvuwela izithunzela ehlathini. Kulo mthandazo uhambe kundenze mhlophe uThixo akufake kundenza mhlophe. Ngoba mhla uhamba kundenze mnyama iindawo ezimnyama azifunwa nangumntwana.*

- One of the most important conventions governing the speaking in the Zionist service is that a speaker has an important responsibility to fulfil toward the listeners, namely to contribute to the success of the service through competent communication. As an old minister says: 'One needs to add salt to the samp to make tasty what you are cooking,' while another states: 'My conscience addresses me now that we are closing and I have not yet thrown a clod' (made a contribution).

## Speaking styles

The conventions discussed above are expressed in a characteristic style of speaking. A number of literary and linguistic resources are used to enhance the communication process within the Zionist service. Among the large number of literary factors that can be mentioned, figurative language and imagery are probably the most striking.

The following are examples of metaphoric language that attract attention:

- 'I am a tortoise wearing a shell' – a person carrying a burden about to be shared with the congregation.

- 'They have taken out of the pot still on the fire' – they have broken away from a church to possibly start a new one.
- 'This money has horns' – a useful amount or contribution (meant as a self-compliment).
- 'The ploughs of today continually change' – the ministers of today are not of the calibre of those of bygone days.
- 'We mock the drunkards at the shebeen without knowing their problems. There is wine we hide right in our hearts. We too have wine that intoxicates – this wrong thing that flows from my mouth. This is the actual wine.'
- 'You depart from a secure place [*estandeni*] to a shack [*ematyotyombeni*]' – a divorced woman returning to her family's place which implies serious degradation.

Powerful images furthermore contribute to the speaking:

- 'We have pitched our tent at the sixth line' – we have chosen verse six for the Bible reading.
- 'You must not hurt your blanket' – your reputation as a believer.
- 'His stomach closing in on his back' – very hungry.
- 'People who slaughter hens' – who are concerned with the trifles of church life (as opposed to 'cows', which would mean important issues).
- 'Your apron is pulled this way and that' – you are drawn by opposing groups in the congregation.

Analogy can be as colourful:

- 'I was born in a church like a young swallow that when it grows up, flies up and defiles the [church] building' – an old minister on his earlier backsliding.
- 'They are like people who are like a beast that stabs with its horns' – aggressive people in the church.
- 'A mother who gave birth to one child which became two, Mpho and Mpothane' – the married woman has to engage in a new unit as close as Siamese twins (the names of a well-known twin in South Africa).
- The inconsistency of the Cape Town ministers is compared to the city's changeable weather.

One also finds the use of understatement ('he is lying completely still' [*ulele tu tu tu*] – said of a deceased person); hyperbole ('We have given you our last cent'; 'church robes are the most valuable thing, the most exalted dignity on earth'); humour ('I am scared to go to a house where the minister and his wife quarrel because I don't know if I might pick up a scratch'); allusion ('the son of Zebedee' – John the Evangelist and 'the man who knew the call' – Jesus); cliché ('I don't want to say much' or 'I don't know if you will agree').

The rich pool of Xhosa idioms and sayings is often tapped in Zionist speaking. For instance: 'The knobkerrie rules outside in the world' [*induku ayinamzi*] – it has no place in the house; 'I have a long stomach' (*ndinesisu eside*) – 'I am talking for a long while'. As is the case with verses from the Bible, speakers take the liberty to alter some Xhosa idioms slightly. One speaker requests 'that we put our heads together' [*sinqubana ngentloko*] instead of the regular 'that we meet together' (*sidibana ngentloko*). Another refers to a person who keeps to one side and who follows his own head or 'eats alone' [*udla yedwa*] from the idiom 'the beast follows its own head' [*inkomo edla yodwa*]. In the latter case the speaker possibly uses a pun: the clan name of the archbishop presiding at the service is namely 'Dlavedwa'.

Stereotyped words and phrases need special attention as the Zionist speech is interspersed with standardised or formalised groups of words. As for single words 'Uxolo!' 'I beg your pardon' and 'torho/torhwana' (an interjection denoting or reinforcing expressions of among others sympathy, concern, entreaty and tenderness). In the four services the majority of speakers uses varieties of at least 15 phrases, sometimes only at the commencement of the speaking, regularly throughout. The phrases call for God's, the Lord's or Jesus' presence, blessing or peace, or else praise their names. The grammatical form of the verbs in these phrases expresses a wish and I understand many of them to denote a yearning, a pious wish or ejaculatory prayer.

Stereotypes employed are often effectively restated and integrated into the speaking. In this regard Bengt Sundkler (1961:192) refers to 'certain fixed formulae, differing in different sections of the Zionist movement, but all being similar in essence'. He adds an ironic note: 'In the name of the freedom of the Spirit, the serfdom of the formula is being definitely established.'

In the services under discussion there are a few examples of stereotyped phrases which are indeed carried to excess and rather hinder than advance communication. At Langa, for instance, a male's speech which consists of only

two short and one long sentence is interspersed by no less than 12 rounds of 'May the Lord of peace bestow his blessings' (*INkosi yoxolo mayisikelele*).

The tone and mood within the speaking is performed stylistically and serves an *expressive* function that may even prevail over content in which the *persuasive* function is primary. For instance, the forcefulness of a preacher, which could come to shouting at the top of his or her voice, could override the meaning of what he or she wants to communicate. Some speakers have a speaking style which emphasises personal dynamism, the *manner in which* they speak and not *what* they say. Now and again speakers can let their tongues run away with them, resulting in confused, meaningless and even embarrassing words (from which both the speaker and the audience are soon relieved by communal singing).

The style of the speaker could thus have an effect on the changed mood of a service, for example, from a light-hearted one to a solemn one when an archbishop feels the lack of seriousness. As the following shows the opposite is also possible. After speaking very earnestly on the virtue of hospitality, a speaker changes the mood of the service with a flash of honesty: 'You must be hospitable, Reverend Father. Here in the Cape we are satiated [*sidikwe*] with people. Know that I am not satiated with people, not in the least ... Well, only a little [but] without being upset ...'

Remarkably, the highest pitch to which voices were raised during the speaking was usually when traditional Xhosa issues were mentioned (this applies to the speaker as well as the audience response).

The style of speaking therefore enhances communication in the Zionist service by conveying meaning in an attractive, energetic and forcible manner. In a few cases the style has the opposite effect of diminishing meaning. The potential for explaining biblical and everyday truths, advancing spiritual enrichment and inculcating values, all within the linguistic world of the listeners, is virtually unlimited.

## Rhetorical techniques

Speakers use various rhetorical techniques to enhance the effectiveness of their communication. A number of features are commonplace in the Zionist services.

- *The memorisation and repetition of the given Scripture verse or phrase* serve as a starting point as well as a continual point of reference. This does not exclude the introduction of a completely new verse or several additional verses, which might seem to the speaker to be more appropriate for the occasion. Repetition might be done for the sake of elucidation or emphasis.
- *Pauses between sentences*, for instance to create increased attention, tension or expectation, or at times the virtual absence of such pause (with very little breathing space left).
- *Fluctuating voice volume*, with a tendency to rather more than less loudness, and intonation patterns.
- *Role-playing*: A male speaker, for example, alleges: 'There are women who do not submit to their husbands. They say: "I am the one!, I am the one!, I am the one!"' He jumps up and down in imitation. 'And they say: "Husband of mine [*ndodandini*], go and fetch water, go and fetch water. Do you hear me, I am talking. Put the wash bowl over there!..."'
- *The use of dialogue, actual or supposed, in preaching*. The following passage illustrates the latter. An archbishop is sketching a scene in which a married man is tempted by seducers, the 'flowers':

The flowers will show up on your way and say all smilingly: 'Hey bra, lend a hand over here. I have a problem with a little money.' You grasp the meaning [and think]: 'Hey, hang on. Let me approach her.' Amen. You too, bride, will be approached: 'Hey, come on! Don't waste your time with that man of yours. Look at this money! Take it and drop him.' Amen.

*liflowers ziza kufika endleleni zithi: 'Heyi bhuti, khawundincede apha, ndinengxaki apha, ngemali ethile' zincumancuma. Uqonda ukuba 'Heyi, hayi noko, lo mntu makhe ndisondele kuye.' Amen. Kutshiwo nakuwe, makhoti: 'Hayi, suka! Sukuzilibazisa ngala mntu wakho. Nantsi imali! Yeka la mntu.' Amen.*

Instances of dialogue preaching between two preachers do not occur.

- *Repetition of words, phrases, sentences or key ideas* which create a certain effect and emphasise the message.
- *The manipulation of breath*, for instance, the (to the audience) clearly audible and forceful gasping for breath, often at regular intervals, or the

continued quick inhaling and exhaling of breath followed by short, rapidly spoken sentences.

- *Rhetorical questions*, frequently repeated. A mother, for example, gives the congregation the reason why she is speaking:

The reason for coming nearer to the mothers who are speaking here was that I was drawn by the word of God that spoke of whom? Of the deceased. I am drawn by the word which will speak of this Father – the one who is the cause of our gathering today – [namely] from where do we come with him?

*Into ebangele ukuba ndisondele koomama abathetha apha ndisondezuwa lilizwi elithetha ngobani? Ngumlindi. Ndisondezwa lilizwi eliza kuthetha ngalo uBawo lo usingaye namhlanje ukuba sisuka phi na naye?*

- *Nonverbal techniques* such as the use of gestures to indicate an idea or a feeling; clapping of hands or beating the Bible to emphasise a word or idea; facial expressions; closing of the eyes while speaking; walking around; and using of a cupped hand in front of the mouth – perhaps to create the effect of a loudspeaker microphone (some say they do this simply to check their spittle). One speaker expounds on vices including money without ever mentioning the word. Yet, while speaking, he holds a coin to the audience. Another imitates a donkey's eye-flaps with his open hands alongside his eyes to demonstrate a point. A third has the audience roaring with laughter when he mimics (with a cloth on his head) a woman member who acts unworthily in spite of wearing church headgear.
- *The discontinuance of speech*: For various reasons speakers interrupt their speaking by intoning a song (besides members of the audience who do the same for their own particular reasons – see later discussion on 'Closing formulae').

## Composition of a speech event

Since most speakers at Zionist services do not know beforehand what biblical text is to be chosen for a particular service, preparation for speaking on a specific text is virtually excluded (apart from possibly the person who chooses the text). Zionist speaking is therefore not prepared in writing but rather conceived and performed exclusively in oral form. Speakers draw in

an *ad hoc* manner from their context and the common fount of ideas, beliefs, phrases and general vocabulary appropriate to this context, which, is a distinctly Christian one. An aged illiterate person, for example, claimed that for all the preaching he had ever done, which was considerable, the only source he had from which he could draw, was the sermons of other preachers.

The point is evident in the case of the Langa service in which the president makes known: 'Brother G, my minister, you will give us a verse.' The first preacher announces the verse and adds: 'This is the Word of God. I want us to talk about these verses. There is much in this (scripture) reading.' Seven preachers, besides the original one who later gets a second turn, then return to the verse, four denoting the chapter and verse. One speaker acknowledges the person who gave the verse: 'Let me come to the verses of Father G in Matthew 25:6.'

In the case of one of the Khayelitsha services it is only the seventh speaker who introduces a biblical text (on Job). Eight preachers all referring to or elaborating on, the same scriptural reference in his or her special manner follow him. To exemplify this developing of a phrase, I use the simple but concrete instance of the gifts eventually presented to Job by his family and friends (cf. Job 42:11). The first speaker to use the Job verse quotes the Xhosa rendering: 'a hundred pieces of money and a golden ear-ring'. A later speaker uses the plural 'ear-rings', a third 'a hundred pieces of money' and the final one has only 'a hundred golden ear-rings'.

Previous speakers are taken into account to such an extent that many speakers do not refer to the biblical text directly but to the speaker who quotes the verse using such expressions as 'the chairperson says' or 'the words of Job are quoted'. In one service the sixteenth speaker announces: 'I shall start and these mothers will witness to me.' She does this obviously ignoring the chosen verse.

Speakers are fond of referring to preceding speakers. The 'echoing' quality of the preaching in the Zionist services comes to the fore in the following example:

Therefore, when I came here I did not come to say much. I was never more eloquent than those who have already spoken. Words were spoken by these women and by our honourable fathers . . . I came to sow a few

seeds. It is said: 'Understand this: He who sows stingily will reap stingily. He who gives freely will receive abundantly.'

*Noko ke xa ndiza kule ndawo, andizanga kuthetha kakhulu. Andizanga ukugcisa ababethetha kule ndawo. Inkosi yoxolo mayibe nathi. Kuthethiwe ngaba mama, bathethile ootata bethu abakhulu ... Nje ndiza nje nokokuhlwayela. Kuthiwa: 'Qondani le nto: Ohlwayela ngokuwimba naye uza kunikwa ngokuwimba. Ohlwayela ngesisa uyakunikwa naye ngesisa.'*

Often when an idea or event (apart from a biblical text) is related, a subsequent speaker will return to the words used: 'I start off with the words of the mother who said ...' or 'The father who spoke said ...' – in this case all used by the same speaker.

At one of the services speakers from a group of late arrivals even continued a series of speaking based on a text (1 Samuel 3) which was used earlier the evening at another venue. The first of two speakers explains: 'We departed with the Book of Samuel ...'

Therefore, while the general theme of speaking, and in particular of preaching, is taken from the biblical text, speakers make use of what previous speakers have said, and repeat or expand on foregoing statements, or summarise the gist of what has been said. Some speakers even subtly challenge what a previous speaker has said. I mentioned the case of a male speaker who jokingly mimicked an imaginary hen-pecked husband whose wife did not submit to him. The very next speaker, a female, retorted: 'When a father has to play second fiddle it is said that we mothers have the problem that we rule in our own houses. I feel concerned, Father, to talk about this [matter].'

Is a verse for the day chosen beforehand? Sometimes 'it is given' on the spur of the moment during the service, but it can also be a rational choice previously made or else 'given' (which implies: by God) in a dream or vision. As one speaker says: 'As soon as I awaken I make notes to use for my preaching so as not to exclude anything of importance.'

Whereas in mainstream churches a minister's sermon is usually the ripe fruit of a well-considered and prepared 'speech', with the Zionists a seed is often sown which germinates and grows in an *ad hoc* fashion during the service. This implies an edited version of the Word adhering to a literary culture as opposed to a spontaneous version of the same Word now performed within a mainly oral culture.

## Opening and closing formulae

The recurrent 'Brothers and sisters' (children are seldom mentioned) or 'Dear congregation' which mainstream preachers use to commence their preaching, is not the normal way in which Zionist preaching begins. Certain set formulations are used on these formal occasions. For instance:

I stand here in the house of God to greet you in the beautiful name of the Lord. I greet the fathers, Father Archbishop, taking the bishops, the fathers presidents, the fathers ministers, the fathers deacons, the fathers evangelists right up to the door steward. Also the mothers, including the stewardess at the door.

*Ndimma nokubulisa kwindlu kaThixo ngelihle igama leNkosi. Ndibothisa ootata, uTat' uArchi ndithatha iibhishophu, oobawo umongameli, oobawo umfundisi, oobawo umdikoni, oobawo umvangeli ndiyokuma kwigosa lasemnyango. Noomama ngokunjalo, ndiyokuma kumama ugosakazi kwasemnyango.*

This is a typical introduction for a Zionist speaker. It is rare for a person to speak without opening words that are considered to be proper. Quite often these opening statements revert to certain formulae, or at least variations on them.

I have already discussed stereotyped phrases regarding the praise, presence, blessings or peace of God. These phrases are regularly used to commence the speaking. Occasionally someone greets with a biblical quotation.

Other speakers accentuate the make-up of the audience, usually giving preference to the most honoured person present, which boils down to the one with the highest office (as the instance above indicates), then descending the 'ladder'. A female states explicitly: 'I greet the great fathers and those who sit in order [of importance]' (*nabacalamba*).

A female speaker deviated from the standard wording and elaborated:

May the peace of the Lord be with us. I greet you. In the second instance, whoever is present here in the 'tabernacle', I will not discriminate and thus refer to both the honourable fathers and the mother stewardess at the door. I include the honourable mothers and the mothers stewardesses at the door, not to omit the Thursday prayer women, our fathers

who gather on Saturdays, the Wednesday girls' group as well as the band of young boys and girls.

*Uxolo lweNkosi malube nathi. Ndiyabulisa. Okwesibini ophantsi kominquba ndingazi kucalula ndithathe ootata abakhulu nomama igosakazi emnyango, ndithathe noomama abakhulu noomama amagosakazi ngasemnyango, ndingalibalanga oomama bangoLwesine nootata bangoMgqibelo neentombi zangoLwesithathu nomlisela nomthinjana.*

Other speakers single out visitors or those 'that I see here for the first time'. Only twice children are included in the greetings: a male with the words 'also the little children who cannot yet speak for themselves', and a woman: 'Let me not forget to greet the toes [children] in the name of Jesus Christ.'

After the well-wishing with reference to God and the mentioning of titles or categories of people, speakers are fond of giving the reason for, or else the aim of, their speaking. It might be that they were invited, would like to give thanks to the Lord, express their concern about procedures or other issues of the service, or signify that they have been run down in some or other regard or publicly (in the service) seek pastoral or other advice. It is clearly stated what the aim of a specific service is: 'Today is the work [umsebenzi] of Father M's consolation.'

Still by way of introduction or opening statement, speakers relate some or other personal point of interest: the fact that they have travelled well to the service (often providing detail) or elsewhere ('During the past weeks I went down to Xhosaland'); reference to the condition of their health ('I am a cripple. My legs are not the same length, but where there is a service I am present', or 'Children of God, [I have a problem] due to my 'sugar' and 'highblood''); sometimes even a little boasting ('It is clear that when someone dies, I ask why the first one appointed (to speak) is always the same person. They reply: "All of us want to be buried by you"'). Some speakers like to introduce themselves by name, surname and clan name or announce the name of the church to which they belong:

I first want to introduce myself, dear people. I am a Jola. I am from the location of N at Cala. I live at Harare at 3587. May the Lord be with us. My wife is not here. She is not healthy. She has a strange kind of illness that she cannot name. She has pains here [shows chest].

*Mandizazise kuqala. NdingumaJola, nam ke ndiphaya eCala kulelali kwaN. Ndihlala ngapha ke eHarare kwa3587. INkosi mayibe nathi.*

*Umama wakuthi ke akekho apha. Akaphilanga. Unesimangana soku-  
gulana ukuthiwana nangakwaziyo. Unehlaba kule ndawo [walathisa  
isifuba].*

A notable trait of the opening formulae is the often heard reference to the speaker's own speaking. 'I too join [in the speaking]. As for me, let me add a few words to those [already] spoken,' is an example. Often, irrespective of the length of speaking, reference is made to the time factor: 'I shall not be long', 'I shall not delay matters', 'I shall hasten' and 'I make only a few remarks as there is no time left', or 'Let me just say a single word' (*mandiqqagqazele*). Sometimes the tone is apologetic or modest: 'Let me apologise', 'I do not want to preach' or 'Actually I do not have a place here.' The same is true of an archbishop (who eventually delivered a sizeable speech): 'It was pleasant [here in the service] up to this stage, but now watery, insipid beer will be presented [I am going to water the service down].'

In contrast to the opening formulae, the closing ones are mostly not that elaborate. An exception is a male speaker who concluded: 'May the Lord of peace be with us, Beautiful House of God. *Torhwana*, I said I shall not speak because it is daybreak. Now let us sing a song.' Indeed, most speaking ends off with a song, whether started or requested by the speaker or not.

The most typical closing formulae are: 'I hand over/return the service to ...' (as already discussed), 'Let me stand down from this place [of speaking]', 'I shall not delay you', 'Let me leave off' (*mandiyeke*), 'I am grateful', 'I don't know if I have spoken well' and 'Take your place, Father' (said to the leader of the service). Not even once have I heard the prominent closing formula in traditional meetings, *Ndisatshaya* (I pause for a while), in the context of the Zionist service – probably due to the connotation of the word which literally more or less means 'I take a smoke break'. A female speaker says: 'I do not want to be long, I do not want them (the audience) eventually to fall asleep here in the service' – but apparently a new thought strikes her and she continues for some time.

Speakers then commence or discontinue their speaking in a variety of ways, normally remaining faithful to certain formulaic expressions of which the most prominent are described above. The opening and closing formulae are often not unique to Zionist preaching and are not specific verbalisation of their ideas and beliefs about the service as such. They are rather borrowed from Xhosa public speaking in general and from Christian usage in particular.

## The Bible as source

Zionists frequently quote or make direct or indirect reference to both the Old and New Testament, often in a slightly variant version (the new translation of the Xhosa Bible which was published in 1996 is not well known and not commonly used in their services). Characteristically, when semi-literate readers are involved, not only the name of a Bible book, the chapter and the verse to be read are given, but also the number of the page on which the reading appears.

The speakers' references very seldom explicitly distinguish between the two Testaments but are rather made to the Bible (*IBhayibhile*), the Book (*INcwadi*), the Bible book (*INcwadi yeBhayibhile*), the Word [of God] (*ILizwi [likaThixo]*), the Scriptures (*IZibhalo*) as such, or to a specific book or author of the Bible. A few times the Book is qualified as 'good', 'heavenly', 'of the church' or 'of the church's matters' – a clear pointer that to the Zionists the Bible and the church belong together.

Evidence of the eminence of the Bible as source is that the speaking in all their services has as starting-point certain sections of the Bible: at Langa Matthew 25:1–6, at the two Khayelitsha services respectively Ephesians 5:28 and Job 42:11 and at Gugulethu I Timothy 3:1–8. The subsequent speaking is interspersed with references to these texts or to the introduction of new ones. In one of the services, for instance, six of the ten speakers who explicitly quoted or referred to the Bible, used sections other than that of the starting-point. The audience's verbal participation as well as speakers' repetition of verses and stereotyped words and phrases add to this general prominence of Scripture in the Zionist service. A speaker confirms this finding: 'Do not be concerned, children of the Word of God, because the Word is firm in this service.'

In the speech situation of the Zionist service the Bible is indeed a unique publication. Reference to any other Christian or secular printed text is totally absent in all the services, apart from the quotation of one or two lines from hymns or choruses.

Besides the Bible, the Zionists' speaking is mainly based on oral sources (as the analysis of the content confirms). Although I have not investigated this aspect, I have reason to assume where the other notable sources of their speaking are to be found. Firstly, that to which the Zionists refer as *isintu*, the indigenous Xhosa cultural heritage. This oral tradition was very prominent in

the traditional Xhosa speaking at certain rituals (cf. McAllister 1981:44). But these Zionists have come to town where the likes of trade union and political speaking is marked. The result is that their urbanised life setting and experience provide a further source of their speaking as the frequent references to city situations, real or imagined, testify. The Zionists are also part of the Christian church so that the broader Christian tradition to which they are often exposed, usually in oral form, makes provision for a further source of speaking.

The significance of the sources tapped by speakers lies in the provision of a frame of reference within which the speaking is performed. I tentatively conclude that the Bible as source broadens this frame of reference considerably (an aspect to which I return in the next section). Add to the given frame a speaker's particular speaking style and rhetorical techniques, and the possibility of effective communication with the audience – in this case the Zionist congregation – unfolds.

Whatever the nature of the Zionists' dealing with the Bible in exegetical and homiletic terms might be (see 'Theological dimensions'), this highly revered book is one of the major sources of their speaking, and probably the most important of all. Though it might be difficult to substantiate this viewpoint completely – as mentioned there are also other sources that inform their speaking – it is significant that the Zionists themselves agree to the view that the Bible is central to the speaking in their services. By far the majority of speakers indeed either refer to, paraphrase or quote sections from Scripture, indicating their remarkable ability to memorise. This use of the Bible implies that they have an additional, a new source of speaking alongside the traditional Xhosa heritage.

That the Zionists use the Bible and use it profusely cannot be denied.

## Addressing the audience

The participants in the speech situation in the Zionist service are primarily the *speaker* (in this context known as the preacher) and the *hearers* of the message (referred to as the congregation). Normally the audience as a group is addressed, in which case the speaker will refer to them collectively. Here certain words or phrases are used in a typical manner.

One group of expressions is derived from biblical or church vocabulary. In this case speakers address the audience as Beloved (*Bathandekayo*) [of the

Lord/the Word of God]; Children of God (*Bantwana bakaThixo*)/ of the Lord (*beNkosi*)/ of the Word of God (*beLizwi likaThixo*)/ of the church (*becaue*); holy/dear/heavenly Congregation (*Bandla*); holy Christians/people (*MaKrestu/Bantu bangcwele*); or (good) Christians (*MaKrestu mahle*). Less frequent are Tabernacle of God (*Mnquba kaThixo*), Speakers of Peace (*Zintethi ezoXolo*), Friends of the House of God (*Zihlobo zeNdlu kaThixo*), Candles (*Makhandlela*, meaning that they bring light to the congregation), and Dear Orphans (*Zinkedama zithandekayo*, 'We have no father or mother to take care of us here on earth', as a respondent explains).

It is perhaps surprising that not once in the four services was the audience addressed as 'Zionists' (in the previous chapter I pointed out the apparent reluctance to use this name). One speaker addresses the congregation he is visiting using a glorifying name for the church: 'Beautiful House of Cush', later adding 'Beautiful House of God'.

The titles of church officials are regularly put to use to address the congregation, especially when greeting. Less frequent is a speaker who in the middle of his speech greets the audience anew: 'Molweni!' ('Good morning to you!'). A few times the 'master of ceremonies' (*mpathi*) is addressed.

Another series of expressions are often more colloquial: dear/honoured friends, friends of the house, brothers (sisters alone is not heard, brothers and sisters seldom), (great) men, (honourable) fathers, (respected) parents, (important) mothers. One or two speakers address age groups: my old man (*xhego lam*), all the elderly, and the youth, while in all the speaking the children were never openly addressed though only once alluded to, admittedly with a fine metaphor, 'the toes'. 'Family members' and 'our people' (*bantakuwethu*) are meant both religiously and in terms of family. Only once *mfondini* (fellow) was used, in this case endearing and not deriding.

On numerous occasions the speaker directs his or her speech to a single person, well aware that the individual is part of an audience. It is here that the use of someone's father's name, clan name or kinship term in addition to terms expressing relationship and affection are heard: our brother (*mntakaD.*), our people (*bantakuwethu*) and brother-in-law (*sibali*). Female equivalents are seldom if ever heard. The chance to acknowledge a family member when addressing an audience will surely not be lost. In a pastoral

kind of speech a president addresses a middle-aged afflicted woman as *ntombi* ('girl'), which indicates a fatherly attitude.

Some speakers have interesting and lively ways of directing their words to a variety of individuals, besides the general audience and that in the same speaking event. For instance, a senior male speaker who speaks for six minutes addresses a couple getting married five times individually, each time mentioning the surname. In the beginning he addresses the groom as *Mfo* (Fellow) but later on in a more respectful manner, *Bawo* (Father). Four times he uses the expression 'dear congregation' (exceptionally *rhamente yakowethu* instead of the more usual *bandla lithandekayo*). In addition 'parents', 'mothers' and 'children' (not in the literal meaning), and lastly Father Reverend P (the researcher as visitor) is used.

These words and phrases of addressing are an indication of the formality of the speech event, of identity or of the personal style of a speaker, but also communicate emotive elements of polite acknowledgement, familiarity or endearment. Some of them are commonly derived from both kinship and ordinary modes of address, others from the Christian tradition, though I have seldom heard some of these expressions in the services of mainstream churches. Many are regularly heard at the meetings of traditional Red Xhosa.

### A formal code for speaking

Such a code refers to 'common knowledge, accepted values and behaviour patterns, to shared ideals and basic cultural forms. The use of such a code makes for social solidarity and reinforcement of the status quo, resists change, does not tolerate ambiguity, and legitimates the existing authority structure' (McAllister 1981:45). This formal code then indicates the correct and suitable, the accepted speaking norms of a speech community.

Characteristic of a formal code is that when a speaker adheres to it the speaking is generally not contentious and the assertions made are not subject to debate, competition or argument. The speaker is careful not to insult or hurt the feelings or self-respect of anybody. Even when the speaker challenges the congregation as to their behaviour, the challenge is mainly rhetorical and not normally directed to a specific individual (exceptions being such occasions as the instances of ordination and marriage given above). The formal code is perhaps the most clearly apparent in the manner in which the deceased are praised at wakes, funerals or condolence services,

such as the one at Khayelitsha. Speakers are extremely careful not to make any inappropriate remarks.

Some indications of the use and maintenance of this code can be mentioned: the common formulae and expressions used; the conventions governing the speech; the manner in which the audience participates and in which it is addressed; the reference to the Bible and the Christian tradition; and the relatively fixed order of speech (as discussed above) – all testifying to the use of a formal code. A non-verbal example of the last-mentioned instance (recorded on video) is that of an archbishop who, without uttering a word, removes a female speaker who has already taken the 'platform' in favour of another woman. Later I learnt that the name of the first woman was not on the official programme. She eventually did get her chance to speak.

The presence of a formal code is indicated by statements such as that made by a woman speaking about a person who has passed away: 'Children of God, at this time when we will talk of the son of M, I feel afraid. You might have to reproach yourself [*uyakuthi shu*] [about what you said].'

Another speaker, a young woman, is given the chance to speak at the confirmation of a minister's wife. On such occasions it is normal to instruct, challenge or exhort (*ukuyala*) the person receiving a higher status (in Xhosa tradition a ceremony was held for this purpose when a person was undergoing such a transition). As she appreciates the delicacy of the situation, she first shows that she honours the code, and then she gives a fairly long instruction:

Seeing that she is already an old mother I will not instruct her. I do have a request to her. Parents, hear me well. She is older than me in terms of years. Even though we were on the same level when we became Christians, in terms of birth she is older than I am. I have to consider well the words I present and I must realize that I am talking to a parent.

*Kuba selengumama omdala andizukumyala. Ndiza kuba nesicelo kuye. Ndiva kakuhle, bazali. Mdala kunam ngokwesithombo sokuzala. Nokokuba sifike apha kuKrestu, safika salingana, kodwa ngokokuzalwa mdala kunam. Amazwi ndiwakhupha kufuneka ndiwaqiye ndiyazi ukuba ndithetha nomzali.*

At the commencement of a service a man encourages the speakers explicitly:

We kindly request you to await your chance [in the service]. When we sing a lively song, I will take the service and hand it over higher up to the father president. Let us act in the spirit and experience the service that is now not one of beginners. So let us not wander away from the point, let us not wander far off.

*Kufuneka sikucenge umamele ulinde ixhesha lakho. Xa siza kuwuma ingoma eza kuba shushu, ndiza kuthatha inkonzo ndinike ubawo ngumongameli ngasentla. Masenzeni emoyeni sive inkonzo. Ngoku asiyonkonzo yabatshayelwayo. Singazichubi izinto ezi, singachubi izinto ezininzi.*

Song is an instrument that can be skilfully and spontaneously used to maintain the formal code without disparaging a speaker. One of the Khayelitsha services provides ample illustration. Four speakers are involved. The first gasps as he utters his short, excited sentences. Seemingly his incoherent speech entices a woman to commence with a song. He restarts after the song, but only for three sentences, when women's song finally ends his speech. A second speaker thanks the singers for interrupting his speech: 'At this stage you have helped me with your song.' Much later, when someone attempts a song, he responds: 'Wait a minute, son of B, I want to finish off ...'

The same happens in a third case in which a woman disallows another woman's song to discontinue her speech by exclaiming: 'Wait, Mother!.' Yet, subsequent to a fairly long speech, she mildly criticises the (unspecified) church: 'The church is locked with a key on the inside.' Before she is able to continue, the archbishop immediately and emphatically starts the most popular of Zionist hymns.

The formal code then presents a guide to the speakers; one that restricts them to the parameters of what is acceptable in a relevant speech community. Yet, the code does not necessarily limit the speaker regarding his or her abilities to communicate competently: 'Within the broad restrictions imposed by the code the speaker can use some alternatives; different figures of speech and imagery, different speech styles, and so on. He can put his own twist to the situation, innovate, and manipulate available linguistic resources to produce a rich, effective and appreciated speech' (McAllister 1981:45). In other words, within the limitations posed by the code, a Zionist speaker uses his or her individual style to develop a message that is capable of communicating to the audience what the speaker actually wants to say and thus contributes to the successfulness of the service.

## Elements of an evaluative code

This code refers to actual events and behaviour rather than to an abstract idea (cf. McAllister 1981:45). A speaker might make reference to a certain member's behaviour or action in the service and to the response of the members of the congregation to such behaviour. There is an implied judgement of such behaviour against the normative background of what is expected of a member and of the expected response of other members to the behaviour. A speaker, for example, disturbed by voices from the back of the hall at Gugulethu, puts the culprits in their place: 'I like to speak to people who listen but those who do not listen, let them keep quiet and cease speaking.'

The case of the Langa prophecy further illustrates the point. I have already described the events concerning the prophecy that took place during this service, I will therefore only attend to some of the statements made by leaders who had to manage the unexpected, though not unique, occurrence. What did make the prophecy exceptional and precarious was that it involved one of the leaders and potentially presented a threat to the uninterrupted continuance of the service and perhaps even to the wellbeing of the church itself. The predicament was that the young prophet was in-the-Spirit: Does his speaking therefore not represent a higher order of authority than that of any leader? The situation was delicate and required careful handling.

Part of the prophecy was that the prophet was to give certain 'weapons' to the ministers for which they were then to pray. In the president's immediate and brief response he underplays the importance of the prophecy somewhat by indicating that it is not a unique event:

Eh, let us pass this matter. As people who have been in this church since long ago – when the deceased were still living – [we know that] the weapons of the brothers need to be continually prayed for. We joined this church around 1968 and I prayed for them. There was an opportunity at which we placed all the weapons together and they were prayed for when one's spirit says so.

*Ee, kudlula khona thina bangena kudala enkonzweni – amatshabe esaphila – izikhali zabazalwana xa zihlahle zithandazelwa. Ke thina sangena ngesithuba zo-1968, ndandizithandazela. Kwakukho ithuba lokukuba zonke izikhali zikhe zibekwa ndawonye zithandazelwe xa umoya wakho usitsho.*

Nevertheless, the prophet was not yet satisfied and speaks again:

Pardon me, I have a problem. Because when I apologise it must be clear that I really apologise. If I do not make sense, do not hesitate to say so when I stumble. When I stare at you, when I stare at you, my brother, I wanted to take and subdue you. When I say I stare at you helping you to stand up, I saw a bottle.

*Uxolo, ndinengxaki. Andifuni xa ndithetha into ndisithi uxolo makucace okokuba ndithi uxolo. Okokuba ayikho le nto ndiyithethayo, vela utsho ungathi wonqena okokuba ndikubeke. Ndiithe xa ndikujonga, xa ndikujonga, mzalwana wam, ndangathi ndingakuthatha ndikubeke phantsi. Xa ndithi ndiyakujonga ndikuphakamisa, ndabona ibotile.*

The president then elaborately took time to attend to two elements of the prophecy in particular, namely a 'dark cloud' and an 'axe'. He did this in a pastoral tone in a speech that asserted the leadership's authority and control of the service. He commenced with the words: 'Now then, well, [speaking] as an old man, listen when I explain this thing because you do not understand this thing.'

After this a minister dryly announces that the issue is thus considered settled. In a subsequent interview he comments as follows: 'There was a human misunderstanding during the prophesying because the one who prophesied was in-the-Spirit at the time he prophesied. He awoke and he could not tell with whom he was speaking. It is necessary that it should be made clear to him precisely who the person was with whom he spoke and what issue was discussed with him. So now it is clear that there was an attempt to explain to him the things which he was told.' The words 'It is necessary' is an indication of what should be done in the speaking while the whole incident provides an example of the functioning of the evaluative code.

## Reflection

By way of summary: The spoken words in a Zionist service of worship are transmitted with a greater or lesser degree of intensity, clarity and response. They are performed within a specific broad speech situation but also within a particular local speech situation. The first speaker who is not necessarily the principal or the most effective communicator follows the indispensable scripture reading. A number of further speakers of both genders develop themes arising from the foregoing oratory and with the liberty to initiate new

themes. A regular sequence of speaking events is the result. The spoken words are not heard in a vacuum or in silence: a continual responsive and audible interaction between speaker and audience takes place. While certain conventions, formulae and even codes of speaking are employed, personal style and the use of rhetorical techniques enhance the effectiveness of a speaker's communication and enrich the oratory. Whereas the composition of the speaking is mostly *ad hoc*, the Bible has a unique role as a major, perhaps the main source of this oratory.

Deborah Gaitskell (1997:260) has affirmed that Christians' 'powerful volubility' in preaching is characteristic of broad African church life and that it is not gender-specific. It is certainly justified to include the Zionists of the Cape Flats as a speech community in both aspects of her affirmation.

It would be incorrect to infer that all aspects of Zionist orality are unique. Some of these aspects are universal while I have observed many of the eleven characteristics above in the Xhosa-speaking of other AICs and even in mainstream churches' preaching. The conclusion I reach is that the Zionist service is a singular socio-cultural event in which forms of indigenous Xhosa speaking – within an urban setting – are prominent. In their services – which are primarily Christian speech events – the Zionists perform their formal speaking in a manner that is to a large degree analogous to that of their culturally related fellow-Xhosa-speaking traditionalists, living in the rural areas but also in the urban townships of Cape Town. A predominantly indigenous *manner* of speech, and therefore communication, is thus a feature of Zionist speaking. This finding obviously does not imply that elements of orality typical of the Christian tradition are excluded.

The similarities of the way of speaking of respectively the Zionists and the Xhosa traditionalists illustrate the former's closeness to indigenous culture and presents an excellent example of what missiologists advocate: thorough contextualisation. It remains to be seen how an analysis of the content of the speaking affects this finding.

The Zionists' speaking within the service is 'essentially an exercise in communicative work' (Kiernan 1990:77). The manner in which the speaking is performed and the appreciation of sharing the conventions of speaking bring about a feeling of being at home, of being accepted within the Zionist congregation, and eventually a sense of community within the broader context of township life. A further implication is that this speaking presents a powerful vehicle for the communication of the biblical message.

If 'good words have power for the Xhosa', then the Zionist worship service presents a most appropriate venue where Xhosa-speaking people are exposed to and can experience the powerful influence of such words. Yet, not only the manner in which words are used but also the matter of the content of the words should be raised. This I do in the next section with emphasis on theological aspects.

## Theological dimensions

The early Christian sermon was called a 'homily', a term derived from the Latin *homilia*, a conversation. Hence the subdivision of theology known as homiletics which can be described as 'the discussion of the art and theology of preaching' (Douglas 1974:479). Zionist speaking in the worship service is closely related to what in the Christian tradition has been known as homiletics.

In the previous section the focus of attention was on the characteristics of Zionist speaking in which the *art* of this 'preaching' came to the fore. The *how* of the oratory which, despite personal variation is fairly consistent, was the point of interest. I now attend to elements of the *what*, the dimensions of *theology* of the Zionists' speaking in order to identify themes which will possibly be included in the construction of an emerging rudimentary Zionist theology.

I do not attempt to construct a Zionist theology that reflects the traditional *loci* of Christian theology. Such a task is surely not the prerogative of any outsider, as Robert Schreier (1985:16-20) has convincingly argued. It is not the assignment of the researcher to construct a local theology, whether within the frame of traditional theology or not. He or she should rather identify and put down in writing certain theological dimensions. However, discerning theological dimensions carries the seed of constructing a local theology. Even so, I am aware that the analysis that follows is provisional, the presentation of a few building materials that might make up part of an eventual fully constructed Zionist theology.

In addition I refer to the remarks in chapter 2 on the numerous limitations one has when researching Zionist oratory. In this regard one is working with Western tools of investigation and I am quite alert to the risks of the imposition of Western theological categories on the current data (a matter to which I return in the final chapter). Moreover, the four Sunday services from

which this data was collected represent a mere fraction of the tens of thousands of services held by Zionists in the Cape Flats each year. Besides, the four kinds of services discussed here give rise to a different set of data than would be the case if one were to take as example any one of the at least 15 kinds of special services listed in chapter 4. The current data therefore can be regarded as a sample but not as a representative one. I thus do not attempt to arrive at far-reaching or decisive conclusions in this section.

For the stated reasons, instead of endeavouring the impossible to 'construct a Zionist theology', I attend to a few questions: What is theologically relevant to the Zionists?; What are the most conspicuous theological themes, the referential focus of their speaking?; Which issues are addressed and which ones that one would expect them to address, are downplayed or ignored?; How is the Bible used?; What are the main concepts of morality?; How is the service and prophecy experienced?; What do the speakers teach their congregations?; Can the formulation of any novel or profound 'truths' be discovered in Zionist speaking?; How do they deal with gender and traditional cultural issues? To use a contemporary formulation: Is there an emerging theology?

Even a superficial survey of the data on the speaking of the 70 speakers shows that a large volume of the content is concerned with matters other than the quoting, paraphrasing, explanation, interpretation and application of the biblical text. Some of this speaking has no apparent theological dimension, although some does contain implied theology. As has already been illustrated in the preceding section, this speaking as distinct from that on the biblical text, includes numerous examples such as greetings, anecdotes, reference to the speakers' own speaking or presence, and communication on the speakers' or a relative's condition such as regarding status, health, or origin.

In Zionist services a lot of speaking therefore takes place which could as well have been performed in any other gathering and which would normally not be found in mainline services. Often the content of this speaking is not well integrated in a specific speaker's performance. Here, the focus is on the discovery of the clear and hidden theological dimensions in the Zionists' oratory. This does not imply that I totally discard the orality, which ostensibly does not include any theological dimension. It could well have the function of making speakers feel at home, part of the communication proceedings and

of the total speech situation – in conventional theological terms: of expressing *koinonia*.



A semi-literate archbishop and caretaker of a school in New Crossroads studying his Bible

Eight themes emerged from an analysis of the content of the various Zionist speakers' contribution to the communication in the worship services thus far discussed. These themes reflect the most important theological dimensions arising from the Zionists' orality. By comparing the prevalence of the various themes I attempt to identify the referential focus of their speaking. The themes are more or less arranged according to frequency and, although they are successively dealt with, they are interwoven and often overlapping.

## Using the Bible

Thus far I have established that despite the fact that the Zionists basically have an oral culture, the Bible is nevertheless a major source for, and usually the launching pad of, consecutive speakers in the Zionist service. The speakers spontaneously appropriate the form of speaking which is natural to them to communicate the biblical message to their listeners. The oratory

therefore gains effectiveness by employing traditional Xhosa forms and styles of speaking.

Before attending to some indicators of the theological dimension arising from an investigation of the data on speaking, an underlying factor regarding the use of the Bible should be appreciated: the Bible is generally accepted as the authoritative Word of God while its divine origin and its significance in the life of the believer is unquestioned. No Zionist speaker challenges this belief or finds it necessary to convince anyone who might be in doubt of this authority. Brief confirmation of this elementary belief is sometimes made: 'Never forget a verse [of the Bible], do not forget a verse'; 'Jesus says: 'Bread alone does not give a person life'. These living spoken words, which come from the Word of God, give a person life.'

Since the Langa service was the only one of the four under discussion not devoted to a special occasion, the speaking and particularly the 'sermons' in the Langa case can be considered to be the most typical of an ordinary Zionist service. Langa is used as an example to illustrate the use of the Bible in the Zionists' speaking, apart from its use elsewhere in the service. The pattern that comes forth is in many ways typical of much Zionist speaking and can also be observed in a lot of the preaching in some religious meetings of black mainstream churches.

After the preceding quotation and paraphrasing of an unrelated scriptural passage, eight speakers consecutively take the floor to preach. The first speaker repeats the chosen passage (Matthew 25:1-13, the parable of the ten girls) and announces the chosen portion to be verse 6: 'It was already midnight when the cry rang out, "Here is the bridegroom! Go and meet him!."' He adds: 'This is the Word of God. I want us to talk about these verses. There is much in this (scriptural) reading.' He states the problem of the parable, the five unwise girls who did not have oil in their lamps, and comments on the content of the parable. He offers a brief eschatological application and identifies the root cause of the problem as the unwise who 'have been busy with their own matters'. The focus is on 'the oil', clarifying that a metaphor is used: 'Let everybody . . . think which oil we are talking of, so that someone might not think that we are talking about oil that is sold in shops.'

The next speaker asserts the importance of the Bible in the service. He quotes the whole of the chosen verse and then uses a technique of association: he employs one general notion included in the verse and links

this concept to a totally different scriptural reference, on which he then sermonises. In his case the underlying idea is 'go and meet' which he associates with two other parts of the Bible: first he mentions a woman, who approached Elijah and was 'on her way to meet Jesus of Christ'; the second reference is obscure: 'Jehovah God stood under Mount Gideon, crying to Enoch: "Get up and meet him."' No exposition or application is offered.

The technique of association is then followed by the six succeeding speakers: repetition of only part of the chosen verse which contains the focal idea, with or without comments on the original verse, but always the linking it to another verse of the Bible, Old or New Testament. The pattern is completed by a shorter or longer application to the audience. The following summary gives an impression of the result (scriptural references are by the speakers):

Emphasis	linked to
go and meet	1 Martha went out to meet Jesus 2 Zaccheus descended to meet Jesus
the cry	1 in Isaiah's prophesy - Isaiah 40 2 Cain 'who had not heard the cry' - Genesis 3 John at Patmos 4 the (Samaritan) woman 5 Peter at (the lake of) Tiberias - 'a person who does know the cry'
go and meet	1 the prodigal son went to meet his father 2 'We will go and meet Jesus coming from the east' 3 Zaccheus 'climbed down and came to meet Jesus' 4 Naomi came to meet people of her village
be watchful to have oil	1 no specific linkage 1 Elijah 2 Jacob 3 David - who all had oil/paraffin
Jesus' return and (good) works	1 quotes different New Testament reference to the Lord's return 2 Jacob's gift to Esau

The speakers are seemingly aware of the technique and choose which special themes they wish to emphasise: 'I am not going to talk about 'the cry', but I will talk about 'go and meet.' Another states that he is 'giving examples of people who have paraffin.' It is noteworthy that half of the

speakers explicitly name the bridegroom of the parable as Jesus, Christ or the Lord – which the text itself does not do, but which is the common interpretation.

Not only does the Langa speakers' rendering of the biblical verses vary from the Xhosa version, it often adds to the text: with reference to the parable of the ten girls: 'These ten girls were in the house as there were people outside peeping through the window;' 'The bridegroom arrived at the cock's crow.'

Already from the Langa example one can find answers to the question on how the Zionists deal with the biblical text. The chosen verse is taken as starting-point of investigation, I now illustrate eight such possibilities: the text can be explained and interpreted, modified, contorted, varied, substituted, located, applied or ignored. In the case of Langa, all these elements, with the exception of the introduction of a text with a completely new meaning, can be singled out.

Firstly, in spite of the frequent use of the Bible and much speaking going on in the worship services, not much exegetical interpretation and exposition is offered by speakers. One rarely finds evidence of dealing with the text in such traditional ways as comparing Scripture with Scripture, explaining the text within its textual context, taking into account the genre of the particular portion involved, in short, any observance of literary or historical factors. A scholarly exposition can by no means be expected from speakers who have had no theological training, who generally have had limited education and who have very few books of any kind available. One of the main elements of preaching in the traditional Christian fashion, interpretation and exposition of the text is therefore not typical of this Zionist speaking.

The potency of Zionists dealing with the biblical text is not to be found in exegetical management along tested ways. Yet, their speaking does show signs of the necessity to interpret and to explain the text to the listeners as can be seen in the following quotations (the first two are taken from speaking on Job):

With reference to the words 'the friends came', also they who had hidden their faces came when misfortune befell someone. This is a good thing that when a person is struck by a bad happening, (his) friends come to him. Also in Job's case they came, they approached, arrived and gave him what they had. The father said: 'They went to the table with him and ate with him'. I understand that they supported him with what happened to

him so that they could see his improved expression. They [in so doing] removed the misfortune.

This [Job] is a man from Kirika, an Arabian man. It was said that there was need at home and (problems) came upon [him] and the man [Job] went away and made himself an ash [rubbish] heap. He really was contagious. Because [Job's] testing continued.

I say so, my parents, to explain with these words the meaning of Ephesians 5 verse 28.

In the next instance a speaker shows exceptional insight in one of the biblical genres: 'This book talks of the parable of the ten girls. A parable indeed is not something which actually exists, but rather something that is similar to something else.'

In the second place, the following are examples of modifying the text from respectively the Old and New Testament. Regarding the former the following is said (compare the given texts to standard versions): 'Our verse says: "In the afternoon at one o'clock a messenger arrived and stood at the door. He delivered his message: Your land is burnt and your cattle are seized"' (Job 1:13-16); "All Job's brothers and sisters and former friends came to visit him and feasted with him in his house". Amen. "They consoled him, comforting his suffering, binding him with bandages for what had previously happened to him" (Job 42:11); 'The good Book of the church says: "Call on your Creator while He is nearby, or while the blood still flows in your veins. Do not go to meet him when you are already worn out"' (Ecclesiastes 12:1); 'There in Isaiah 59 [heading and verses 1-3] true things are said: "Your sins hinder the works of God. The ear of God is not too dull to hear, his arm is not too short to save you, but our iniquities separate us from God." It is said: "Our lips mutter unrighteousness, our tongues speak lies."' It is quite typical that a heading is taken as part of the original biblical text.

As for the New Testament: 'A certain mother brought only two cents while the rich people brought hundreds' (Luke 21:1-2); 'Timothy, take care of what has been entrusted to your care. You must dodge (out of the way of) people with their filthy talk' (1 Timothy 6:20); 'I, a captive in the Lord, exert you to persevere in the calling with which you were called. I mean: do this according to the calling with which you are called and be meek, humble and loving at all times' (Ephesians 4:1-2). The gender of the subject is simply changed in

the following significant instance: 'The epistle to the Ephesians 5 verse 28 says that as a woman loves her husband she loves herself.' Scriptural references are sometimes altered or combined to produce a desired reading: The words 'If a person [sic] is eager to be a church leader ...' quoted from I Timothy 3:1 is connected directly to 'she [sic] must have only one husband' of the next verse. This 'new' reading is followed by various subsequent speakers, some changing the gender references back to the original.

It should be mentioned that the modifications, whether reduction, expansion or combination of the text, normally do not change the meaning of the text seriously. In this connection one should keep in mind that the culture of the Zionist speakers is primarily oral and not literary. Speakers often *hear* the alterations of certain texts, but seldom see them for themselves in the original.

The same applies to the third way in which the speakers deal with the biblical text, namely contortion: 'May the lands the Lord God gives you be stretched out' (cf. Exodus 20:12); 'The Book of Exodus says: 'A man who is caught sleeping with another man's wife must be killed'' (cf. Deuteronomy 22:22 – wrong indication of a text often occurs); 'David said: "Job is like a tree, Job is like a tree"' ; 'It is also said in Ephesians: "You too, parents, submit to your children"' (cf. Ephesians 5:22, 6:4); 'All people are liars' (cf. Titus 1:12). One speaker, sermonising extensively on Zacchaeus (without mentioning his name), places the following words in the tax collector's mouth: 'I long for you, New Jerusalem, as my efforts will end when I arrive within you' (a slight adaptation of the words of a well-known Xhosa hymn). I here use the word 'contortion' and not 'distortion' as there is no reason to suspect that speakers deliberately give a false account of the original.

Fourthly, the chosen verse of a specific service can be varied. In a marriage service the text is Ephesians 5:28–29 in which the key words are: 'Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies ... No one ever hates his own body. Instead he feeds it and takes care of it.' A speaker repeats the main theme and then supplements it with a theme from Genesis 2:23: 'The verse says that nobody hates his own flesh but rather loves and cares for it. Friend T, as you join yourself to this Mama today, you must realise that it is flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone. This means she is your wife.' In another instance the variation rests on much more meagre grounds. While preaching on the sorrowful Job, the speaker reminds himself aloud of another figure who was

heavy-hearted: 'After that he [Job] gave him a [sad] look. Another [messenger] comes along. The verse says: "A person came along and his (Job's) face changes painfully." And I thought of the vision in which Nehemiah's face changed in a similar way: "[It was] in the kitchen at 4 o'clock and the king asked Nehemiah why his face had changed [so sadly]."'

In the fifth place: whereas in the previous case the key concept or general truth is maintained, it quite often happens that the chosen text is substituted by one which has no direct relevance to it. Obviously speakers have their own reasons for doing this, possibly because they feel they can add fresh contributions to the general speaking. As the examples that follow show, moving away from the chosen text evidently does not imply departure from the Bible. The services devoted to special occasions lent them more often to the substitution of the text than the ordinary service. This is possibly due to the fact that in the broader Zionist context a large pool of biblical and oral texts is available from which speakers readily draw for speaking at special services such as Communion, thanksgiving and confirmation occasions. All the speakers in the Langa service (excluding those who spoke on the case of prophecy) consistently maintained the chosen text while in all three other services this was not the case.

At the ordination service at Gugulethu three of the eight speakers disregard the chosen verses, I Timothy 3:1-7 and Ephesians 5:22. They replace these verses with others ranging from Psalm 23:1, Proverbs 13:1 and I Samuel 2:22-25 to Luke 21:6 and Titus 1:12. All these texts are used appropriately on the occasion of the ordination of a minister and his wife. In most of the cases an application of the new verse is given.

A similar pattern is found in the marriage service at Khayelitsha. The chosen verse, Ephesians 5:28, is substituted by a small minority of speakers who give preference to other verses suitable to the marriage theme (Genesis 2:23, Ruth 1:11-12 and I Corinthians 13:8), the prayers of the childless Hannah (I Samuel 1) and the theme of giving (marriage gifts) generously (Luke 21:1-4 and II Corinthians 9:6). All these verses are applied to the lives of believers. Often not substitution but wide-ranging elaboration of the text appears to be the intention.

The condolence service at Khayelitsha has Job 42:11 as chosen verse. A quarter of the speakers substitutes this with a variety of other verses. With one exception (Ezekiel 37:7), it is difficult, perhaps even to the congregation, to appreciate how respectively Psalm 119:9, Ecclesiastes 12:1, Zechariah

13:6, Luke 19:1-5 and John 15:6 as dealt with by the speakers, are appropriate to the theme of condolence. My untested impression is that sometimes speakers use biblical texts that inspire them and which they feel are suitable to communicate a message from Scripture, whatever the occasion might be.

A sixth possibility, of less importance, is the locating of a text. The chosen verse is carefully announced: 'In the book of Matthew 25 verses one to 13 we have read, the verse we will use will be verse six', or 'Our first epistle, to the Ephesians, is on page 1155. The second is the epistle to Timothy, chapter 3 page 1171.' When speakers deviate from the chosen text some meticulously indicate where the new text is to be found, some mention the biblical figure that uses the words, while others quote the text or simply paraphrase it. It frequently happens that speakers acknowledge that they do not know where a verse they quote is located or 'who spoke the words'. One of the favourite sayings of speakers, following the chosen verse or not, is 'the Bible says' (*ithi iBhayibhile*) or 'the Book says' (*ithi iNcwadi*).

Seventhly, the application of a biblical text is an indispensable part of preaching. With a few exceptions of speakers who do not say much and thus do not really contribute to the speaking, the Zionists are generally masters in the art of drawing parallels between the biblical events and teachings, and the lives of the members. This is done in such a manner that the distant issues of biblical times become close and are made relevant to their present-day existence. The meaning of the Bible is enlarged to address matters in the lives of the listeners directly by way of linking biblical data to issues in the lives of the listeners. Contextualisation in this sense is therefore characteristic of their speaking.

A few examples serve to illustrate how the application is done. When the parable of the ten girls is the theme of preaching, one speaker urges: 'Dear heavenly congregation, if you are still far from the grace of God, stay here in order to come and meet Jesus because He is nearby. For there is going to be a cry: "There Jesus is coming". Even you, on the last day you will see him.' Another speaker is even more explicit: 'Now this thing addresses the people here present, men, and no longer the ten girls.' A speaker in the same service adds: 'Yes, this refers to us, whether we have bought paraffin, whether we have it or whether we do not. Because if we do not have the peace of paraffin, there will be someone who is left in the lurch.'

A revealing instance of application of the chosen text is given at the service of condolence a year after the person concerned had died. The speaking is on the comforting of Job: 'In a similar way you are here at this house today to console this house [which is] caused to suffer by a sharp sword [painful experience]; they were bereaved of the father of the home.' Another speaker applies the texts on the gifts brought to Job, to his contribution, euphemistically referred to as 'cents', to the bereaved church: 'Let me now attend to your issue, Father. The real reason why I keep on putting down two cents, [is that] your verse indeed says: "They came with gold to console him", dear congregation.'

Finally, the chosen text and sometimes all biblical texts can also be ignored. As already mentioned, it does happen that speakers do not go beyond speaking which has nothing to do with preaching from the Bible. One speaker, for example, states his position in his church, mentions that he has a question which he will not pose and repeats the interjection 'in the name of the Lord'. He then announces that he is handing over to the master of ceremonies, tells the listeners his name, surname and where he lives and finally calls for a song. Although he has not preached, he respectfully has been given full opportunity to do so.

Analysis of speaking in all four services, excluding that on prophecy at Langa, shows that more than a third of the speakers do not use the text (they replace it, as discussed above) and that more than a tenth do not use any text at all. In fact, the longest speech event of one of the services merely quotes Psalm 119:9 and Ecclesiastes 12:1 without any elaboration whatsoever. Furthermore, the four longest speeches recorded in all the services totally ignore the chosen text and offer virtually no explanation or application of the text they have chosen.

Two conclusions arise from this finding; Zionist speakers do not use the Bible in their speaking in an equal measure; the content of the speaking includes much which has no direct bearing on the use of the Bible.

If not with biblical matter, with which issues of substance (ie, besides the conventions already dealt with) do the Zionists fill their speaking? The most striking is the relating of some short stories or events in which the speakers were involved. A speaker, for instance, uses exactly half of his speaking to tell the listeners about his church uniform, which he found thrown on the ground after having neatly ironed it. He continues with his experiences on his way to the service, an ill omen with which he has recently been burdened and some

information on his birth and background. Only in the middle of his fairly lengthy speaking he says: 'Let me come to the verse,' which was the chosen one.

It is popular to sketch scenarios, usually of situations gone wrong and often in an amusing style. One male speaker mocks the abilities and moral weaknesses of the Cape Town ministers and midway through his speech he changes the subject: 'I discontinue [people's examples] and come to the Bible because I understand that you have heard the side of the people.' After a few sentences on the text he returns to imaginary scenarios which depict problems in the life of the local ministry. Another speaker, of whom half the speaking is devoted to personal anecdotes, says: 'I will go for the verse but I need to tell people what happened last night because I have been sent to this place.'

Much of the speaking is indeed on 'the part of the people', on matters arising from common life and not necessarily from the Bible. Yet, one should note that most of the speaking which is not directly biblically related, is by no means mere chatter, meaningless or spurious. By far the best part of this speaking is concerned with the religious life of the speakers or listeners. Thus, while the speaking on biblical texts is in some cases overshadowed by other speaking, the common tenor of the speaking is preponderantly religious. Any serious deviation is soon met by spontaneous singing.

It is also noteworthy that in the phase of the Langa service in which prophecies and visions occurred and which consisted of sixteen speech events, only a single incidental reference to the Bible is used and no quotation at all, let alone the chosen text. This appears to be somewhat surprising and deviating drastically from the traditional Protestant emphasis on a close association between Holy Spirit and the Word of God. This speaking, furthermore, does not seem to reflect the Zionists' belief that the Holy Spirit who speaks through the prophet is the same Spirit that is the proponent of biblical truth.

Prophecy certainly does have its merits in terms of having an effect on the lives of members of the congregation (see the section on 'The spirit in Zion'). Nevertheless, the fact that the speaking in prophecy is not connected directly to the biblical text – the latter otherwise being so prominent in their speaking – could suggest that the Zionists believe in two ways of divine revelation, as some churches of the Christian tradition also do. Apart from the speaking in services, some respondents even say that revelation through prophecy can be more significant than that of the Bible.

Others see the difference between this prophecy and that in Israel as follows: 'The latter is for the whole nation while with us it is local and meant for our immediate concerns. So our prophecy has nothing to do with the Bible.' Another adds: 'The Bible does not refer to our problems. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals the solutions.' The Zionists therefore do not in all cases see the Bible as having relevance to their lives.

Zionists' prophecies do not deal with any aspects of showing the meaning of or applying Scripture, or of communicating, propagating and teaching truths of the Christian faith. They are concerned with specific issues that affect the immediate everyday lives of the members and the congregation. For instance,

- identifying a particular illness and its cause
- warning someone not to take a certain action
- moving forward concerning a decision
- taking heed regarding a relationship with a certain person.

Admittedly, the Zionists assume that a prophecy should not clash with biblical truth. The practice of *isisefo* in which a prophecy is sometimes tested is one of the ways to counter one-sided subjectivity. When a person is the object of a special revelation the surprise element and psychological effect add to the significance and impact of the prophecy.

Not only the sending of messages by the speakers, but also their reception by the listeners, is essential to communication. If a chosen verse is 'sent' effectively, it still remains important to ask how it is 'received', how it *affects the listeners*. On a rational level the message, in this case the chosen verse, should be understood and appreciated if communication is to be effective. Subsequent speaking in the services suggests that this is the case regarding at least part of the Zionist speaking. 'Pleasant words have already been spoken (in the service),' states a speaker and another says: 'What I like when I preach in a service, is that when you preach, you preach knowing that whatever you are preaching either builds or destroys. I want all of us to understand [this].'

When, in an interview a week after the Langa service, a female respondent was specifically asked about the effect of the preaching on her, she shows that she has well understood and appreciated the substance of the collective speaking:

They [the preachers] taught that there were five girls who were wise, and another five who were foolish and confused. With what aim did I come

here to the church? Even if I have come here either wise or foolish, it is necessary that I have a lamp. I have come to the church looking for a lamp, to open my heart so that the words that have been spoken can stay with me and I always think about them. I must not be like those girls that were shut out . . . They taught us always to have oil within us or to have a lamp [burning] inside of me. Let me not simply attend church, let me be moved by something within me.

It is risky to surmise how the listeners receive all the elaborate speaking in the Zionist service. The impression I often have is that the *manner* of the speaking is as or even more important than the *content*. Nevertheless, the pattern of sermonising sketched above ensures an enriching elaboration of the meaning of the biblical text. I presume that, just as the speaker selects a certain theme, the listener too will be impressed by a certain theme or interpretation. On the other hand, the technique of associating and linking texts merely on the sound of words, and that often without explanation or interpretation, can hardly be advantageous to the congregation in terms of effective communication of the biblical meaning.

The Zionists' use of the Bible in the service as a form of exposition and proclamation of the Christian message is unconventional in terms of academic homiletics. Exegesis is lacking, original themes are not fully developed while distortions do take place – the examples of the distortions found in the current data are less serious than some I have heard in the wider Zionist circle of speaking. Nevertheless, the Bible is appropriated by the Zionists, extensively used in the service (as illustrated above), while the meaning of its message as interpreted by the speakers is communicated and applied to the lives of the listeners. The Bible is indeed at the very heart of the speaking of these ordinary, non-academic readers and this is where I identify the first referential focus of their orality. Whatever their eventual theology will be, they at least share this basic point of reference with more sophisticated forms of theology.

To complete this conclusion: alongside the Bible other narratives are used in the speaking, mostly of an anecdotal or imaginative, yet predominantly of a religious nature.

Some ways in which the Bible is used in the speaking of the Zionists have been discussed. I have by no means exhausted the theme and it appears again in the sections that follow. Suffice to add that the frame of reference within which this speaking takes place, is not only expanded by the use of the

Bible, it is deepened by the manner in which Scripture is dealt with. While cautioning that the sample of the present data is too narrow to justify decisive conclusions, I wish to emphasise the necessity to further examination of this richly chequered theme.

## Morality

The Bible presents to the Zionists – as to most followers of the Christian and Judaic faiths – countless examples of, and teachings on, good behaviour. All religions have their particular ethos and perceptions of what is morally 'right' or 'wrong'. Yet, moral values are not only highly variable but also relative between cultures and historical periods. No wonder that different peoples living in particular situations – such as the Zionists of the Cape Flats – continually have to address the question of morality.

The speaking of Zionists in their services provides a window through which one can observe what some of their perceptions of good behaviour are and how they deal with right and wrong. One should obviously not expect to find ethics or even a system of moral rules and principles, which is not the business of speaking in the context of preaching in the worship service of any church, indigenous or mainline. At its best some indications or core aspects of their ethos could be identified. It should be realised that the data provided by the speaking in the four services under scrutiny will tend to highlight certain mores usually relevant to the occasion of the service and the chosen scriptural readings. In two of the four services, the confirmation and the marriage, a man and a woman were sitting in front of the congregation so that one can expect the husband-wife relationship to lie heavy on the mind and the tongue of the speakers.

The first impressive factor when analysing the morality issue in the Zionists' speaking is that they are aware of morality and the importance of living in a right and worthy manner. This awareness is shown by such speaking as 'How must your feet walk?', the need to 'obey God's law' and 'the worth of good works'.

Conduct that presents a problem to the Zionists, assessed from the content of the speaking, centres on *ill will* towards others. Speakers sound warnings against anger in particular, but also mention ill-temper, a wrong spirit, malice and hatred which can give rise to spitefulness, different forms of quarrelling and even domestic violence. Favouritism is especially singled out in this regard.

Ill will is most obvious in the case of improper talk. Speakers are outspoken against scolding noisily (*ukushawuta*), swearing, 'stabbing' (a strong word, *ukuhlaba*, is used figuratively), lying, open discussion of private matters and dirty talk. Gossiping and spreading rumours are often mentioned: 'You must always hear: "It is said", or "Someone said" and then follows [the rumour]. Let a thing pass you by.' A young woman has the following to say about 'the wrong things which flow from my mouth': 'There is a difficulty regarding what comes out of the mouth of such a person who calls herself a Christian.'

Marital discord is a field in which ill will is rife. Not only is this kind of 'wrong' by far mentioned most often, but more examples, some of them elaborate, are given on this theme than on any other (note the remark above about the nature of the two services). A speaker encourages the marrying couple: 'Let there be no ill will between you (*kungabikho nanye into eyenzekayo*) ... do not allow a wrong spirit to enter between you.' Another's advice: 'Do not live with your back turned to your partner, but rather live facing each other.' 'Mothers and fathers cause their own problems by concealing matters from each other,' says a speaker.

*Worldliness* presents the second major category of behaviour that is not expected from a Zionist. A male speaker cautions against what he euphemistically calls 'all kinds of meetings, there where you will gain nothing'. The 'places of pleasure' in the townships are indeed numerous and tempting. A young female convert is forewarned that 'outsiders will entice her back [to them] as it is pleasant there. We want ... a person to leave the pleasant things that are done [in the world] outside.'

The most addressed forms of worldliness are drinking and sexual licentiousness. As for the first: 'You must live a sober life and not be maddened by wine because there outside (the church) wine is plentiful'; 'On Sundays some people pay their own visits and do not visit the church. Some people whisper and also carelessly say to you: "How now, just have a drink, man. Church? Surely you are not attending church today." You too will be surprised to see that now there is no church person who sees you. You will see that they say to you: "Down a Black [Label]. One [only] is harmless. Even in the church you drink, man. We once saw you drinking there".' The following is a warning against sexual immorality: 'The flowers are many. What is more, the flowers cause a man to be blinded or a woman to be blind' (This issue is also discussed under gender relationships).

Pride and an attitude of superiority, especially concerning one's church position, is a further moral problem of a worldly nature: 'You must remain as you were and not become puffed up. Do not say in the church: "I am the important one, nobody will boss me around".' Avarice, profligacy, dishonesty and caprice are also mentioned as undesirable conduct. In summary a speaker says: 'I cannot identify with such things.'

The morality coin has two sides. Apart from the wrong behaviour there is the right and proper thing to do. The fact that vices are spoken of more regularly than virtues is not particular to the Zionists but common in many churches.

*Love* is by far the most recommended moral quality. Sometimes love as such or loving attitudes are mentioned, such as compassion, gentleness and humility. More often though love is given some or other concrete form such as hospitality and disinterested generosity: 'We can give hundreds but we still expect something in return. No, God does not accept this. He accepts a person who sows joyfully.'

Family care is another highly regarded form of love, care for aged parents, children, spouses or in-laws. A female speaker advises: 'Do not allow a wrong atmosphere to enter your house' (*Kwanaphakathi kulo mnquba wenu ningavumeli umoya ongenayo*). A wife's submission to her husband is deemed important. One speaker who addresses her self-love, respect and dignity is exceptional. With a long quotation from Matthew 25 a speaker recommends good works – the only speaker to raise this theme: 'You need to meet Jesus with good works.'

*Peace loving* is a further desired virtue. Not only is the interjection 'The Lord of peace be with us' repeatedly heard but peace and forgiveness recommended: 'It is not necessary for you to have anger, malice or hatred, rather to be true to God. You must forget whatever someone else has done to you. Forget it! God uses me in this manner.' Cheap reconciliation is not valued. Restitution and even a peace-offering might be necessary as in the case of Jacob: 'When you realise that you have fought with someone, you will not be reconciled without carrying something in (your) hand. I am saying this, our people, because Jacob came down from Laban to meet his elder brother and sent people with things of peace.'

To *endure* or to be patient, especially when experiencing suffering, pain, some or other of life's hardships or a difficult person is valued highly as morally correct.

Generally, the speaking on morality witnesses to the Zionists' realisation that they are conscious of human weakness and brokenness. Yet, not only *what* moral issues they address in their services is important. One must also attend to matters to which they do *not* refer. I have identified a few omissions, which, to my admittedly limited experience, have applicability beyond the data of the four services:

- Nothing is spoken about social morality. This is strange in the light of so much apparent social injustice, corruption, and various forms of violence and permissiveness in the township communities and society in general. I have, for example, never heard Zionists preach on the merits/demerits of the television shows their families watch. Morality addressed by the Zionists is virtually limited to the personal and congregational level.
- Whereas culture is normally clustered around political-economical factors this is not at all apparent in their speaking. The implication is that significant moral issues are not attended to in this context – despite the Zionists obvious awareness and a degree of practical involvement in socio-political matters. Perhaps this is a case of 'practising what they do not preach'.
- The moral aspect of witchcraft and sorcery, arguably *the* most immoral behaviour in traditional society, is not attended to – let alone in the prophecies.
- Apart from a few exceptions, there is not much reference to the urban environment in which they live. One would expect the speakers' examples and applications to abound with consciousness that they are urban and not rural people. The few references to city life include a father who is said to have gone to court (*ecourt*) and broken up his marriage, 'all teachers and judges' who are 'on the broad road', and discontent because of 'waiting for the government.'
- The motivation to do what is morally right and the consequences of respectively good and bad behaviour are underrated. The single case of an eschatological motivation to do good works is extraordinary.
- While much is said about sexual adventures of married people, the sexuality of young adults and children is ignored. In the light of the prevalence of AIDS this is a serious omission.
- Christian morality is not, by way of comparison and teaching, seriously juxtaposed with either traditional Xhosa or modern urban morality.

- In the data provided by the four services I found no indication of legalism in the sense of undue adherence to legal forms prescribed by the Old Testament or an interpretation of the Christian faith understood as a new moral or religious law. The possibility of legalism in Zionists' views is not denied by this finding.
- While Zionists occasionally mention racism or racial issues, often adding 'God does not discriminate' (*UTHixo akakhethi buso*), this is not the case in the speaking discussed here.

An analysis of the Zionist speaking on morality shows that although no particular system of morals or a moral code is noticeable, a clear outline of good conduct is discernible. The service provides a forum for expressing moral rules on the expected conduct of members. Speakers endeavour to strengthen the members' willingness and ability to abide by the rules which are presented by an unwritten collection of 'do's' and 'don'ts'. Part of the speakers' attempt is the reference to behaviour that is not expected of a Zionist. This is done by way of anecdotes and examples that often elicit considerable more speaking than that on what is advocated.

As regards morality in the Zionists' speaking, the focus is positively on love, often in concrete form, and negatively, on the avoidance of ill will towards others, which can take many forms. These and other mores provide a measure of moral direction to the members in their urban environment in which clarity on morality and morality itself is often lacking. The speaking thus creates a context conducive to the making of moral choices. The moral rules furthermore give the leaders a degree of social control over the conduct of members belonging to their specific church.

## Experiencing the speaking and the service

If the speaking informs and guides the Zionist congregation on matters of morality, it has a further effect on them: it provides them with certain religious experience and also encourages them to reflect on and share with others their own experience.

Speaking is one of the main features of the service. This section investigates what the Zionists' experience is in terms of the speaking as well as the entire service, which to many of them, is the most significant event of their weekly activities. Some instances of religious experience beyond the service, such as healing, prayer meetings and counselling, are kept in mind.

The experiencing of the Zionist service is preceded by intercession while still at home: 'I myself have prayed for today's service and I said: "God, I ask that all people be present."' Awareness of *God's presence and involvement* in the service is expressed: 'I experienced the presence of God when we arrived'; 'Today God carried us and placed us at this venue'; 'We thank (God) for this opportunity. He still protects us, He still shelters us, and He still cares for us in length of time. Throughout the whole year as it winds to its end God has kept us. Until here and now He is with us.'

When members of the congregation listen to the speaking and experience the service generally, *certain feelings* are roused. Midway in his speaking, an archbishop makes the expressive statement: 'It is pleasant in the service of Zion (*Kumnandi enkonzweni yaseZiyon*).' Two females add further dimension to the service: 'Let me not simply attend church, let me be moved by something within me'; 'Even if I am feeling pains here in my heart, when I arrive at the church I am happy. I just feel happy even when I leave the church, I feel happy and the pain in my heart has left me.' These words witness to a sense of release of life's hardships.

In a post-service interview at Langa, the experience of joy in the service was repeated and the source of its stimulation traced: 'The service was extraordinary as compared to ordinary services inasmuch that I was joyful and I did not want it to end. The usual services are pleasant but on that day the service was more pleasant than the normal ones and this made us so joyful. In my view (it was so pleasant) because the Spirit of God came with enthusiasm and was working on that day.'

Two female respondents commented on the 'working' of the Holy Spirit by describing the typical inner experience of what happens when the Spirit fills one: 'You change and you are no longer yourself, not conscious of where you are. While you are not aware of your presence, a feeling reaches you and you see that something is the matter with someone. You are now in-the-Spirit'; 'As the mama said: when you have the Spirit you perceive a feeling within you. We are changed. We now see something within you that goes beyond you. So now a person could say: "Oh! Someone is now in-the-Spirit".' This intensely personal encounter with the working of the Holy Spirit is occasionally experienced and frequently spoken of in the services (compare in this regard the discussion of being in-the-Spirit in chapter 5).

The frequent circle dancing in the service comes into play: 'That mama is healed. She went around (in the circle) only twice as her legs tired her, her

legs were inclined to be painful. Now we, we who go round (in circles), we rotate and experience an inner pleasantness, full of the Spirit because there is something which makes us move. The Spirit is present within us. Eh, we do not tire because here within us it is pleasant, indeed.'

On the human level joy was experienced because of the 'important' visitors: '(We enjoyed the service) because we are not used to worship with you. Today you are present to look at what we are doing. Therefore, as you watch us, we are glad because we are with other people who have come to look at what our situation is. Now we are glad to have other people with us. Yes, we say we are happy for this reason.' I interpret these words as appreciation for the acknowledgement shown by outsiders for 'our situation' of being despised and marginalised by other churches. Another speaker's feeling of being 'included and not excluded when a song is sung' is likewise significant in terms of the tremendous sense of community feeling roused in the service.

One of the major experiences in the Zionist service has to do with *renewing one's faith*, including one's morality. A speaker expresses this clearly:

When you are a person who goes to church, you do not pursue what gives you satisfaction. Yes, when you do not go to church, your faith will come to an end in this way: there in the place where you live while not attending church, you will go forth and meet difficult matters, distressing things, you will experience pressing matters. Then you are not able to say: 'Indeed, my faith is alive in me.' It will not cease as it is strengthened by reading the Bible. So a child learning there at home who does not know the teacher, does not know whether he is [learning] right or not. He only knows that he is learning. This means: (he does not know) whether he is right or wrong about what he is learning, how he is progressing in the way he is managing. He will take himself to behave correctly, as there is nobody to say he is behaving badly.

Self-examination is one of the ways of renewing one's faith. Not surprisingly some speakers encourage this experience. Members should 'examine themselves to see where they stand', 'whether they have oil in their lamps or not', and realise that 'we need to look at ourselves and not at others'. A female speaker uses a fitting metaphor: 'I should go to the service and hear what the minister says. When I arrive at my house [I realise]: He is right, and I place myself on a scale [do soul-searching]. At all times, each morning, let me hear something else and on another Sunday I once again hear another thing and I continually know that it applies to me. This is what I experience.'

There is no doubt that experiencing of the awareness of the *presence of the Holy Spirit* in the service is the most intense of all, especially when some form of healing takes place. This was the case in the Langa service. I mentioned earlier the diseased woman who was bound with a rope and shaken around. In an interview a week after the service, respondents commented on how the woman 'of whom it is said that she was a diviner and once had demons' was healed.

First, what usually happens to her in the services is sketched:

She comes in and sometimes just wants to sing at her arrival. At this very moment she is seized. We talk calmly to her and remove her outside. At times we just ask her nicely not to make a row and to go and sit down. Sometimes she listens, and sometimes, if it becomes clear that she does not listen due to the demons, we are compelled to talk nicely to her and to take her outside where she sits down and prays. When you hear her praying she has to stay well and when you find that she is quiet, she is given a candle and she stays outside.

On the day of her healing her experience was different: 'She was healed and there she was kneeling. She has already removed the rope. She is now in a waiting period. She was distressed with her whole body in pain as the people moved around her. They wanted her pains to cease. After she was encircled, she too has to go round in a circle. Yes, after this she knelt down and said: "Oh! I see this and have seen that". She said: "I am now healed because I saw this and that".'

Finally, the significance of the potential outcome of the healing as climax to the process of being transformed from diviner to prophetess is described:

There are people who come to the church who are prophets. As we are created we have different gifts. So God wants to use this mama, who had entered the service, as a blessing to us. Therefore He is still busy with her to place her in the position of a complete prophet. So I can see what she still has to do and I say: 'Mama, there is something you have to do. How? As you come here into the service, you will come under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is necessary that you make a definite choice and discard what is bad. If this is a problem to you, the Spirit will set you free'.

The sister who came here due to the stabbing pains (*amahlaba*): the stabbing pains now go away and the Spirit of God comes in and uses her. Now this mama who is trained [as a prophet] still has to be made suitable until she has completed her prophetship. The duration of the training

differs according to the situation in which you are. As we black people are accustomed, we pray and worship with drums. Thus we say that sometimes it takes a person a year, sometimes a few months. Anyway, the Spirit completes his work.

What both the new prophet and the whole congregation experience in this case is one of the most extraordinary phenomena which gives Zion its strength: The 'office' of a vital figure in the traditional Xhosa religion and culture is changed to that of a life-giving prophetess who, having undergone an extended process of 'training' (*ubutrainig*) and 'completion' (*ukugqiba*), will in her turn be instrumental in healing others. Experiencing this and other instances of such transformations has a tremendous reassuring and identity confirming influence on the Zionists, as well as serving as proof of the power of the Spirit of God.

However, the speaking also accommodates views, which, to some other theological traditions, would at least be questionable. As example I quote the words of a speaker who, at the beginning of one of the services, reflects on the presence of the Spirit:

At the moment we are not in-the-Spirit. Let us advance the service. We are not yet in-the-Spirit. To arrive in-the-Spirit you have to searchingly investigate Scripture. At the moment I await the time [of being in-the-Spirit]. At present we do not have the Spirit. We do not have the Spirit through the drum; it is the Spirit of God. It is necessary that we appeal to you to listen sensitively and to await your time [to be in-the-Spirit].

While appreciating the role ascribed to Scripture, it is difficult not to conclude that the manipulation of the Spirit is implied. The fact that the speaker finds it necessary to state that the Spirit does not come through the drum suggests that he is correcting a false perception that some listeners might have. The same could have been said about the compelling singing and dancing.

As for experiencing the service, there are three central points which have theological implications: the awareness of the presence and operation of God, especially the Holy Spirit's healing power; the renewal of faith; and the sense of community that is roused.

The experience of the Spirit in the service is one of the most important ways in which members' lives are animated and helped 'to reach out toward the super-sensible realities' (Kalilombe 1994:115). In particular the living presence of and communion with God, as well as the encouragement to

live up to this relationship in everyday life brings about spiritual and physical empowering. In any case, the speaking should not be divorced from other aspects of the service. This is, after all, the temple where the Zionist believers have communion with God and their fellow-believers.

## Prophesying

Zionists, together with other churches of the Spirit, are often referred to as 'prophetic churches' as distinguished from non-prophetic churches. This is because prophecy, which in Zion differs radically from the perception of prophecy in mainstream theology, is a vital part of their ministry and church life. Prophecy is received from the Holy Spirit through hearing or visions. Without a person being in-the-Spirit prophecy in the Zionist context is not possible: 'The one who prophesied was in-the-Spirit at the time he prophesied.' Prophecy includes warnings against wrongdoing and threats, and calls for repentance. The congregation experiences prophesy as a regular, though not indispensable, part of their services.

What follows is a more detailed investigation of the content and the speaking dealt with in the Langa service.

First a young man, N, reports to the congregation on a vision he has received according to which he is to prevent a man with bound hands and feet from sitting at a table. The person, M, is actually present in the service. At this moment a dark cloud suddenly appears to N and he is to rebuke and subdue M, which he does. N also sees an axe coming to M's head. In an apparently separate prophecy he has a vision in which he enters a house full of people with someone praying. He is to collect certain weapons and have ministers pray for them.

The president of the church does not have to explain 'the weapons' as all present know that these are the staffs and spears used as weapons against evil powers. The issue is the praying for these instruments. The president confirms that this is nothing new and that the weapons continually need to be taken together and prayed for.

In two separate speaking events, interrupted by three others, the president addresses M in a pastoral manner: 'Brother M, when it was prophesied why we were sitting down, I saw that you were controlled by the Spirit'. He explains the being 'bound up', as that he (M) is ill. The 'axe' is interpreted as that M 'will be chopped up' if he does not pray: 'I see that people have strong

negative feelings that can become apparent through the presence of (such) an axe.' The axe shows that there are people whose 'harsh speaking' (*lintetho ezibukhali*) threatens M. This is to be prevented: 'You see, if we do not want those [people] chopping to enter here, the Spirit will reveal it.'

When the president interprets the *dark cloud* he reverts to a kind of explanation similar to one of the techniques used in the speaking. First he explains the 'dark cloud' in a literal sense: 'Something that even the Xhosa do not like because it brings a shower of hail and thunder which destroys people's food.' Then follows the biblical interpretation in which God uses a dark cloud 'when Moses was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt'. Finally, a figurative 'dark cloud', when people for example have lost a beloved. I later discuss the possibility of the cloud being sent by people of evil intent.

In all cases the cloud forebodes nothing good. Someone is to suffer some kind of misfortune and prayer is advised as the only answer. At a certain stage the president's explanation evoked N, who uncharacteristically interrupts his senior's speaking and seriously agitates the audience (whose loud response makes it impossible to follow some of the tape-recording of the event). Yet, all in all, N's prophecies have been given due attention and interpreted to the person concerned and the congregation in a meaningful and constructive manner.

The same cannot be said of the second prophet's speaking, which did not have a fortunate ending. This prophecy is dealt with comprehensively elsewhere, therefore, suffice it to say that it had an unfortunate result. At the conclusion of the service the prophet calmly announced that he was leaving the church 'as I have been chased away by you' and because 'some people estrange others from the church'. He refers to the president who 'said that my prophecy is off the mark. He told me openly that my conduct was surprising.' Indeed, a sad ending.

The following can be concluded about the belief in the Holy Spirit and prophecy from the Langa and other speaking:

- It is believed that through prophecy the Holy Spirit reveals matters regarding the well-being of people.
- Prophecies in the service are discussed here although it must be realised that frequent prophecies of healer prophets mostly take place in the context of the private home.

- A prophecy has to be interpreted openly to make the hidden message meaningful to a specific person and to the congregation at large.
- Both prophecies and interpretations are devoid of scriptural references (besides the incidental one to Moses).
- The outcome of prophecies can be constructive (the averting of a threat in M's case) or destructive (a prophet leaving the church).
- The congregation experienced all the events and was intensely and, at times, emotionally involved in the speaking.
- Different or disagreeing interpretations of prophecies between speakers can result in very tense situations.
- The social control of the service has the priority and is maintained at the serious risk of losing a member.

Theologically, the focus is here on the prophecy given by the Holy Spirit through the agency of two prophets. The Zionists generally accept that human error is possible and should be checked, even when a prophet speaks in-the-Spirit. The interpretation of the respective prophecies could be challenged and even cause unpleasantness, but not the belief that in specific cases God works through his Spirit to enable prophecies. The fact that the Bible is not mentioned in a prophecy does not of necessity imply that the Holy Spirit operated independently of biblical truth. The widespread assumption is that the prophet operates within the framework of biblical truth. In the case of a prophecy the prophet experiences a sense of divine immediacy and receives a personal revelation which is essential for the well-being of an individual or of the whole congregation.

## Ministering within the service

Leadership is an important aspect of any group and the social influence of leadership roles is crucial for the well-being of the group. In the context of the Zionist churches such roles are assigned to a range of officers who minister to the members of the congregation (as indicated in chapter 4). Within Christianity the ministry is considered to be a divine institution which is indispensable to serve the essential functions of the life of the church.

Besides the Zionists' ministry on the use of the Bible, morality, prophesying and other themes discussed later, mainly two other functions emerge from the data on the speaking in the worship service: pastoring and teaching.

One should not take for granted that it is only in the context of the service that the Zionist leaders execute these functions. The content of the speaking reveals that this is not the case. Usually ministry implies being available 24 hours a day, circumstances allowing. The Zionist leaders are normally very busy people and would scoff at the idea of an 'office' or 'certain hours'.

The nature of Zionist pastoring is well-illustrated by the words of a female speaker at the confirmation service at Gugulethu:

If you are an overseer, you are a shepherd of these sheep. If you are a shepherd of these sheep, Mother, you must tend them at all times, you must always make them secure. When you see some [sheep] not keeping up, you must not only be willing to [tend] the stronger ones, but also the weaker ones. So that when you no longer see someone in the service you must tire yourself to visit her at her living place to be able to understand what has caused her to draw back.

Pastors of different offices should attempt to do their work – even the difficult part when the sheep have gone astray – in a positive spirit: 'When you experience reproach here in the church, understand that you should not give up.'

The speakers give pastoral guidance on a variety of issues. One of them is visions, to which I attend elsewhere. Illness, the type for which one does not visit the medical doctor (*isifo sabantsundu*), is also addressed. The necessity of keeping private matters from being discussed in public, that is in the service, is emphasised in the following quotation, as many other sayings do:

You see, there are certain things about which I could advise this mama next to me, alone or with someone else, as she seems to be ill. There are certain things, Mama, which you need to use in different ways, because some people might be troubled while others do not want to talk about their sickness publicly. I do not say, Mama, that you have sinned, but I am talking about future things. What is necessary is to just go and strengthen this person aside, because we as Christians need to advise one another about such things.

Problems, the nature of which is not necessarily revealed in the service, may receive extended attention. A senior male speaker, for instance, gives a

mother exact indications as to where, when and with whom she is to visit him for 'pastoral counselling'. He does not use this expression but employs a metaphor: 'There is a parcel, a big one, Mama, that I have to open for you. For this parcel many people should not be present, only you, your husband and I.'

Attention is also given to married life, as one can expect the case to be at a marriage service. The bride is counselled: 'There are many issues at stake in a marriage. There will be difficult days so realise that you should sing: "We will follow Jesus".' Important practical advice is that when problems do crop up, the wife or husband should not run to 'the Mission ... as we do not attend to house matters here. We do not want to destroy but to be constructive.' Such problems ought to be taken to the respective families of the couple.

In the practices of the church wise pastoring is also needed. For one thing: 'You must know what kind of person each one is so that you can say: "I will approach each person according to her personality".' The admonition of adults is also a difficult and delicate issue:

There is nothing as difficult as to admonish an adult seeing that an adult is problematic – with a child you take a whip and beat her. You don't know how to instruct an adult seeing that you cannot beat her. An adult admonishes herself and knows that I should not do this as it will create difficulties for me. This is the correct thing [to do]. It is necessary, Mother, that you identify [these things] yourself.

Another speaker gives an example of how he attempted to correct some preachers, not very successfully: 'Last week I went to a service somewhere else. The preachers said while speaking: "Hee? Eh!". I saw the people preaching in an impudent way exceeding all limits. Although I wanted to preach, I was afraid. Why? I was overcome. I admonished (them) seriously. They did not like it. I admonished them and [someone] turned around and wanted to ask me: "Who is this?". You see I want to remove such things.' An archbishop's words summarise the situation: 'We do not reprimand unrestrained, we reprimand in a proper way.'

The frank and straightforward manner, in which congregations are sometimes addressed, either to encourage or to reprimand, often borders on bluntness. At the marriage service a female speaker three times mentions that there is an 'evil spirit' (other than in the sense of a supernatural spirit) between the couple sitting right in front of her. On the same occasion the couple are reprimanded that their days of courting secretly are over: 'It is no longer necessary that you

continually long for each other as in the time before your marriage when it was still a secret matter between the two of you. Now is the chance to love each other, and to unite [carnally] knowing that you are united by God.'

A woman who had a problem is admonished in another service: 'Pray, because you have stopped praying. It is when you have stopped praying that things happen to you. You should talk to God at all times, on such occasions talk to God.'

Prayer is probably the central action in Zionist religious life, as well as in pastoring. Mentioning Jesus in Gethsemane as a role model, a speaker concludes: 'Nothing surpasses prayer. Feed your knees and pray.' Another speaker counsels a minister and his wife at their confirmation: 'There is nothing like prayer, so do it with your whole heart. You will now preach a lot but I advise you to pray.'

For what are the Zionists to pray? For 'oil' (which can mean the Holy Spirit, peace, love and faith; those who hear the word of God; but generally 'to know God'); the bundle of weapons; visions (that they become clear, or the threat they suggest be removed); marriage and home life; the bereaved; tribulations and distress; the church and the service of the day. A speaker has practical advice for those whom continuously pray: 'Mother, your aprons will eventually be worn out due to your kneeling (in prayer). Go and beg for a needle (to mend it and keep on praying).'

The second major function of the ministry mentioned in the speaking is that of teaching. Any form of catechism, questions and answer type or any systematic teaching, is foreign to the Zionists who do not belong to a culture in which reading, studying and formal teaching are evident. More typical is the traditional Xhosa form of teaching called *ukuyala* (to instruct, charge, admonish, warn and advise). Traditionally the instruction takes place at a ceremony held for this purpose for a person undergoing a transition (a youth entering manhood or a bride at her new home) who is then advised with regard to the code of behaviour expected of him or her. The confirmation and the marriage services lent themselves well to such instruction.

Truths – one could say straightforward Gospel truths – that appear in the content of the Zionist speaking are examined here. These simple truths are perhaps not always given intentionally or didactically. Yet, the fact that the listeners are continually exposed to them suggests that they are inculcated

firmly over the weeks and years of attending services. I also illustrate some of the Zionists' speaking on teaching itself.

The importance of *teaching* in the Zionist churches goes unquestioned. A speaker refers appreciatively to 'the fathers who taught me [the matters of] the church'. Another encourages the listeners to keep the words spoken by the minister preaching in mind as they are presented 'so that they can stick in your minds'. A female speaker attributes her instructing of others at that moment to the fact that "I have heard and received this teaching at this place."

A few plain truths about *God* are included in the speaking, besides all the exclamations referring or appealing to him. The most notable teaching in this regard is that it is God and Jesus Christ who protect people. God can change misfortune into fortune, a 'dark cloud' into a 'clear cloud', and He removes 'evil spirits' which bedevil human relationships. Food for serious consideration is given in the words of a speaker: 'When a person quarrels with someone else, there is someone who reconciles. If I quarrel with God himself, who will then reconcile?'

Christian teaching requires continual reference to *Jesus Christ*. What do the Zionists say about Jesus? Apart from pronouncements on God in which Jesus is mentioned, Jesus Christ is held as a role model regarding prayer and resisting temptation. He is named as 'refuge' and is said not to choose 'certain people among all nations'. Evil spirits are cast out 'in the name of Jesus' and the congregation is greeted 'in the name of Jesus Christ', acknowledging that the gathering is a Christian one.

The following quotations reflect teachings on *salvation*: 'He came to the world to trample my sins and yours'; 'because Christ loved us He sacrificed his blood and our sins are washed away'; due to his love for people Jesus 'eventually gave his body for the congregation'; the Lord is to return unexpectedly and 'in splendour and He will separate people, that is the sheep to the right and goats to the left'; 'The son of man has guilt hanging over his head, and must bring Jesus something that will satisfy God if one is to arrive at God's place (heaven)'; 'We need to meet Jesus with good works as He himself advised his people: 'Let your waists be tightened and your lamp be lighted as people awaiting the Lord.'

*Satan* is hardly prominent in the speaking of the Zionists. In all four services he is only mentioned a few times: twice in scriptural quotations, as part of the temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1) and of Zechariah's prophecy

(Zechariah 3:2); once as the 'Tempter'; and in a single admonition, 'Satan, leave us alone'. The most comprehensive attention a speaker does pay to Satan includes both basic biblical teachings as well as an application that does not flatter certain occupations:

I talked to God because God listens to our petitions. I am not saying that God hears me at all times, but when you are a church person one needs to pray every day. Because when you do not pray, Satan undoes a person and casts him away. There is the road of God and that of Satan. There are two ways and they forcefully deprive each other. You see, the one is difficult, the other a large tarred road. You see men, all teachers as well as all judges are on the latter road. He (Satan) is now beckoning and when a person arrives who is not strong (in the faith), he refers him to the judge.

Yet, the finding above does not concur with my overall impression. Zionists take the spirit world seriously – it is an inseparable part of the Xhosa worldview – and to them Satan, as a biblical figure, is part of the spirit world. I have heard Zionist speakers elsewhere preach very explicitly on Satan. Usually he is spoken of as God's and the Christian's foe.

Some clarity on a matter which is often confusing is brought by a minister when he speaks on 'test the spirits' (I John 4:1), an often quoted text. The question is how to distinguish what kind of a spirit a certain woman has. In an interview the following explanation was given:

I cannot say that she had a demon as we in the spiritual churches believe. Now, people differ. In some cases, when a person is visited by a spirit, the person will retain his (own) spirit. Now, when he does not agree to accommodate the (other) spirit, he resists and kicks out violently . . . At times you see him thrown down on the ground. This is (then) ascribed to the spirit. Now this does not mean it is a demon. In some cases you see a person has something which we simply cannot identify as a demon. We can perhaps say that it is a disease, one with which we have been infected by others.

Firm edification is given on *marriage*: 'God founded the day (of marriage) in the Garden [of Eden]'; the couple are 'united by God. They are not united by father Z. [the marriage officer]. They are united by God, He joins them together'; the partners have bound themselves to God and join themselves together and should place their 'hope completely on God'.

Congregation members are furthermore in a position to discern a few truths about the *church* and its work. Ensuing from the imagined boastful words of

a minister's wife in the speaking, this clarification on church authority is made: 'A bishop and archbishop do not have congregations. They are overseers. They oversee the ministers. The minister is the person with a congregation . . . It does not imply that when it is said that the congregation is that of the minister, that he has a free hand.'

A fact about the church which is of minor importance in most traditions but which, to the Zionists, has much value in terms of symbolism, status and self-accreditation, is the rubber stamp on which the names of the church and its leader usually appears. This visible symbol is a sign of the constitution and unity of the church. It is not surprising that one of the first things to be done when a new church has been established, is to acquire a stamp. With the very object in his hands a speaker confirms the importance of the stamp: 'Do you see this stamp? It is the stamp of the church. It constitutes the people of the church. It speaks of unity, brothers. This thing speaks of unity.'

A fine example of teaching on the church is a speaker who, probably unknowingly, goes right to the essence of what the church is: 'Now, in the church of God we do not work according to a "majority". It is necessary to know that the church of God is the church of *God*. This is so. The church of God is not a thing to play with.' Speaking in terms of schism and people who usurp the church he adds: 'There is nobody who has a church. The church belongs to God.'

A speaker, as it were, summarises the functioning of the ministry in the church in the following words: 'It is then necessary that you know all of us in the church so that you can manage the church of God and say to the brothers: "I have taken care of God's church" And also in this position in which I am, I ask for power from God. Everything is done by God, let me not manage then according to my (own) liking, seeing that (if I do this) nothing will work out well for me.'

Teaching does take place in the ambit of the local worship services. Though this teaching might not always be intentional, members, the newly converted and the established ones, are instructed in a form of Christian teaching communicated by the Zionists' speaking. In addition, the speaking also provides a platform for intense pastoral care and counselling, albeit in the presence of the whole speech community, namely the Zionist congregation. These forms of ministering within the service do not exclude their performance in private.

One of the focal points of the speaking of the Zionist churches is that unconventional teaching and pastoring do take place. Though the teaching is less extended and systematic than more orthodox methods, and the pastoring is unique in many ways, together they provide a ministry that indicates a potent and continuous stream of concern and care for the congregation. The result is the fulfilment of their needs and addressing of their hopes and fears.

## Witnessing about Zion

The maintenance and growth of any church is obviously a major concern for the people to whom the leadership has been entrusted. It is therefore not surprising that many, if not most, speakers in some way or another attend to issues regarding the church and its witness to its own members and those who do not belong to it, the 'outsiders'. Such witnessing about Zion can be seen as part of both deliberate and unintentional teaching on what the church should be and provides insight in the process of supporting the well-being of the congregation.

Speakers often refer to the desirable qualities that should be seen in any church. Many express the wish for unity in church matters. One speaker reminds the listeners what motivates this unity: 'As you are together here today, you, Christians, are united by Christ. You are not united by us.' There is much appreciation for actions, which witness to unity. A speaker, for example, voices his gratitude that many churches responded to an invitation to attend a particular service. He somewhat exaggeratedly says: 'I too thank the whole House of Cape Town (*umzi waseKapa*), all the congregations of the Cape (*onke amabandla kule Kapa*), that when they received the important invitation, they took trouble and turned up.' Moreover, as part of the accompanying contribution to the church, a visitor notes that he has collected money 'even from a shack' in the township – an indication that poor people are prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of expressing church co-operation.

In this regard speakers from visiting churches are fond of recognising and making known the name and the leader of their specific church. There should be no doubt as to which church is demonstrating its willingness and action to co-operate and thus serve the cause of unity in a concrete manner.

Speakers powerfully witness to the necessity for commitment to the church and its work. The congregation is encouraged 'to advance the interests of the

church. Here is indeed a duty: to build up the church . . . this is where people change'. To 'keep orderly the congregation of God' is needed 'an obedient person, a gentle person. It needs one who controls her anger. You must be gentle, Mama, and persevere and be zealous on all occasions.'

Instances of people who are prepared to sacrifice for the work of the church are given; some based on actual experience, others by way of analogy. A speaker says: 'I no longer work for myself. I work so that the people of God can have something from me.' With reference to a leader who had passed away, a speaker remarks: 'Father M was a person who did not spare himself. If we were many [people] and said: "Father M, let us go to the wake," he gets up in the night and does not say: "I am the founder [of the church]". He did not cling to his position as founder. He got up, took his [church] robe, and responded.'

A female leader is encouraged to follow the sacrificial example of a hen: 'You must take the members of the congregation and put them under your wing.' She relates the story of a hen, which was caught up in a fire. Someone comes along, sees the burnt hen and kicks it aside. Only then do the living chickens appear from under her wings.

A minister is challenged to his task: 'Here are the children, Father F, here are the children of Zion. They are many. Here are the children of Zion. We place them in front of you. Lead them continually.' He has been chosen as minister because the leaders 'have decided to love him as they saw him doing good things . . . [so] you have clothed him with a robe. You saw whether he is worthy of the work. At the same time he leads this congregation in the way you like.'

The robe, or the church uniform, plays an exceptional role in the life of Zionist churches. These robes are usually washed and neatly ironed. To both insiders and outsiders the robes are a sign of identity. They are highly valued and the robing of a member or an official is an event not to be missed. Not all church attendees are entitled to a robe. A minister explaining to new converts that this attire is extraordinary confirms this: 'You will never find this thing in a shop. You can never simply say to a person in a shop to sell this dress to you. You will receive it the day you come to the service and what is more, it is a church attire. You will dress in it when you leave your house, and then take care of it at home. You will dress in it when you come here again.'

The robe is a sign of membership, which goes hand in hand with a number of privileges and responsibilities. One does not robe oneself. The church and

in the final instance God himself gives the robes. For this reason the robe is most valued, it provides 'the most exalted dignity on earth. We are given our status by God whom we serve.' Members are to be true to the calling of one robed with the church attire.

The robe is not the only advantage gained by belonging to the church. A president inspires the congregation by pointing to the source of their power and he urges them to consider what the church means to them: 'We are ruled by the power of the Lord and we should discern whether we gain from all the things of the church.'

Speakers mention various advantages that they ascribe to their belonging to the church. Healing is one: 'I love the places of the Zionists because ... my leg was healed. I could feel no pains when I walked.' In the church one finds and receives consolation regarding misfortune, one's faith is strengthened, while interpersonal problems are attended to. Finally, the church is the place where one is taught and corrected: 'Everything I do will be done due to these people [the fathers] who taught me what the church is all about and I also give them the opportunity to fill the gaps. Whenever I make a mistake, they rectify it.' Wisely, a speaker affirms: 'When you preach, you preach knowing that whatever you are preaching either builds or destroys.'

Yet, the Zionist speaking also attends to obstacles and problems, which the church experiences and has to address. To start with, a township environment can have a detrimental affect on members: 'Now I want to emphasise (something). I know the Cape Town lifestyle (*apha eKapa*): people are married, but you indeed, sooner or later, see that the wife, having changed her attitude has kicked out her husband.' A female speaker is concerned about the influence of township life on her fellow sisters who can become obstacles to others. She refers to a minister's wife being ordained: 'Her name must not be changed to "Hindrance" ... this mother must not do these things' (the wife bossing her husband, quarrelling, drunkenness and having more than one man). Speakers are aware that a 'brother can cause a disgusting thing (*isikizi*) in the church' and that 'a church person can be very difficult'. One of them states that 'some people estrange others from the church'. Zionists are aware that the church is fragile.

It is therefore fitting that a speaker airs her self-criticism: 'Here is a problem: outsiders may say that the church still expands, we are indeed perceptible. But the question is: "Where are we?" Another speaker warns against the false portrayal of the church by using an everyday image as an example: 'Trousers

may be fine on the outside, although the pockets may have holes in them. I am talking of the inside, children of God, one needs to examine whether there is any stupidity.'

The frailty of human life comes to the fore when speakers turn to weaknesses such as members boasting about their church membership and taking harmful pride in their church robes which 'soon makes them puffed up with pride'. The issue has a serious influence on the church and its witness to outsiders: 'The problem is that we are known there outside [as the church], but [only] when we come here [to the church], then we elevate Christ [*simisa uKrestu*]. How can we elevate Christ but as soon as we are through [with the service], we have no [positive] relationship with our neighbours?'

From the content of what the speakers say, the ministers are ironically often seen as hindrances to the church. A new minister is, for instance, forewarned: 'Let us not hear anything extraordinary about you, Father, people saying: "There it is (*eyi*)! This father is regularly clothed in his attire on his way to church but the continuous sound of his footsteps does not speak the same language. His conduct is not that of a father minister".'

In spite of possible exaggeration for the sake of rhetorical effect, the image of the minister in the Zionist speaking is not flattering at all. Perhaps it is more popular to speak on the demerits than on the merits of the ministers. Anyway, a speaker mockingly explains that ministers are unable to perform one of their major duties:

Here in Cape Town we are astonished. Local ministers do not know how to conduct a funeral. I do not know if they have not been taught. Or do they attend church at the beer hall? I have not completed a year here in Cape Town but I see the ministers and presidents of the Cape, goodness, they do not know how to bury a person. You arrive [at the funeral] and the man says: 'Please help me!'. He does not know how to bury. Brothers, he uses the Wesleyan hymnal but he does not know where to begin or end! Even a mother with a jacket [uniform] is ignorant.

Critical allegations are made about ministers' attitude and behaviour, which have a most harmful effect on the church:

The ministers are corrupt [*bonakele*] but it is surely you who are still in control. There is not such a place as Cape Town regarding the corruption of ministers. Because they do things while wearing the collar. You see me with the collar, but I was not in a hurry to wear it. The reason was that I

saw ministers drunken in the city and you see him unexpectedly arriving and welcomed by the wife of another man.

A speaker compares the changeableness of some ministers to the fickleness of Cape Town's weather and makes a grave charge: 'This is what the local ministers are like . . . There is no scarcity of a minister who says: "I used to be a minister." When the mothers let the father slide, he will bring forth children of the church [much laughter]. They will hear that it is said: "He wasn't here but he was preaching while committing adultery." The audience's amused response suggests that what the speaker is saying is not new or surprising.

Only a single speaker addresses one of the most serious problems of Zionist churches, namely schism. He cautions against a minister who oversteps his bounds: 'The danger is that you will usurp the things of the church for yourself. Are these not his? They are God's. But he who leads places himself under him [God] and you must walk on a clean road . . . I know the church. It is terminated by a person . . . he comes to the congregation with nothing, he is merely a schismatic [*uyingugheke*]'.

On the positive side, the missionary dimension of the church is raised by a number of speakers. Outsiders, described as 'people who look at other people going to the church', are prominent in this speaking. Zionists appreciate that 'you must have a good reputation towards outsiders'. In fact, such factors as a church marriage and a believing woman 'who will be taken by an unmarried man who is an outsider' have the potential to draw people to the church.

Three speakers sketch scenarios which show that Zion is aware of its missionary task. Two have rural Xhosaland as background, the third an urban setting. A story is told of a farmer who insisted that his son does not outspan the oxen though the day's allocated plot (*indima*) has already been ploughed. The farmer is compared to a president who has passed away: 'Do not say: "Outspan the oxen." Do not leave this plot, because the Father of the K Church has shown you that there is a harvest to be won even from the difficult part of the field.'

The second example speaks for itself: 'There at our settlement [*kulaa lali yethu*] a minister is greatly valued. There he lives in one settlement with the Red People. A person of God takes a briefcase, goes through the settlement and goes to the kraals as usual.'

It is from a minister's explanation continued in an interview after a service that one can glean what happens countless times in a township situation

when a person joins a Zionist church. First he states that 'all people have distinguishing signs of the church' (*baneemphawu zenkonzo*). I understand this 'sign' to be an inclination or predisposition towards the church which can be strengthened or weakened. When a person hears the rhythm of a drum and 'sees a place of worship, she is disposed favourably and she realises that this is a church because she has a sign of the church'. Such a person understands that a service is being held inside the building. Some of these people 'see someone surrounded by dancing or an ill person and enter out of inquisitiveness'. These are people who have the 'sign'.

Eventually others, standing outside, grasp what is happening and understand: 'Goodness knows, this is the church! ... I will be well served if I enter completely.' They 'see the chair and come in and sit down on the chair' as a token of their conversion. There is a risk that someone was merely 'carried off' by all 'the people rejoicing and dancing', and that 'outsiders will entice her back to where pleasant things are done in the world outside'. Therefore careful examination by the leaders is necessary to grasp 'how she experiences the coming to sit down and how she understands the motivation'.

Also a Zionist 'who has fallen along the way and left the church ... stands outside as a spectator and has a guilty conscience. He then realises: 'Dear me, here is Zion!' Even if it is not the one in which he originally worshipped, he understands that this is Zion. All in all, these spectators outside the church are people who are caught in the net and then enter the church.'

The discussion above indicates that the Zionists are aware of the discrepancy in their witness of what the church ought to be and what it actually is. The speaking about the desired qualities of the church includes the advantages to the members. Yet, they are quite aware of the difficulties that beset the church, the poor performance by ministers perhaps being the most crucial. Through their speaking they address the problems and criticise the weaknesses of their churches. Still, they also have an opportunity to show loyalty and commitment to Zion. Finally, even if it is an alternative kind of mission previously referred to, they do realise that 'there is a harvest to be won'.

## Gender issues

Traditional Xhosa culture has sharply distinguished between the genders, as for instance the sexual division of labour shows. This distinction has been upheld for centuries by social and cultural structures. Churches of most

denominations have maintained the difference in gender roles as illustrated by the fact that males and females in by far the majority of mainline churches and AICs are seated separately during worship services. It is furthermore evident that the Christian Gospel and modernisation have both in their respective ways addressed and positively changed the subservient position of women.

The speaking demonstrates that the Zionists do not deviate from this general pattern. Owing to the nature of the confirmation and marriage services, speakers were given a good chance to pay attention to gender issues, while in the other two services there is no special reference to such matters. In the speaking on gender it is important to note not only *what* is being said, but also *which gender* is saying it.

Some speakers are aware not only of the distinction between the genders but also of the possibility of discrimination. When a woman speaker greets the congregation, she says: 'I shall not discriminate and I thus refer to both the honourable fathers and the mothers' stewardess at the door' (probably with both gender and status in mind). Another speaker commits himself to 'speak without distinction' between the marriage couple. It does happen that a speaker of a particular gender addresses the audience of his or her gender exclusively, apparently ignoring the opposite gender.

The outstanding moral teaching about marriage is that one woman and one man is the Christian pattern. As many Zionist churches in South Africa and some in the Cape Flats allow polygamy, one might think that this exhortation is appropriate in a Christian gathering. Yet, the earnest advice is not here aimed at polygamy, but against extramarital liaisons. One of the congregations hears the 'one woman one man' theme no less than fifteen times during the service.

Perhaps due to the chosen text, 'Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord' (Ephesians 5:22), the theme of wives' submission to their husbands is repeatedly heard. The archbishop who ignored the verse with which the section commences chose the text, 'Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ'.

A female encourages her own gender: 'Mother, submit to your husband. Do not beat him with plates.' A male adds: 'The Book says: "Let her be a virtuous woman who honours her husband, because the head of a person who is a woman, is a man". This is a basic statement (*Itsho izekela*).' Even if the husband is apparently not the stronger person of the two, submission is

necessary: 'The mothers are not allowed [by the Bible] to rule over their men. The man is the head of the woman ... This [type of] man is a Popeye. I don't like a Popeye. Don't make a Popeye out of him. Will Mother Bishop control me? I don't agree ... I don't agree that a mother rules her man.' Reference to the man being the head of the woman corresponds with the often heard words '*Indoda iyintloko umfazi ungumsila*' (literally: the man is the head, the woman the tail).

Though wives are advised to endure their husband's behaviour, the theme that features prominently is that of mutuality between the genders. Male speakers notably emphasise this point: 'If a man must be the husband of one wife, the same applies to the mother, let her be the wife of one man ... the father must have one woman, the mother only one husband.' Mutual help and respect in marriage are called for: 'God created a woman to be a help to you. He never created her as your dependent. He made her as a person who would be a help to you'; 'Mother, the father doesn't want you to rule him. But you too, Father, when you leave the house you must not say: 'My wife does not rule over me' [used as an excuse to leave]. Show respect to your wife, walk with one step [together].'

Women and their contribution to the church are appreciated. A male speaker has the giving of advice specifically in mind: 'Some of the mothers are people who perhaps have good advice. "*Macebo*" [Advisors] is their name. They are people with much advice.' The senior women are singled out: 'When you go to seek help from Mother Archbishop, she will give you council.' The young married women should be led to succeed with their tasks. Women, such as Hannah and Ruth, are held as biblical models in terms of examples and endurance.

The Zionists' speaking has many instances of extramarital sexual relationships of genders. Allusions are made and scenarios are given, some with much joking and laughter, others more poignant.

In the confirmation service a female suggests to the young minister an imagined scene in which his 'wife climbing into a Citi Golf' is implicated. A male speaker returns to the scenario but then sketches a second one to give the reason for the husband's unfaithfulness. He explains elaborately, 'To each mother here present that a husband is satisfied by minor things.' He then states the wife's responsibility to start the cooking before he arrives from work, to provide him with hot water to wash, and to keep the money safely. When these things are not attended to 'he sees that there is indeed no joy in his

house'. Only then does he become the prey of loose women (*emankazaneni*). The speaker then sketches the contrast: 'When he goes to the loose woman and arrives there, hot water is already available. He washes and becomes clean, eats, has enough, chats and has intercourse. What else can he ask for?'

Mutuality is, however, at stake in a further example: 'I heard of a mother that is employed. At a certain stage both of them go to work and return together. There is no chance for the woman to prepare (the water). In such a case he should prepare the water for himself. Do this for each other without a fuss.'

A young female speaker supplements and mildly challenges a male's earlier reference to a husband's 'Popeye' submissiveness by pointing out that 'when a father has to play second fiddle it is said that we mothers have the problem that we rule our husbands'. She continues to spell out the dire consequences of a woman who has deserted her husband: 'You realise at this stage that it is better to leave him, take your possessions and go home. When you arrive at your family's place, you no longer hear the name that you are a "young girl" [*uyintombi*]. You have already been given the name of "concubine" [*uyinkazana*].'

Improper gender conduct is by no means confined to ordinary members. A male speaker gives an example of ministers who beat their wives. Despite the advice of a person of senior rank this still happens: 'Father Bishop says: "Do not beat her". But I say: "Yes, beat her!"'

Again, a scenario is given of a minister who sets a negative example. His point is driven home in spite of the audience's laughter (which might be due to amusement or pert up feelings):

If a child is asked: 'Where were you made pregnant?'. 'At the minister's place' [laughter]. 'Hey, this is a surprise. And you, where were you made pregnant?' 'At the minister's place.' 'Where are you made pregnant, (recently married) woman?' 'At the father minister's place.' The woman has even not yet given birth at her own homestead. 'It is the minister' [laughter].

Hypocrisy is attacked in the case of an unfaithful leader: Being a man of one woman 'is a problem for Zionists because during the time he leads the congregation he nevertheless has a hidden agenda. He says: "My field will not be eaten by anyone but me alone." This is what he advocates.' The supposed transgressor then quotes the Bible ('Exodus 22', but actually Deuteronomy 22:22) which commands the killing of a man who sleeps with another's wife. This example draws a very strong emotional response from men in the audience.

Generally, husbands are encouraged, as a male speaker does, not to ill-treat their wives:

'You too, men, treat your wives well.' The wife must not go to bed wetting the cushion with her tears. When you do not return [straight] from work you say: 'No, she is used to me not arriving.' The wife becomes despondent after 8 o'clock: 'No, I know him, he is not returning.'

Wives, according to a female speaker, should remain at home to avoid trouble:

Stick to your house at all times because on a day you will leave, go abroad and meet with many difficulties. On the other hand, if you stay at one place and look after yourself, nothing happens to you. Even if something does happen to you it happens to you with the sharp edge off [cooled off]. You cannot roam around, go to certain places, and have a cup of tea there. It is where you have tea that you encounter all kinds of problems.

The Zionists use the service as a platform for both men and women to express their ideas on sexual morality as well as their expectations and fears regarding gender issues. They do this mostly by sketching scenarios based on realistic township situations, well known to their audience. The referential focus in this case centres on gender relationships generally, on mutuality (despite the wife's submissiveness), and on monogamous conjugal fidelity in particular.

## Dealing with traditional culture

The Zionists of the Cape Flats are exposed to both cultural continuity and cultural change. Urbanisation has transformed their rural life as well as created a city or a township life. As I have indicated, to Zionists the two remain inseparable.

In this regard: if the Zionists' manner of speaking in the service is close to traditional Xhosa speaking, it would be strange if the content does not feature indigenous culture and religion at all. The scarcity if not absence of issues relating to the latter in mainline churches can be viewed as an important shortcoming. The speaking here investigated provides some examples to demonstrate that the situation in the Zionist churches is not similar to that of the mainline churches.

As is clear from the foregoing discussion, speakers use illustrations from rural life, besides those from urban situations. The countryside with its rural

ambience is frequently reflected in the speaking, for instance by references to a 'pound, according to the English' [over against a rand], the *umtshotsho* [instead of *umdaniso* or *idisco*], traditional beer-making [compared with: 'We never saw you at the shebeen but we do see wine that is poured into cups'], or 'the old people who first of all discuss an issue'. A more subtle example is the quotation of a verse from Isaiah 40:6-7: 'all mankind are like grass; they last no longer than wild flowers.' Whereas the Xhosa translation has a general word for 'wild flowers', *iintyantjumbo zasendle*, an elderly speaker replaces the latter with a specific flower well-known in Xhosaland, the *umnga* or mimosa tree. He adds: 'At the approach of December it brightens up, and after December it withers.' Such picturesque speech is meaningful to people with a rural background.

The speaking echoes rural life in another way: the constant mentioning and recognition of the value of family ties. With reference to their relationship to God, a speaker reminds the congregation: 'Children of God, it is clear that there are certain things that one cannot give away even if the person is your relative.' In addition to speakers addressing their relatives as part of the audience, the congregation is encouraged to love, respect and take care of their family as well as their relatives by marriage. The couple at the marriage service is addressed: 'Do not only take care of your mother, but also of your in-laws. "Coach" your in-laws and know that your in-laws are your own people. The people of Mama T, now the people of Tata T, co-operate with the whole family.'

In the case of a marriage problem the couple are to go to their relatives and not to the 'Mission' (the church 'headquarters'): 'We do not attend to house matters here. We do not want to destroy. We want to be constructive'; 'Call your wife and people together so that they can decide on the problem you have with your wife, without the interference of outsiders. Your matter calls for you as family to get together.'

A female speaker eulogises a late Zionist archbishop who years previously did her the great honour of 'admitting my son into manhood' by speaking to and instructing him at his initiation – an event she will never forget and which she recalls with passion.

However, there are cases in which the speaker goes beyond rural or family examples and references to deal with issues relating to the traditional Xhosa worldview. One could say that deceased ancestors, present in the homestead where they give their blessings and show their disapproval, inhabit the indigenous Xhosa's world. But this world is also inhabited by witches and

sorcerers, some of them even church members, ordinary people, but people of evil intent, whom through familiars or medicines seek to harm others in the community (Pauw 1975:57).

As for the familiars, a female member probably suspects she is being bewitched and she relates to the whole congregation a vision she had about a path in a forest, hoping to find a solution. A senior male speaker explains and humorously gives his advice:

Eh, [my] girl, you need to pray. A dark path in a forest is not a good thing because no people go there, only zombies [*izithunzela*: dead people raised by witches to become familiars] go there to the forest. You need to pray to God in order that they do not take you and make a zombie out of you. They heard you singing so nicely that they want you to sing for the zombies in the forest. So you need to pray. In this prayer you must be pure and God purifies you.

The case of a young girl with a similar problem is attended to in the service. A speaker advises her to pray and to breathe forcibly in a vaporised olive extract with the following explanation: 'What causes me to say to you that you must breathe forcibly once a week is that there are many traces of the thikoloshe, many traces of the thikoloshe that follow you.' The thikoloshe is believed to be a familiar of witches in the form of a mischievous dwarf.

A young female speaker, who is one of the most significant contributors of all the speaking recorded, ends off her speech in a remarkable way: 'I am reluctant to leave (this speaking place) because when you leave it behind, you abandon it to the thikoloshe [heyi!] (who then) stays at this place [heyi!]. Those (thikoloshes) of today even enter the church [ewe] and one (of them) arrives and speaks to us at this place. I am reluctant to leave this place and leave it behind to the thikoloshe.' Her attitude and the audience's response, interjections expressing calls to attention and consent, indicate that her citing the tThikoloshe is by no means out of the ordinary.

Still on the level of the supernatural: the temple or the church building or shack provides a safe haven in which the believer is not hindered by any powers: 'This place is cool [*le ndawo ipholile*]. So members have the privilege of entering here and praying'. In this regard it is believed that positive and negative forces come into operation when certain states prevail. To be 'cool' means that no harmful force can exert its influence over people and that a favourable state exists in which a person is susceptible to

blessings, healing and good fortune. Since the coolness/heat contrast is not very prominent in Xhosa tradition, while it is more fully developed in Zulu culture (cf. Berglund 1976: *passim*), there is reason to believe that this is one of the features which Xhosa Zionists have taken over from Zulu Zionists (cf. Pauw 1975:300–301).

The example just discussed, as well as others such as glossolalia and spirit possession (attended to earlier), lead me to the presumption that Xhosa Zionists have taken over certain common features from Zionists elsewhere and developed them, while other features were met with less acceptance. Interaction between Zionists of different cultural contexts and the different nuances among them, is undoubtedly a field of research that lies fallow.

An earlier section the vision in which a 'dark cloud' appeared is discussed. A probable interpretation of the cloud is that a person of evil purpose sends it. In Xhosaland it is a familiar sight that during an approaching thunderstorm a woman will stand on a hill, wave a garment and repeatedly shout: 'EMbo!' In this way it is believed that the 'dark clouds' that were sent to destroy the crops by hail, would be diverted to Pondoland. In his explanation of the prophecy of the 'dark cloud' the speaker includes, to the audience meaningful, the words 'People will ask twins to chase the dark cloud away.' Once again, a belief of the traditional worldview is taken seriously.

The same applies to matters regarding the spirits of the ancestors. Although they were never mentioned once during all the speaking, issues relating directly to them were spoken of, and dealt with. The diviner, who is supposed to communicate messages of the spirits to the family concerned, is included more than once in the speaking. The woman who was a diviner and was being 'trained' to become a prophet is mentioned. The speakers' feelings towards diviners are negative. A speaker advises against visiting a diviner: 'There are people who will tell you: "Go there, there is the diviner." Go down on your knees and pray . . . pray, do not put your trust in any person . . . rely on Jesus Christ and not on any person because a person is fickle.'

In another speech a woman talks of tattooing (*ukuwamba*). The word means to make incisions on a person's skin, formerly as ornamentation. In this context it seems that the operation has magical connotations, namely the application of preventative medicine. Without apparent provocation the speaker takes up the theme of a tattooer: 'You see (you cannot understand) this thing of a tattooer (*umvamba* [sic]) . . . if you never grew up in Xhosaland. A tattooer has a difficulty because when you see a person making

incisions [*umntu evambile*], you see a spirit [is present]) which reveals what [good or evil] is hidden because . . .'. At this stage the audience's response of surprise and approval, which has been vigorous throughout, makes the speaking inaudible after which a song terminates it.

A number of elements of the traditional worldview are drawn together by the report on a prophecy in one of the services. A male speaker actually levels a few personal accusations or challenges against the head of the church. He first relates a vision he had in which children wearing green and white clothes had coloured candles in their hands. He also saw a water container (*imbombozi*), a spear and the leader of the church carrying a stick to which a beast's white tail-brush (*itshobo lenkomo*) is fixed. He then continues: 'I want you, my old man, to express yourself on what you do know, but that you acknowledge it when you do not know something.' Then follows the interjection '*Camaqu!*' from someone in the audience, said with high tone and accentuated.

Owing to the significant matters raised, I quote most of the remainder of the speech, including interjections by the audience:

It is said that I should not speak evil [amen] but rather openly. With this robe you clothe yourself when you bind yourself to help people. I myself then saw a problem: You were hiding something which you held in your hand, for you go and help people making incisions [*ubaqaphula*] in the skin to remove malice. In this tin container [is] a stick to beat this danger. When I looked at you [*yeha ke!*], I saw you wearing head-beads [amen]. That is why I today carry a burden concerning you. It is said that we need to ask you about the [amen] whistle, where you left behind the whistle which you blow [*heyi!*]. Hallelujah [amen]. Pardon me! Do not forsake these things Father F [amen], because you are going to hurt many people by performing hesitantly [*Nkosi yam*] because when we see you and the people coming to you [*sheyi! Nkosi yam*], you must not hurt your reputation and give people a chance to wonder about the way in which you are scrabbling around for your unused whistle, which is out of sight, and your unsmoked pipe, although they are available. You must raise and use your whistle seeing that if you do not have it available [amen] you will immediately get hurt [amen].

The speaker's words cast the church leader in the role of a diviner: the stick with tail-brush is usually carried by diviners; the tin container and stick is used by them to mix medicine (*iyeza*); they make incisions (*iiqaphulo*, to scarify and rub in medicinal powder); they wear the typical white beads on their heads and other parts of the body; the whistle, controversial among

Zionists, and the pipe, both belong to the paraphernalia of the diviner. The pipe is used to smoke the *impepho*, a flower known as 'everlasting' which 'is believed to be associated with the ancestral spirits, who through it assists the igqirha in his work and ability to prophesy [sic]' (Broster 1981:54). The speaker is warning the leader that he is putting himself at a disadvantage and even at a serious risk by not using the potential of the traditional ways of helping people – this boils down to gross negligence.

The audience is responsive – an indication that the speaking makes sense and that at least some of them agree with what he is saying. Apart from the interjections 'amen' and '*Nkosi yam*' (my Lord), others denoting a prediction of imminent trouble (*yeha ke!* – alas; *heyil!* – there), and outrage (*sheyil!* – deception or fraud), and most significantly, *camagu!* are heard. The word *camagu* (be appeased), can be a response given to a officiating diviner when searching questions are put to him, an interjection used when the ancestral spirits are addressed, or an expression emphasising moments of significance in religious ceremonies. In the quotation above the first meaning is applicable – it is preceded by words which could be unpleasant to the leader. Other speakers used *camagu* in its common sense, 'pardon me'.

A further example of the use of *camagu* with a religious connotation was at the commemoration service for the late leader of the church. A female speaker addresses the congregation in a very soft and intimate voice interspersed with silence: 'The mist has risen and here in the church the mist has cleared, because he (the leader) brings the daylight. He is silent. He is silent. You have shaken him (and woken him up) (*nimshukumisile*). The root had laid well, but now you have stirred it up' [*Nkosi yam*] [*tsii*] [*Camagu, Makosi!*]. The addition of the vocative '*Makosi*' (chiefs) is equal to the English 'Sirs!'. These words evoke more emotion than any other in the speaking of all the services does.

The general atmosphere of the Zionist services – despite all the innovation – strongly suggests that of some traditional religious gatherings. In this regard the Cape Flats Zionists, as I have shown in the preceding descriptions, are typical of many Zionists elsewhere:

In traditional Xhosa rites, the faithful stand around and sing and clap, while the diviners and other inspired people dance in the areas in the middle. Similarly, in Xhosa Zionist services in rural areas, people stand in a circle and sing and clap. When the Spirit comes, people have to move ... [they] walk or run in a circle amid the singers. This circular movement

– sometimes including running at high speed – occurs also in Zionist worship in urban townships (Dargie 1997:324).

A few remarks are appropriate:

- My finding agrees with from that of Dargie (1997:324) on a rural Zionist congregation. He reports that after the sermon 'members of the congregation respond by saying – not "Camagu!" – but "Amen!"'.
- Shortly before the archbishop mentioned earlier passed away, I paid him a visit at his house with a group of people who went to pray for him because he had been ill for a long time. I was surprised to learn that a diviner had been living and dealing with him for a number of weeks. I admit that this and some other factors are difficult to understand – being a person who 'never grew up in Xhosaland'.

Notwithstanding this admission, it becomes clear that the Cape Flats Zionists do deal seriously with indigenous culture, specifically with religion and the unseen powers that inhabit the Xhosa world and that are believed to have a vital influence on the well-being of their members. The audience feels stronger about this theme than any other, as evidenced by their excited emotional responses. This shows that the Zionists are addressing the felt needs and the fears of their members in a specific and constructive manner – whatever the misgivings of outsiders might be.

In the wider context respect for and maintenance of *isintu* (traditional Xhosa culture) as opposed to the current culture which, to a large extent, has been influenced by modern trends, is crucial to some Zionists. In a statement, worthy of serious missiological reflection, a female speaker expresses the view that Xhosa culture and Christianity should not oppose but should complement each other:

The traditional customs of the Xhosa people and Christ come together. When you abandon the culture of the Xhosa people Christianity comes to an end because you forsake your humanity. When you say: 'I myself do not know the traditional customs of the Xhosa people, I do not know the beer-culture', then the thing which is called Christianity comes to an end with you.

*Isintu noKrestu ziyadibana. Wakulahla isintu buyaphela ubuKrestu ngoba ulahle ubuntu bakho. Wakuthi: 'Mna, andiwazi amasiko mna, andibazi ubutywala', buyaphela into ebithiwa ubuKrestu kuwe.*

## Reflection

Whereas the *manner* of the speaking in Zionist service is closely akin to the characteristics of traditional Xhosa speaking, the *content* differs considerably. This can mainly be attributed to the use of the Bible as illustrated above. In addition to traditional Xhosa speaking, a new source and content of speaking is available to the Zionist speaker.

George Lindbeck has considered the way in which the biblical text has an influence on human hearts and minds: 'Once they penetrate deeply into the psyche, especially the collective psyche, they cease to be primarily objects of study and rather come to supply the conceptual and imaginative vocabularies, as well as the grammar and syntax, with which we construe and construct reality' (Lindbeck 1989:39-40). I can well believe that the biblical text has a profound influence on the Zionists' construction of reality.

In the content of Zionists' speaking there are many indicators of a novel element: indigenous (Xhosa tradition) and exogenous elements (predominantly Christian, but also modern, urban life at large) are here fused resulting in a new orality, one which the Zionists themselves view as belonging to 'Christianity' (*ubuKrestu*). This orality is continually strengthened and renewed by the Bible as source. Thus, in terms of traditional Xhosa speaking, an alternative oral tradition is available which provides the Zionist speaker with a broader frame of reference as well as an abundant source to draw from in aid of his or her speaking. It can be concluded that the speaking functions as a barometer of the Zionists' belief, and simultaneously it helps them to create and reinforce these very beliefs (cf. Abrahamson 1983:288).

In the Christian tradition the biblical text is commonly regarded as the fundamental document of the Christian faith and understanding, as well as the basis of theology. The extensive use of this text by the Zionists indicates that they are part of the Christian tradition that values Scripture profoundly. Yet, their often-unconventional homiletics could well lead to uncommon and unorthodox theology, which brings them in conflict with mainline churches with their more conventional theologies. It should be added that these conventional theologies themselves are by no means uniform, while in the history of Christianity biblical interpretation was frequently a bone of bitter contention which even caused lasting divisions.

In his search for the construction of local theologies, Schreier, using the tools of the sociology of theology, identifies four forms of theological

expression (which are obviously not exclusive): theology as variation on a sacred text, theology as wisdom, theology as sure knowledge and theology as praxis. In the light of the findings above, the Zionist type of theology could be expected to be closest to the first mentioned, although theology as praxis, in this case enacted theology, also features strongly in Zionist churches. Schreier (1985:80, 83) indicates two sets of cultural conditions that seem to be especially conducive to a theology as variation on a sacred text: the one supports oral over against literate forms of culture; the other deals only with units within a text rather than the text as a whole. Both these sets of conditions are prevalent in the case of the Zionists of Cape Town.

Nevertheless, at this stage of Zionist research, I consider it, as indicated, more appropriate to identify theological dimensions of the speaking and not a theology as such. The most prominent theological dimensions that do arise from the Zionists' speaking are the following:

- The Bible as authoritative and guiding Word of God is at the core of the speaking – it is appropriated, proclaimed, interpreted and applied, often in unconventional ways.
- The avoidance of ill will and the showing of love, frequently expressed in tangible form, are central to morality.
- The influence of the Holy Spirit and the renewal of one's faith are the main experiences in the service.
- The Holy Spirit uses prophets to communicate messages that are to be interpreted to an individual and to the congregation.
- The speaking offers a forum for the ministerial functions of pastoring and teaching.
- The desired and undesired qualities of Zion as missionary church and of its ministers are spelt out.
- As for gender relationships, the focus is on marital fidelity and mutuality, in spite of the wife's implied submissiveness.
- Issues arising from indigenous Xhosa culture receive serious attention.

I certainly do not claim that these theological dimensions of the speaking are representative of stereotype trends of Zionists preaching in South Africa. To justify such a claim one would have to compare the current findings with those provided by the literature on South African Zionist sermons.

Regrettably, such reports are extremely scarce. I was able to find only two specifically on Zionists.

To compare the specifics of the present project with the more general Zionist preaching, I quote summaries of the findings of these reports, which both happen to deal with Zulu Zionists.

An account of the use of the Bible in 37 AICs, of which slightly more than half were Zionists, sites the following dominant themes (in order of importance): sin and confession of guilt followed by forgiveness, redemption and salvation; Christ's work of salvation (his death and resurrection) as well as his present work as Liberator and Protector; faithfulness and obedience towards God and persevering in faith and God's will; mutual harmony and good relations with others; the work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Müller 1992:19-21). In sum: 'the central theme was found to be that of securing harmony of life and as a result wholeness. To achieve this, the help of God almighty, of Jesus as example and of the Spirit as source of power must be called in' (Müller 1992:2).

The second report refers to a variety of themes of the Zionist preaching that can be heard: an exhortation to send children to the 'Sunday school'; true conversion as a precondition of being numbered among the elect; the importance of prayer; the necessity of having strong faith; piety in remembering the dead; the institution of leadership in the church; a recommendation to avoid evil ways; the necessity of being pure and unstained in order to free others from sin; the conversion of Nicodemus and the meaning of rebirth (Kiernan 1990:88).

A comparison shows that, apart from a few dissimilar themes, a fairly high degree of agreement and, in any case, no disharmony is apparent in this small sample. I conclude that the Zionist speaking in the four sermons does have value, though very limited, in terms of representation of broader South African trends. Further comparative research could increase the representative value tremendously.

## **Synthesis**

In the preceding chapter on the Spirit in Zion certain concepts emerged from the data which were based on the more or less informal everyday speaking during interviews. To a certain extent these findings correspond with themes

generated from the formal oratory in the Zionists services as summarised above. I now briefly correlate themes from the speaking in the latter with the findings of the former. I do this well aware that despite the fact that two different methodologies were applied, the results do not quite provide a representative sample of the content of Zionist speaking in the Cape Flats. One implication of this may be that there are many other dimensions to a rudimentary Zionist theology to which I do not even allude.

The reader is reminded that six concepts issued from the examination of the spirit in Zion attended to in chapter 5: Zion, life, threats to life, counter-measures, animation and conversion. I now relate these results, based on the data gathered from interviews, with the results arising from the speaking.

In the interviews Zion was spoken of as God's homestead, the place of healing, refuge and protection, the place where people feel culturally and socially at home in the way they worship God. Zionists are people with a changed identity and morality, city dwellers with a low level of prosperity. However, the speaking emphasises the more practical side of Zion and its functions and witness as church, and also issues concerning morality in which gender matters are prominent.

The various aspects of the Zionists' holistic concept of life, health, condition of life and life in a religious-ethical sense, are continually echoed in the speaking. While supernatural threats to life and the counter measures against these threats are pronounced in the interviews, they are less marked in the speaking though dealt with in a more practical way. In both cases they are treated as realities.

A lively consciousness of the Holy Spirit as the subject of animation, being in-the-Spirit, is apparent in both the interviews and the speaking. The influence of the Spirit on the congregation as a whole, but particularly the prophetic experience, is a major theme in both cases. The management of the conversion of a diviner, likewise much discussed in the interviews, was practically illustrated and spoken of in one of the services.

Obviously the speaking broached more themes than the interviews which, in turn, reached greater depth. Generally I could not find any discrepancy between the two sets of data.

For the reasons indicated I consider the results of this phase of the project as less conclusive than those of the other phases. Yet, an analysis and

interpretation of the speaking in Zionist services should be an indispensable component of any thorough study of AICs. Inus Daneel's (1987:248) requirements for such a study aiming at the ascertaining of AIC theology are demanding but essential:

Representative empirical in-depth studies would have to include *analysis* of sermons (based on preaching in various contexts and by different leaders) so as to determine actual theological trends. It would also require prolonged *observation* of both the ceremonial and daily life of the church, as well as *interviewing* significant numbers of clergy and lay members to gauge the process of Christian concept formation.

To conclude this section on theological dimensions of the Zionist speaking, I return to homiletics. As late in the history of Christianity as the thirteenth century 'a "modern" new form of thematic preaching from a short text with careful introductions, transitions, conclusion, and, of course, three headings, appeared in university circles. It was called "modern" in contrast with the older form of homily. Calvin and Luther at the Reformation tended to return to the older form of preaching, but the medieval forms prevailed with succeeding generations' (Douglas 1974:479). Missionaries brought this 'modern' mode of preaching to Africa where it is still prevalent in mainline churches and in some AICs. Running parallel to this kind of homiletics is a 'premodern' type used by preachers of both AICs and mainline churches and which is characteristic of the Zionist speaking. The major difference between the two is the fact that preachers who have academically been schooled employ the 'modern' mode in homiletics, which is not the case with the 'premodern' form.

The Zionist manner of speaking in the worship service might prove to be a return to an older, a more effective form of 'homily', more effective in the sense of communicating the Christian message in a meaningful way, one attuned to the ears of the majority of township listeners.

## Conclusion

The current chapter can be seen as an investigation of Zionist homiletics, described as the art and theology of preaching. A consideration of the characteristics of the *how* and the theological dimensions of the *what* of the speaking has been presented. A clear-cut division between the *forms* and

the content of Zionist speaking should only be made for theoretical purposes. In practice the distinction is impossible to maintain.

The result of the investigation is the finding that Zionist identity can be established as both Xhosa, as markedly illustrated by the characteristics of their orality, and Christian, as shown especially in the content of their speaking. Sociologically the speaking partially reflects the urban Zionist experience of reality.

In the entire four services examined in this project, the emphasis has been on speaking and not on ritual. Nevertheless, along with ritual, Zionists perform speaking to ensure that their members interpret their experiences as Zionists 'correctly'. This means to be faithful to the church, the House of Zion, and thus to contribute towards fulfilling the quest for fullness of life and well-being, as I have described their characteristic spirit. Their identity as Zionists is maintained and strengthened while their commitment to their Christian lifestyle is continually reinforced.

The Zionist speaking therefore expresses their *ethos*, the underlying, taken-for-granted patterns of moral behaviour by which a group ought to live. Their particular form of *spirituality*, an open grappling to encounter the benevolent and hostile super-sensible realities, is influenced by both Xhosa and Christian traditions. This spirituality is dramatised in their services and helps to orientate themselves and to live with the weal and woe of their current situation. Service after service, Zionists are, provided with a frame of reference, an expanded *worldview*, within which their ever changing reality is accommodated and which provides to them the power and motivation to face urban life from a Christian perspective.