

CHAPTER 3

Liturgy and church life

1 AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL SERVICES

1.1 African Christianity 'at home'

Pentecostals are most noted for their exuberant, enthusiastic, experience-dominated Christianity. The African roots of Pentecostalism (Anderson 1992:22-28) suggest that, in many respects, the characteristics by which Pentecostals are known throughout the world are culturally more acceptable in an African setting than they are in any European or North American setting. Many white (even Pentecostal) Christians in South Africa feel most uncomfortable sitting in an African Pentecostal service, not knowing how or whether to join in the African joy, expressed in boisterous, strongly rhythmic and spontaneously harmonious singing and dancing; they remain silent while the whole congregation literally roars its prayer to God. An early white American Pentecostal leader, Charles Parham, felt the same discomfort when he visited the cradle of Pentecostalism, the Apostolic Faith Mission in Azusa Street, Los Angeles in 1906 to be disgusted by what he described as 'unintelligent, crude negroisms' and 'animalisms' (MacRobert 1988:60). What seems to make these whites uncomfortable is precisely the African character of the Pentecostal liturgy, the feeling of communal oneness that is experienced in 'praising the Lord together' with dance, shout, antiphonal singing, and simultaneous prayer. Africans have led the way in the Pentecostal movement in translating what are often essentially African religious expressions into Christian worship, or, to put it another way, African Pentecostalism has Africanised Christian liturgy in a natural and spontaneous way (cf De Wet 1989:311; Anderson 1992:73-74).

1.2 Uniforms and church decorum

Christians in the Pentecostal mission churches and independent Pentecostal churches do not generally wear uniforms, although there are a few churches, like the Reformed Apostolic Faith Mission, in which they do. This church, however, is an exception, which also has several characteristics of an indigenous Pentecostal-type church, and might be classified as such. Some of the Pentecostal churches have strict rules concerning attire. In most Pentecostal mission churches, for example, women are expected to wear a head covering in church services; make-up and jewellery are often frowned upon; and men are to wear a jacket and tie. There are also very strict rules for courting couples which in Western cultures would be regarded as 'Victorian'. Young couples are not allowed to be alone together, to sit together in public, or to show any outward display of affection. The church leaders must be advised if a couple is contemplating marriage, so that they may ensure that the proper codes of conduct are observed.

In the independent Pentecostal churches these rules have been considerably relaxed, and the great majority of men attend in open-necked shirts in summer, while the women are usually elegantly dressed in modern Western clothes, often with make-up and jewellery. Rules for courting couples are also generally less strict. A member of one of these churches said that this relaxation was in fact why she liked being in the church; members were not restricted by church traditions concerning hats, jewellery and make-up. The freedom that they had was not a looseness, she explained, because the inner life was more important than the outward appearance of a person.

In the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches the rules for church attire are many and varied. In some churches, such as the Zion Apostolic Twelve Church, people have to remove their shoes before entering the service. In the ZCC, the rules for church attire are rather strict. As visitors, we had to wear jackets to be admitted on very hot February afternoons. The men dancers and singers in the choir (called the *mokhuku*, a Sotho homonym, originally 'shack' - from Edward Lekganyane's male choir, who first had to live in shacks when they arrived at the church headquarters in 1948) wore the khaki uniforms with caps and white shoes, whereas the (unmarried) women and girl members of the choir wore blue uniforms with green berets. The older, married men in the church (these were mostly church officials over forty) wore bottle green suits with gold braid and brass buttons, and the married mothers (also older women) wore green headscarfs (*duku*) and gold blouses with blue trimmings and bottle green skirts. There was also another group of women wearing khaki uniforms with green berets. Uniform wearing is not compulsory for other members, although the wearing of the badge is. Men are also required to be clean shaven and may

not sport beards or moustaches - in contrast with some Apostolic churches in which the wearing of beards is obligatory for married male members.

Separate services are held for the men and women members of the ZCC on Sunday mornings. The reason for this is the traditional separation of the sexes for any social or community event. At Sunday afternoon worship in Soshanguve, which is the service open to everyone, men and women sit on different sides of the enclosure. The different groups in their particular uniforms sit together. Nearest the centre at the front on either side sit the men and women in the green and gold. Behind these men sit the khaki-clad *mokhuku*, and the choir in blue behind the older women. It makes an impressive sight. (To have seen this arrangement multiplied hundreds of times at Moria during the Easter Festival in April 1992 was an unforgettable experience.) Some Pentecostal churches also separate the sexes in the seating arrangements in the church, for they believe that women and men should not sit together.

In IPC church services uniform-wearing members are separated from enquirers and people seeking healing, who sit near the front in the middle. In Soshanguve the services are held on Wednesday nights in the local community hall. Visitors are ushered to the centre seats in the hall, while the members sit on either side separated by sexes - women in red and white, and men in maroon jackets. All men are to wear jackets and ties in church services; women and girls are to wear head coverings, and may not wear jewellery. In the front of the huge auditorium at the church headquarters at 'Silo' (Zuurbekom) there is a throne-like chair in front of a table in the form of an altar on which there is a round seven-globed table lamp. Frederick Modise explained to the visitors at Silo the meaning of the lamp: the centre red globe which stands higher than the others represents fire (which in IPC theology is the name for God - see chapter five), and the six smaller lamps surrounding it are the Water, the Blood and the Spirit of Truth (the three witnesses of 1 John 5:7-8), the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This lamp is switched on only when Modise is present at the table. Modise sits on the large chair, often dressed in his high-priest-like robe. IPC ministers at Silo wear red robes, similar to an academic gown. From sunset on Friday until Sunday morning Modise fasts and spends much of the time in the auditorium with the crowds who come to be healed. He sits behind the table with a file in which all the particulars of each seeker are inscribed by secretaries before the healing service. Each sick person is given a number by the secretaries, and then the sick proceed to Modise in numerical order. Once they reach him, they are to confess their sins to him to ensure their healing.

There is a fine choir and a band at Silo, and music forms a very important part of the services, as does the taking up of various collections - only members partake in the collections. Several collections may take place during a service,

and members are encouraged to give liberally, even up to an entire wage. Modise himself is well provided for. He has several expensive cars, including a Rolls Royce bought for him by his congregation, a Cadillac and several BMWs. The church has several rules concerning inter-sexual relationships. No church member may marry someone who is not a member of the IPC; and Modise himself must apparently approve or disapprove the choice of a marriage partner. Polygamy is allowed; in fact, it is encouraged. Women and girls are forbidden to greet men by any physical contact such as shaking hands. Traditional healers and the ancestor cult are to be forsaken by IPC members. Traditional funeral and mourning practices like smearing windows with ash, changing the furniture, the wearing of black and purification rituals are to be shunned; funerals and weddings on Saturdays may not be attended, for it is the Sabbath. As most of these events in the community take place on this day, this practice tends to estrange IPC members from the community.

In many of these churches 'membership cards' are issued to members on which their monthly church dues are recorded. It is a sort of identity card for members. Church dues are extremely modest; ZCC members said that they had to pay one rand and twenty-five cents to the church every month. A member cannot expect to make use of the services of the church if these dues are not paid. There is also a special booth set aside in the ZCC services for these payments to be made, as well as the paying of monthly insurance dues, which cover unexpected expenses, especially funeral costs.

In the St John Apostolic Faith Mission, fairly typical of the 'Apostolic' type of indigenous church, uniforms are white robes with blue sashes for men, and white blouses with blue sashes and skirts for women. Ministers and congregants wear the same uniforms, but a minister is distinguished from the others on special occasions (weddings, funerals etcetera) by the wearing of a dark blue rope on top of the uniform. In this church women can be ministers as well as men - it was, after all, founded by a woman! Ministers also carry a gold coloured staff, which they use when blessing water and praying for the sick. The ministers also use a small silver bell which they sound rhythmically during singing. A large bell is rung at noon during the service to signal the time for prayer.

Other churches use various colours in their dress; and there does not appear to be any trend of conformity. In the St Paul Spiritual Church of God, for example (which we attended), married women wear powder-blue and navy-blue skirts and blouses with white headscarfs, with a red and yellow sash, while unmarried women wear a white beret instead of a headscarf. Men wear ordinary clothes with the red and yellow sash; but jackets are again compulsory. In our preliminary survey in Soshanguve, we found that after the ZCC khaki, the colours most commonly used in uniforms among Pentecostal-type churches were

blue and white, followed by green and white. Most of the members we interviewed did not know anything about the symbolism behind the various colours used in church dress; it was simply the custom of their church, they said, that which distinguished them from other churches. It appears as if the ZCC khaki is merely a colour that represents uniformity, and does not have any symbolic meaning. Sundkler (1961:213-215) discussed the subject of colour symbolism among Zulu indigenous churches. He pointed out the close relationship between 'dream and dress' (:213), in that the colours of uniforms, robes, ropes, sashes, staffs, etcetera, were often revealed to a church leader or to a member through a dream, sometimes purported to be revelations from the ancestors. We came across this phenomenon in our in-depth interviews on three occasions, related later in a different context. Sundkler (:214) said that white is 'an active and effective colour: it carries with it purity and purification and acts as a guarantee that the *imikhokha*, the magical defilement, has been washed away'. Green was 'the dress of the Spirit' (:214), and it appears that blue, the colour of the heavens, also symbolises the Spirit. Red, the colour of blood, and black, the colour of death, are taboo to many indigenous Pentecostal-type churches (:214). It is interesting to note that black and, to a lesser extent, red are prominent colours in the mission and Ethiopian-type church uniforms, and red is a dominant colour in the IPC. Daneel's (1974:163-165) discussion of colour symbolism also mentioned the connection between dream revelation and colours, but it differed somewhat from Sundkler's interpretation in that black and white are the colours of the ancestors, and black, therefore, is not shunned. Red 'seems to symbolize the judgment of God and the fires of hell', and blue and green 'represent a state of anticipated well-being in heaven' (:164). It is unlikely, however, that this colour symbolism any longer has much significance for the rank and file members of these churches in the South African townships today. It is more likely that Daneel's (:164) observation applies here as much as it did in Zimbabwe:

I have been unable to determine any standardized symbolic value attached to these colours, and I have the impression that the prescription of colours in dreams serve as manifestations of willingness to heed the commands of the Holy Spirit, rather than a specific value being attached to the particular colour.

1.3 Services in Pentecostal churches

There are noticeable differences between the liturgy of Pentecostal mission and independent churches on the one hand, and that of indigenous Pentecostal-type churches on the other. African Pentecostal churches have many similarities to

their Western counterparts, whereas the indigenous churches have a liturgy which is quite unique, although there are sometimes more similarities to Western mission churches than to Pentecostal ones. I do not think that the indigenous churches are necessarily more 'African' in liturgy than Pentecostal churches in fact, the opposite is sometimes true. There are some slight differences between Pentecostal mission churches and independent Pentecostal churches, but these differences are marginal. All these churches usually have only one service on Sunday - unless they are Sabbatarian, like the IPC, where the main service in the headquarters begins on Friday night and lasts until Saturday night. Services in Pentecostal churches usually last between two and three hours.

I have attended literally hundreds of services in African Pentecostal churches over the past twenty years. Generally speaking, the Sunday service centres on two main emphases. Firstly, there is considerable audience participation. A visitor will immediately be struck by the way in which everybody present participates and is involved through united song, choir and group items, testimonies and prayer. A number of people from the congregation will come forward and participate in these different ways. The prayers offered by the congregation are usually spontaneous, simultaneous and uninhibited. A person who is not used to this type of praying will be overwhelmed by the sheer volume and emotion generated by it. Unlike the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches, people in African Pentecostal churches do not usually kneel to pray, but stand or remain seated.

In most independent Pentecostal churches of my acquaintance it is very important to have a 'praise and worship' music group, usually with electric and electronic instruments, especially keyboards, guitars and drums. This group, rather than the pastor, will usually lead the congregation in singing, which often includes English songs borrowed from the neo-Pentecostal movement - until the pastor comes to the front at a given time, either to exhort the people to pray together, or to begin preaching. During the singing the congregation will usually dance to the rhythm of the music and sway from side to side. Music is usually very physical in Africa. Other physical expressions of praise such as the lifting up of hands and ululating may also take place at this time. One independent Pentecostal church of my acquaintance uses shrill whistles in the praise times, but this is not typical. In some churches an invitation will be given during the service for people to come to the front to 'testify', and from four to ten people may come at this time and speak about something they have recently experienced in their Christian lives, or some healing or deliverance from danger or other troubles. Some independent Pentecostal churches have stopped this practice, because it was found that people sometimes used this opportunity as a time to give an extemporaneous sermon, and would 'waste time' as a result! In some Pentecostal churches one finds that 'song items' are also a prominent

part of the service, and several of these may be given in one service. These have also been limited in some churches (particularly in the independent ones), where it is felt that the 'praise and worship', the preaching and the 'altar call' are the only really necessary activities in the services.

The second emphasis of Pentecostal churches is the preaching of God's Word by a pastor. In Pentecostal churches this is typically regarded as the most important part of the service. Unlike many indigenous Pentecostal-type churches where several preachers take the podium, the sermon is usually given by one preacher only. Preaching in these churches generally is an exposition of a text or a short Bible study, with an emphasis on what 'the Bible says'. The preaching is usually much longer than that in Pentecostal-type churches, and often lasts for anything from forty minutes to an hour, and the preacher is normally the pastor of the congregation or a visiting minister. The sermon is carefully prepared before the service, and is followed by a challenge to the congregation with an 'altar call' for people to come to the front of the church to receive Christ into their lives, have other needs met, and for the sick to be prayed for by the laying on of hands. The 'prayer line' sometimes takes as much time as the sermon, as people may be counselled and prayer is offered for them individually. In the larger churches there are often at least fifty people in the front for prayer every Sunday. After the 'prayer line', announcements will be given and the church offering taken up by ushers passing around plates or baskets. The service will then be closed in prayer and the congregation dismissed. In many churches it is customary for the people to sing as they file out of the church building, making a line outside and shaking hands with everyone in the congregation. This has been discontinued in some of the independent churches.

1.4 Services in the ZCC

During February 1992 we attended three ZCC services in Soshanguve on consecutive Sunday afternoons. The *mokhuku* (men dancers) begin their dancing and singing on Friday night, have a short break on Saturday afternoon, and recommence on Saturday night, then continue until Sunday morning, when they are joined by other male members. This means that a *mokhuku* may conceivably be at church for at least twenty-four hours a weekend. Members we spoke to assured us that they become accustomed to this rigorous routine. One leader in the *mokhuku* said that God never became tired, so neither did they! In practice, it seems that this procedure is a little too taxing for most members, and that they do not find it possible to spend so much time in these activities every weekend. We estimated that not more than 40% of the 8 000 adult members (this figure was given by the senior minister) in Soshanguve were

present at the afternoon service. (10%, or 15 000 of Soshanguve's total estimated population belong to the ZCC - but this includes children.)

The main service, open to everyone, starts at 2.00 pm. First of all, at the entrance to the church ground, all people should pass a 'gate test' as they were all sprinkled by the prophets with a handful of water from a tin container. We were liberally sprinkled in front and behind, and emerged quite wet. If anyone had eaten bad or poisoned food, or was sick in any way, this could be revealed to the prophets at the gate, who would thereupon take the person aside into an enclosure next to the entrance for prophetic therapy. Inside the property, the main feature was a large shack-like shelter made of poles covered with corrugated iron with wooden sides, open on the side facing the congregation. This was where the ministers, the married members and the choir members sat, the men in green and gold or khaki uniforms and the women in green and gold or navy blue attire. All other members and visitors sat on the ground outside this shelter, women on the right facing the shelter and men on the left, with several aisles in between. Not all members wear uniforms. A large number of people in the service wore ordinary clothes with the badge of a silver star on a green flash that is characteristic of all ZCC members, and which is worn every day.

One minister acted as the master of ceremonies. Numerous choir and group items were rendered during the service in fine harmony and without the use of musical instruments, before the first of six preachers (all men) began his sermon. Usually the preaching is preceded with the standard Zionist greetings: 'Peace in the church!' or 'Peace to the Zionists!' (the congregation responds 'Amen'). Throughout all these proceedings, various prophets, both men and women (some scarcely out of their teens), were moving up and down the aisles among the people pointing to individuals with various ailments to follow them to the enclosure at the right side of the entrance gate. This wooden, roofless enclosure was the place where prophetic therapy and instructions were given in private to those who had been summoned there by the prophets. People in the main service were unable to see or hear what was happening in the enclosure. Fortunately, at the first service we attended, Sam Otwang, our field worker, was summoned there by a prophet together with six other men, and I myself was called there on the third occasion. This will be described in the next chapter.

The constant moving backwards and forwards of the prophets during the church service were obviously accepted as a normal part of the proceedings, but as visitors we found it somewhat disconcerting as, for us at least, it seemed to bring confusion into what was otherwise a very orderly service. Sometimes the prophets would make loud ejaculations which would startle someone not expecting it at the time, and would even sometimes result in nervous giggling by

congregants! The prophets would move freely in front of the preacher while he was delivering his message and call out people, including senior male leaders sitting in the front. In between the different preachers were musical items given by the various choirs, including the *mokhuku*, a choir which has one thousand members in Soshanguve. Some of these choir items were rendered in English. The last preacher was the senior minister, Reverend Mamabolo, who summarised what the other preachers had said, and made some other announcements about his efforts to procure a bigger church site for their growing congregation. Finally, people came to be 'blessed', including small children to be dedicated, and those who had been taken to the 'Jordan' for baptism while we were there. These were all presented to the people while the ministers blessed them by placing small square papers on their heads. At the conclusion of the service everyone knelt down and prayed simultaneously. In comparison with what I have experienced in Pentecostal church services, this praying was rather subdued. The service was then dismissed.

1.5 Services in the IPC

The IPC services we attended in the Soshanguve community hall on Wednesday nights were different in several respects from the ZCC services. In the first place, great emphasis was placed on Frederick Modise and his powers - this was the central theme of the entire proceedings. In contrast, little was said about Lekganyane during the ZCC services we attended in Soshanguve - this was even true of the services we attended at the ZCC church headquarters, Moria. Secondly, there is no prophetic activity in the IPC, and no manifestations of the presence of the 'Spirit'. There is more restraint in the proceedings, so that one might say that the liturgy resembles a Western, older church service. The services began with congregational singing (only members sing, not visitors), followed by a short message from the minister (on the first occasion directed against the observation of the ancestor cult). After the message the whole congregation knelt for prayer, but instead of the simultaneous prayer which is common to Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type church services, two people prayed one after the other, and the congregation responded with 'Amen, amen'. Six members stood up to 'testify'. They spoke about how they had been healed, set free from problems and from attacks of sorcerers and *tokoloshe* through the intervention and prayers of Modise. These testimonies were directed at the visitors, urging us to join them in their monthly pilgrimage to Modise at the church headquarters, Silo, where we too would have all our problems solved and all our sicknesses healed. During singing and 'testimonies' much mention was made of *Moemedi* ('Representative'), referring to Modise. Several times people would give a loud 'amen' and 'hallelujah' for *Moemedi*, which would be echoed by the whole congregation. The IPC does not have services in Soshanguve

during weekends, as members are encouraged to go to 'Jerusalem' (Oskraal, not too far away from Soshanguve) on the Sabbath.

At Silo, the liturgy is somewhat similar, but on a much larger scale. On the weekend our field worker attended, the visitors who arrived were directed to queue in the basement of the auditorium to have their personal particulars and sicknesses written on forms, after which they received cards with numbers on them. Our field worker had to be 'sick' in order to be admitted. After receiving their numbers the visitors had to wait for the commencement of the service. The ten-thousand-seat auditorium was filled to capacity, and thousands of others remained outside. Members in their brilliant red, white and maroon uniforms (some with badges only) sat behind at least two thousand seekers of healing, who occupied the front and the centre of the auditorium. Men and women were separated in seating arrangements. On the platform sat all the ministers and the choir.

As in Soshanguve, the entire proceedings were directed at the visitors in order to bring them into the church fold. For every speaker in the auditorium there were three interpreters, so that the four languages of Sotho/Tswana, Zulu, Tsonga, and Venda were used. This made proceedings rather lengthy. There were usually four or five preachers before Modise himself preached. Congregational singing by members only (visitors were not supposed to stand and sing) and choir items were rendered between the preaching. The singing was led by women singers with microphones, with an electronic band. Well-known hymns were sung as well as adapted praise songs for *Moemedi*. Members danced while they sang. Prayer was usually by two volunteers from the members in the congregation, one after the other, with the congregation and the visitors kneeling, and a minister led everyone in the Lord's Prayer. Every preacher (only men spoke) told of how he was helped by *Moemedi*, especially in being healed. This was the main theme of all the preaching. The IPC has its own particular form of greeting: 'We thank God for Jesus; we thank Jesus for the Comforter (*Moemedi*).' This precedes every speech, testimony and sermon in the IPC, except that of Modise himself. Modise was not present during the first three hours of the service; he entered at about 11 pm, and everyone stood to their feet. As he reached his chair the seven-globed lamp was switched on. Modise then proceeded to preach his main sermon of the weekend, which lasted until the early hours of Saturday morning. It is very important that nobody misses the words of Modise, for this is how healing is received. Ushers moved up and down the auditorium waking up exhausted visitors. After he had finished, a few more proceedings took place before the visitors were instructed (at about 3 am) to go outside to rest. Members remained in the auditorium for their own instructions.

The visitors then had to line up in the basement to be arranged according to their numbers for the Saturday night healing service. About fifteen of them at a time were taken into the auditorium to confess their sins to Modise, after they had been searched for 'fetishes' (see chapter four). The healing line continued right through Saturday night until Sunday morning. Some visitors slept in the long queue. On Sunday morning those who had confessed their sins were given final instructions by ministers before boarding the buses for home. Included in these instructions were cautions against ancestors, diviners and other traditional practices, a ban on using the word 'fire' (it is the name of God in Modise's theology), a warning against eating blood or an animal that has died of itself, and the need to consult *Moemedi* before choosing a marriage partner.

1.6 A service in the St John AFM

We also attended a St John service in March 1992, held on a Sunday in a temporary iron structure erected on the property of the senior minister. The service started with congregational singing, mostly hymns from the Paris Evangelical Mission Southern Sotho hymn book, unwittingly called *Difela tsa Sione* ('Hymns of Zion'). Then a psalm was read in which the congregation gave the refrain ('His mercy endures forever'), much as they would in an Anglican church service. During the service a few people periodically showed signs of 'possession by the Spirit' such as jerking and jumping and falling to the ground. It is believed that they had been 'carried away' by the Spirit. When they 'recovered' they were given blessed water to drink. There were six men preachers - two ministers and four evangelists, who commented on the same passage from the New Testament that had been read (John 3:1-13). A short hymn or a song preceded each homily. After the men had finished, four women stood to add their comments on the passage. Before and after each homily or song, the whole congregation knelt for a short simultaneous prayer. At noon a large brass bell was rung by one of the church leaders. A preacher was busy at the time. He immediately stopped, and the congregation knelt to pray. Near the end of the service, a large white banner with a blue cross and blue stars sewn on it was raised by six church leaders in front of the church, and all the people had to pass under it. Ministers, evangelists and women leaders (usually wives of the ministers and evangelists) stood on either side of the banner. We were first given blessed water to drink in a small plastic container, and then the leaders laid hands on us as we passed under the banner. This banner was apparently shown to Archbishop Masango in a vision, and it is therefore used in all St John churches. When we asked members what was the meaning of the ritual, they were unable to explain it; it was merely a church custom, they said.

At the close of the service people brought plastic containers with water in to be prayed for by the minister. The water came from the municipal supply, but after it had been prayed for it was believed to have curative properties. The minister covered the water with a linen cloth and then drew a circle around it with his gold staff, after which the cloth was removed and the water given back to the people to sprinkle and drink for the healing of their sicknesses. Then the minister called forward those who were joining the church, and those who were candidates for baptism. They were liberally sprinkled with water on their faces and on their backs, after which the ministers laid hands on them. The congregation knelt in prayer to close what had been a four-hour service.

Other indigenous Pentecostal-type church services were also attended, and they were similar in many respects to the St John service described. In the St Paul Spiritual Church of God service there was no use of blessed water or of other healing objects, as far as we could ascertain. A small silver bell was rung in time with the singing. As in St John, at times the congregational singing reached a crescendo, and members were 'carried away' by the Spirit as they jumped about and cried. Some were even taken out of the service to 'cool down', and one was given a glass of water to drink. The simultaneous praying was rather subdued, with everyone kneeling.

1.7 Expressions of African theology

At the beginning of this section mention was made of the exuberant, enthusiastic, experience-dominated Christianity that is the outstanding characteristic of Pentecostalism. This was clearly true of the liturgy of all the churches observed in this study. African Pentecostalism has incarnated Christianity in a unique and spontaneous way which makes full use of Africa's strong sense of community, illustrated in the full congregational participation in corporate prayer and praise, choirs, testimonies, and in the abundance of singing and dancing. This African Pentecostal liturgy is possibly one of the more important contributions that this movement has to make towards a Christian theology in Africa. In the words of Burgess Carr (1976:162) 'African theology comes to life in music and song, prayers and sacramental acts of healing and exorcism, art forms and architecture, liturgy and dress, church structures and community life.' In the richness and the variety of this authentically African liturgy (although Pentecostals are often reluctant to admit that they have any 'liturgy!'), an implicit African theology is exhibited.

Generally speaking, the Pentecostal churches do not make as much use of outward symbolic ritual as the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches. The church uniforms, the decor, the church etiquette and particularly the healing and cleansing practices in the indigenous churches contrast starkly with their

Pentecostal counterparts. As one accustomed to African Pentecostalism in its more Western form, I found myself unacclimatised to what seemed to be the strange yet fascinating liturgy of the indigenous churches. And yet none of us can escape the fact of the universal conscious or unconscious use of symbolism in all Christian expressions, be it African indigenous church, Pentecostal, Protestant, Orthodox or Catholic. There is a danger that evaluations of another's symbolism will be based on our subjective experience of what we perceive as an absence of symbolism in our own religious expression, when even the absence of overt symbolism is a symbol in itself!

In all types of African Pentecostalism there are certain common characteristics: an absence of formality, a freedom, and a sense of communal participation were the most obvious ones, but there were more subtle ones as well. Anyone oriented to a European or North American expression of Christianity (be it Pentecostal or otherwise) will be unnerved, and possibly even disturbed by the liturgy of these churches. Their very Africanness will not be a 'place to feel at home' (Welbourn and Ogot 1966) for most Westerners. And yet African Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type people in South Africa have declared their independence, their ingenuity, and their power and dignity as human beings and children of God. They have preserved the best of their cultural heritage and have transformed its inadequacies in this manifestation of 'black power', the power from God to conquer the social injustice and oppression that has plagued them for so long.

In summary, Pentecostal mission and independent churches have a liturgy which has generally more Western influence (but not necessarily less African) than the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches. The main features of Pentecostal services include congregation participation through singing, dance, prayer, testimony and song item, the preaching of God's Word by a minister, and the prayer line at the close of the service. In Pentecostal-type churches the participation of the congregation is attained through similar means with the addition of prophetic utterances and the preaching by several ministers, which gives more participation in this most important act of declaring the Word of God. There is also a prayer line, in which people have the opportunity to express their fears, doubts, sicknesses and other troubles to the ministers for their attention and pastoral care.

2 SACRAMENTS

2.1 Baptism

In both Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type churches, baptism is invariably by the immersion of adult believers. In many indigenous churches there is also an

insistence that this baptism should take place in 'living' (running) water, and thus a 'river Jordan' is located in which the sacrament is performed. It was pointed out to me once by a Zionist member that there were many 'dams' in Jerusalem (like the pool of Siloam), but Jesus chose to go all the way to the Jordan river for baptism. In Soshanguve there are no rivers or streams with enough water for immersions in the near vicinity, and this requirement therefore presents somewhat of a problem. There are indications that the use of 'dams' (baptistries) is now more acceptable for practical purposes in these churches. In some Pentecostal-type churches only the bishop may perform the rite of baptism, at a specially designated 'Jordan' at the church headquarters, usually during conference times. Thus in the St John Apostolic Church baptisms usually took place at conference times at the church headquarters at Evaton, and later at Katlehong, near Germiston. In the St Paul Apostolic Church Bishop Mashego, the leader of the church, is called 'John the Baptist'. Baptisms must take place at the church headquarters at Evaton. In Pentecostal mission and independent churches baptistries are used, and the baptisms generally are performed by pastors.

The great majority (91%) of the 149 Pentecostals interviewed in our preliminary survey had been baptised by immersion as adult believers. Just over half (54%) of these had been baptised by triune immersion and the rest (46%) by single immersion. Baptism is the most important sacrament for most Pentecostal churches - in fact many Pentecostals will identify baptism and the Lord's Supper as being the only sacraments in their churches. Our question on baptism in our second questionnaire showed that for many of the Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type church members, baptism is the only way to become a member, to identify with that church and its teachings and therefore to be 'saved'. Most respondents said that immersion was important because it was taught and practised by Jesus Christ and the apostles.

Members of Pentecostal mission and independent churches generally have a very explicit understanding of the meaning of water baptism. It is at the same time both the symbol and the reality of a believer's identification with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection - the emphasis of symbol over against reality is a Western dualism not generally found in Africa. It signifies that a person has died to sin and now has a new life in Christ. This baptism, therefore, can only be for believers. One respondent said that a person can be baptised only after repenting of sins. According to Mark 16:16, he said, a person must **first** believe, and then after that be baptised. This view is fairly representative of the beliefs of most Pentecostals. Some Pentecostals had a belief in 'baptismal regeneration', that a person is 'born again' when baptism takes place - this idea, however, is not officially taught in most Pentecostal churches, and it may be a misunderstanding of the significance of the rite.

Some Pentecostal-type church members also said that to them baptism means that a person is a believer in God and has accepted Jesus Christ, following the Bible which says that those that believe will be baptised. A member of the Zion Apostolic Church had an understanding of baptism which was similar to that of most Pentecostals: people who had been convinced of the word of God by the Holy Spirit, and whose lives had been changed so that they had a completely new lifestyle were eligible for baptism in water. The majority of respondents, however, like some Pentecostals who held this view, felt that baptism actually effected this change of life. The wife of a bishop in the Christian Church of Zion, for example, was very specific on this point. People had to be baptised in a river, after they had confessed their sins to the minister and had forsaken them. They would then receive a changed life, she explained, in the same way that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus and told him that he must be 'born again'. This being 'born again', or being 'born of water' referred to water baptism, which was the way that a person received salvation. She went on:

The salvation the Bible speaks about is the salvation you receive when you are baptised - you become saved - not this kind of salvation that you hear people speaking about in the streets - I don't know that type of salvation. In other words, when you get into the water and are baptised, automatically you receive Christ and you are saved.

The above response illustrates the holistic African way of integrating the symbol and the reality of baptism. Another respondent said that the salvation spoken about by Pentecostals was a 'superstition'. The only salvation possible was that effected by water baptism, by which a person left sin, was 'born again' and was converted. A member of the Apostolic Church in Zion said that a person who was baptised had received the Holy Spirit at baptism. The person's features would visibly change as a result, and 'become bright', she said. A member of a Swazi Zionist church said that after baptism a woman had to put away earrings and stop wearing make-up, especially the 'painting of the fingers', she said.

To most ZCC members, water baptism by immersion (preferably in running water) after confession of sins has taken place was the way to gain access to Jesus Christ and the church. (This, incidentally, is also often the view of Pentecostals and Baptists worldwide.) And yet the decision to become a Christian invariably precedes baptism in the ZCC and other indigenous Pentecostal-type churches, as in Pentecostal churches. Baptism is the means by which people receive the new life of Christ. Baptised ZCC members are thereafter able to don the uniform, wear the badge and receive a staff. They may also attend those services which are only for baptised ZCC members. The

method of baptism by threefold immersion follows that of the early American church of John Alexander Dowie (the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion), and also that of the AFM. One member said that in its type of baptism the ZCC was following the example of Jesus, when he was baptised by John the Baptist. This sacrament is seen as having purifying qualities, by which converts' sins are washed away and they are made holy. One ZCC member, typical of this view, explained the significance of baptism as: 'When you are baptised, you first confess your sins to the minister, and then your sins are removed by the water. You have left those sins, and are now given the church instructions as a member.' This purification is not automatic, however. A ZCC minister told us how some people join the church and are baptised for ulterior motives, and continue their sinful ways thereafter.

It is also believed by many ZCC members that the Holy Spirit is received at baptism (Lukhaimane 1980:50), and here there is a departure from most Pentecostals. One ZCC member explained to us that just as Jesus Christ had to be baptised by immersion in water before he received the Spirit and began performing miracles, so a person who is not baptised in this way cannot expect to receive the Spirit or do anything for God. Many ZCC members also believe in baptism as a ritual through which a person may be physically healed and delivered from evil powers.

Baptism in other Pentecostal-type churches follows a similar pattern. In the St John church, baptisms take place in a pool at the church headquarters at Katlehong on the East Rand, and are performed by the bishop at Conference times. It precedes membership of the church. One St John member said that when people were baptised they were automatically transferred to the 'right hand of God', and they left their sins. In the IPC, entrance into the church takes place after a full confession of sins has been made to Modise, after which a person's sins are 'washed away' and a membership card may be purchased. Only after this does baptism then take place, by single immersion and always in a river - for Modise told me that Jesus was not baptised in a dam! Baptisms are usually administered by Modise's two senior deacons and other ministers at the time of the annual conferences. Baptism in the IPC enables a person to use the secret formula revealed to Modise, called the *dipaki* (witnesses), which must be recited secretly by a follower whenever he or she is in trouble or is sick. This goes in the vernacular something like this: 'The water, the blood, the Spirit that burns, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the God that comes with fire.' (The association of God with fire in IPC doctrine will be discussed in chapter five.) It is believed that the repetition of these words enables a person to receive healing and protection. Baptism entitles a person to put on the uniform and be a full member of the IPC, to use the secret formula revealed to Modise bringing healing and protection (see chapter four), and attend the

services or 'classes' which are for members only, the 'sheep' of God. One IPC member told us that baptism enables a person who would otherwise be a traditional diviner to be a prophet - but this was not typical of this church, and runs counter to the preaching of its ministers.

In many Pentecostal-type churches, before baptism takes place there must be a full confession of sins in the presence of the minister. Baptism is thus seen as symbolising the washing away of sins. The candidate for baptism thereby makes a public acknowledgement of sin and the intention to forsake it.

2.2 Holy Communion

The only other sacrament common to both the Pentecostal and the Pentecostal-type churches is Holy Communion, which is generally seen in the Zwinglian sense as a remembrance - although the fine Western distinctions between the different interpretations of the sacrament are not important, and probably unknown, to most members and ministers in these churches. My research on this sacrament is limited in its scope because I have personally participated in very few Paschal ceremonies, and we did not question our respondents on this subject. It is, however, an important event in the church's calendar, for which careful preparations must be made. This is especially true of the Pentecostal-type churches, in which these preparations are usually made at the church conferences. Daneel (1974:302-306) has vividly described the 'gate test' and the confession of sins which precede the sacrament in Zimbabwean indigenous churches, in which the *Paseka* often becomes the launching pad for missionary work. I have not yet observed these practices. The sacrament is seldom observed in most Pentecostal churches, which often do not have communion more than once a year - but this does not mean that the sacrament is insignificant here. Some Pentecostal churches also observe the 'Lord's Supper' at Conferences, especially on Good Friday.

Most African Pentecostal churches use non-alcoholic grape juice to represent the wine. Some use unleavened bread wafers, and many use ordinary white bread and wine-coloured soft drinks. In a few Pentecostal churches actual wine is used. In some churches the bread and the 'wine' are passed around to the members in their chairs; in others the people come and kneel in rows in the front of the church as the sacrament is administered to them by the ministers. In the ZCC the Communion is usually administered by the Bishop only at the Annual Conferences at Moria at Easter and in September. Before bread and wine can be administered by ordinary ZCC ministers, the elements first have to be blessed by the Bishop. The sacrament is preceded by the confession of sins by those participating in the Communion. This too is seen as a purification rite,

with 'the function of forgiveness of sins and cleansing thereof' (Lukhaimane 1980:54).

In the Saint John Apostolic Faith Mission water is given such significance that it was even used in Holy Communion in place of wine in the Swazi prophet Msibi's church, and in the presence of Bishop Masango (Sundkler 1976:222). The sacramental use of water is one of the main departures from Pentecostal practices in this church. Holy Communion is also practised in the IPC; but a member of 12 years standing said that the sacrament was administered only twice during this time. In some Pentecostal-type churches, Holy Communion is observed only at night, as West (1975:19) noted in Soweto. It would appear that this sacrament, although not frequently observed in African Pentecostal churches, nevertheless is an important occasion in the life of the churches and of immense Christological significance, to be discussed in chapter five.

2.3 Other sacramental acts

Many of the symbolic healing practices which will be described in chapter four are in reality seen as sacramental acts in Pentecostal-type churches. This is particularly true of the use of 'holy water', so widely practised in these churches. Members of these churches may be set free from sickness or misfortune through a ceremonial washing or sprinkling that is performed by a church leader in a prescribed manner. But there is a great variety of other healing and protective rituals which may have sacramental significance to members of these churches, as will be described in the next chapter. In a few churches a footwashing ceremony is also practised in accordance with John 13, the removing of shoes is employed (a practice deriving from Exodus 3:5), and some churches use the anointing of oil to pray for the sick, according to James 5:14. These practices are not widespread in the Transvaal.

2.4 The significance of sacraments

In summary, although Pentecostal churches attach less significance to sacraments than indigenous Pentecostal-type churches, the two ordinances of baptism by immersion and Holy Communion are practised by all of them. Some differences exist in the method, the place and the frequency in which these two sacraments are administered, but these are not consequential to our discussion. Baptism is either a symbol of a renewed life or the means by which that renewal is effected or by which the Holy Spirit is received. In some churches, baptism is a prerequisite for the conferring of privileges given only to members, and is also sometimes a purifying and a healing ritual. Often baptism is administered only

after a full confession of sins has been given to the minister or bishop. In South African Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type churches the sacrament of baptism, being of a definitive nature for church membership, usually occurs only once in a person's life. This differs somewhat from Daneel's findings in Zimbabwe, where baptisms by immersion were often repeated for various reasons, including purification, exorcism and the detection of wizardry (Daneel 1974:278). One can speculate that the difference from the Zimbabwean practice may have something to do with the fact that the leading purification ritual among South African indigenous churches seems to be that of sprinkling (or rather, splashing) with holy water, and that exorcisms and the detection of wizardry is probably a much rarer occurrence. To these theological reasons could be added a purely environmental one - that sites where immersions can be performed are not as abundant in the Transvaal as they are in the better-watered Zimbabwe!

Holy Communion is the only other significant sacrament, observed rather infrequently in some of these churches, and in other cases three to four times annually at church conferences. Usually seen as a commemoration of Christ's death, in some churches such as the ZCC it also serves as a purification ritual. Other ritual acts which might be regarded as sacraments, particularly the sacramental use of water and other healing and protective rites, are also practised in Pentecostal-type churches.

3 CHURCH LIFE

3.1 Pentecostal church life and perceptions

Pentecostals are very committed to their churches. In our survey, 94% of our Pentecostal respondents said they attended church activities at least once a week. All types of African Pentecostals had a significantly higher percentage than that of the members of other churches. There is an emphasis on 'fellowship', on community sharing. The Praise Tabernacle Church in Soshanguve frequently promotes 'comforting' those who need to be comforted, and the church has a feeding scheme and clothing distribution for the poor. But as a rule, Pentecostal churches are not known for efforts to uplift society; in South African black Pentecostal churches it may be because many of the members are themselves in the grip of poverty and oppression.

Almost all of the Pentecostals interviewed in the preliminary survey were of the opinion that their churches did not have prophets (93%), or bishops (91%), or traditional drums (96%). They believed in dancing in church services (74%), and said that the sick were healed in their churches (95%). The use of symbolic objects as practised by the indigenous churches was also rejected by most

Pentecostals (96%). Pentecostals in Soshanguve also have clearly defined ethical codes: they are opposed to polygamy (99%), beer drinking (97%), smoking tobacco (97%) and even the eating of pork (71%). Here too, with the exception of pork, they are in contrast to most other churches in Soshanguve.

3.2 Ethics and faith in Pentecostal-type churches

The ZCC is still an open air church, although church properties are being acquired in some of the townships, as in Soshanguve, and the present Bishop encourages such acquisitions. There must have been about 15 000 ZCC members in Soshanguve in 1991, who meet outside for their Sunday worship. 91% of the members interviewed go to church activities at least once a week; and 56% more often than that. Dancing is a very important part of the liturgy, and it is believed that participation in the unique ZCC dance brings power, protection and even healing to the participant. There are also some rigorous ethical rules in the ZCC. Members in our survey were almost unanimously opposed to drinking beer (90%), smoking (91%) and eating pork (97%) - and curiously enough, a full 82% of the members surveyed said there was no polygamy in the church (ZCC men are officially allowed up to four wives)! Perhaps the church is moving away from this practice too as it adapts to an increasingly Westernised and monogamous society. As far as food taboos are concerned, a ZCC minister told us that because Jesus Christ had cast out demons from a man and had put them into pigs, pork was therefore unclean and forbidden to church members. Pigs have seven evil spirits in them, he explained. He also told us that ZCC members must not eat fish and chips, because they are mixed together in the same oil while being fried. I have not yet been able to discover the significance of this taboo.

St John members, like most members of Pentecostal-type churches, believe in healing by the use of symbolic objects. Church members don their blue and white uniforms after they have been baptised by threefold immersion. The church recognises both bishops and prophets. In Soshanguve the St John AFM meets in a temporary church structure, but there is a large church building in neighbouring Mabopane. Members interviewed were fairly clear on certain taboos (in order of importance): they were against the eating of pork (92%), smoking (89%), polygamy (69%) and beer drinking (66%). These taboos were obviously not as significant in St John as they were in the ZCC.

In the IPC, Modise practices strict discipline: members may not drink, smoke or eat pork, or partake in traditional rituals, and there are very strict rules for menstruating women. As we have seen already, they may not participate in any community events on the Sabbath day (Saturday). In cases of serious breaches

of discipline, especially in the case of adultery, it was reported to me that church members are whipped with a *sjambok* (a leather whip), an allegation which Modise denied. Men in the church are encouraged to take second or third (up to seven) wives; and Modise himself had two wives at the time of writing. He would not commit himself when I asked if he was intending to take another! It is also necessary for a person to receive the blessing of *Ntate* (Father) Modise before embarking on a journey. Modise also gives advice on whom a member may or may not marry; marriage may be contemplated only with a fellow member of the church.

3.3 Church conferences

In some churches, the conferences of the church are of the utmost importance. ZCC members are expected to visit Moria, the church headquarters near Pietersburg, at least once a year, either at the Easter conference or at the conference in September. The importance of this pilgrimage (for this is what it has become) is that members thereby meet the Bishop and obtain his blessing on their lives. At Moria, each member should contribute generously to the church so that it can help the poor, the widows and students at high schools, colleges and universities. A church bursary fund administered at Moria exists for this purpose. The Easter Festival at Moria is obviously the highlight of the ZCC year. Literally hundreds of thousands of people (some have suggested over two million), all dressed in ZCC khaki, gold and green, congregate there annually. To experience this vast throng as I did at the Easter conference in 1992 is breathtaking. I doubt whether there are many Christian conferences in Africa that attract as many people as this one does. In the IPC, as in the ZCC, annual conferences take place at Easter and in September, the month in which Modise received his 'anointing' by the Holy Spirit. For IPC people in the Transvaal, however, the monthly weekend at Silo is also a type of church conference to which they are expected to go.

4 SOCIO-POLITICAL CONCERNS

4.1 Political preferences

The political trends outlined here are from the perspective of the verbal responses of church members during the survey and during the subsequent interviews. No investigation was conducted concerning the actual participation by African Pentecostals in structured political organisations, and this is the limitation of this section. Further research needs to be done in this respect.

One of the more interesting and controversial questions asked in our preliminary survey was that concerning political preference. Soshanguve residents were asked the question 'Whom would you like to see as the president of a new South Africa?' Their responses are outlined in Table 8 at the end of this chapter. There was little doubt that the African National Congress would have won a free election in Soshanguve in 1991, and that Mr Nelson Mandela was the most popular political leader there. The support for Mr De Klerk, however, was rather surprising. It is unthinkable that a National Party leader could have elicited such support from black township residents three years previously. The fact was that Mr Mandela and Mr De Klerk together commanded over two thirds of the black support, at least in Soshanguve. This too may well be the case in many other parts of the country. The coming democratic elections in 1994 will indicate whether this is so.

It has erroneously been thought that Pentecostals are 'apolitical' or even 'antipolitical'. This is not even true among white Pentecostals in South Africa, who are often amongst the most politically conservative in the country, sometimes openly supporting right-wing organisations. Being 'political' (in a negative sense) in these circles usually means having sympathy with the 'liberation struggle' in South Africa. There is a political awareness among African Pentecostals which does not differ perceptibly from the overall population. African Pentecostals may not be accused (as white Pentecostals have been) of being supporters of the status quo. On the question 'Whom would you like to see as the President of a new South Africa?', 43% of the respondents from Pentecostal mission and independent churches would vote for Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (compared to 47% of the overall population of Soshanguve); 19% would vote for F W De Klerk (compared with 22% overall); and 31% were undecided or would not answer the question (compared with 25% overall). This would indicate that although there might have been slightly more 'apoliticalism' among Pentecostals than among the general population, this was not of any real significance. We discovered several African Pentecostals who were ardent supporters of the African National Congress, and there were also a few Pan Africanist Congress supporters among them.

Since the ZCC was registered with the government in 1942 it has enjoyed the favour of the ruling authorities. The *apartheid* government adopted a policy of 'non-interference' in the affairs of black churches, which in effect meant encouraging the development of churches which were totally 'independent' of what were sometimes seen as troublesome mission churches. The development of these totally black churches was seen as in complete harmony with the *apartheid* ideology. More recent events in the church, such as the visit by the former South African State President P W Botha to the ZCC Easter Festival in 1985, reinforced the idea that the ZCC was a supporter, or at least a willing and

unprotesting prisoner, of the status quo. It is true that ZCC leaders do generally take an 'apolitical' stance and forbid their members participation in structured political activities. Some of the ZCC members we interviewed were supporters of the white National Party government. Many also said that Christians should not take part in politics, but should pray for the political situation. A ZCC pastor told us that members are expected to abstain from political activities, because if they should be injured or arrested during such activities it would not be the business of the church to attend to them. It appears that urban African Pentecostals express their political convictions more by their participation in the trade unions and in the civic associations than in structured political parties - although some of them are also members of African nationalist organisations.

The ZCC has attempted to play a role in the changes which are taking place in the country. A ZCC writer, Rafapa (1992:6), says that 'all the ZCC bishops through all the generations of the church have consistently preached racial harmony and reconciliation'. This may be the reason why the three most influential political leaders in South Africa at the time (Mandela, De Klerk and Buthelezi) were each invited to the Easter Festival in 1992 at Moria, on which occasion I was present. This was a sincere and pragmatic effort on the part of the ZCC bishop to play a constructive role in the negotiations which are currently being conducted, and thereby to help promote peace during a time of violent strife. The bishop's sermon on this occasion was directed at the three leaders, and he lashed out at 'warmongering' and inflammatory political speeches, saying that leaders as well as followers were responsible for the current carnage in the South African townships. He made a plea for peace, and he emphasised the role of the ZCC as a 'church of peace'. Any political leaders ignore the ZCC at their peril, and this may be why all three leaders accepted the invitation! Arguably, the largest crowds that any South African political leaders had ever addressed were present. I could not fail to notice that the greatest applause that afternoon (next to that given to the bishop) was given by the ZCC multitude to Mandela. Most significantly, Mandela made reference in his speech to prominent ANC officials who were members of the ZCC. And yet the pageant clearly belonged to Bishop Lekganyane. He was the real focal point of the proceedings, and not any of the three political leaders present. The politicians were on his 'turf', and they had to take careful note of what he had to say. The ZCC does not engage in political posturing, and this is possibly why this church and many other African Pentecostal churches do not align themselves with political parties. The bishop prudently avoided any impression of taking sides in his sermon.

Our survey did not reveal that ZCC members were more politically conservative, or less politically aware than the members of other churches in Soshanguve. This may be seen by a comparison of the political preferences of 167 ZCC

members compared with the overall population of Soshanguve, as outlined in Table 9 at the end of this chapter. Although there was a slightly lower percentage of ANC supporters in the ZCC (42% - no mean percentage!), the PAC had slightly more support there than in the overall population, and the ZCC support for Mr de Klerk was identical with the total. There were slightly more people who were unsure or uncommitted in the ZCC, but this again is not of any real significance.

Other Pentecostal-type churches showed a similar pattern. As far as political convictions were concerned, St John AFM members were more politically conscious than was the general population of Soshanguve. Over half (52%) were supporters of the African National Congress; 19% supported President De Klerk, 7% the Pan Africanist Congress, and 7% other black political organisations. Only 14% were undecided or had declined to answer the question, compared to almost 25% in the overall population. The survey revealed that St John members were strong supporters of African nationalism. And yet when we spoke to one of the pastors in the church, he told us that 'Christians are not supposed to get involved in worldly things like politics'. Perhaps this was the 'official line'. As far as the IPC is concerned, this church has pursued good relationships with the National Party government in South Africa; but members are forbidden to take part in politics. President De Klerk attended the opening of their new church headquarters at Silo (Zuurbekom) in May 1991.

In our in-depth interviews we asked the question, 'Should the church or its members involve themselves in political matters?' Opinions were divided on this issue, and there was no clearly discernible pattern linking one or other church with a particular political stance. Many of our respondents felt that the church should be involved, as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Others were just as adamant that the church should keep out of politics - mostly because the church leader had said so, and not for any particular reason. Some Pentecostal people were concerned at the seeming lack of political awareness in their church, and especially among their pastors. One respondent was disturbed by the fact that an event of such import as the release of Mr Mandela was not even mentioned in his church. He felt that the church should keep abreast of what was happening in the world; 'the church is not an island', he said.

Respondents expressed their political convictions quite freely during these interviews. One Pentecostal respondent felt that Christians should involve themselves in political matters so that a just government can be established in this country, based on the laws of God. The Christians alone had the answers to bring peace and security to the land. The ANC was the best government to bring this about, he said. If they stuck to the principles of the Freedom Charter,

then the country would be in safe hands. Another Pentecostal said that the church should be involved in political matters after the pattern of Frank Chikane and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who had done such good work. If the church did not get involved the people could easily be led astray and be deceived. This was an oft expressed view: Pentecostals felt that by allowing Christians to participate in political activity, the church was thereby able to exert its influence on the world. One Pentecostal pastor felt that the church as an institution should not participate in political activity, but that its members who were immersed in the society could not avoid their involvement in political matters. A Pentecostal church board member said that the church could not speak from a party political platform, but that it should speak as the mouthpiece of God. It had the right to speak when there was injustice and oppression.

4.2 Social involvement

We have seen that the African Pentecostal churches, like other churches in the township, are concerned to provide for the holistic needs of their members. For this reason, some churches form funeral societies, bursary funds for the education of their children, and provide financial assistance for members in financial distress. Some of these churches have 'welfare committees' who are responsible for feeding and clothing the poor and the destitute. In Soshanguve during 1991, when the shacks started to appear outside the formal housing areas, several of these churches were involved in providing a regular food and clothing supply for the so-called 'squatters'. A private primary school administered by Tshwane Christian Ministries (an organisation directed by African Pentecostal churches) opened in January 1992, just outside Soshanguve. About 80% of the parents of the 173 children now attending this school are from Pentecostal mission and independent churches, mostly from the latter. Adult literacy classes, and sewing, knitting and domestic science classes are also held under the auspices of these churches. The ZCC has a nation-wide 'ZCC Burial Assurance Fund' and a 'ZCC Literacy Campaign' with adult education centres scattered throughout the country - one is in Soshanguve. As Martin West (1975:196) points out concerning indigenous churches in Soweto, so the African Pentecostal churches in this study 'meet many of the needs of townspeople which were formerly met by kin groups on a smaller scale in rural areas'. Although the community in Soshanguve (with the notable exception of the recent shack dwellers) is more settled than was the case with the people in Soweto over twenty years ago, West's observation is still appropriate. He lists several ways in which the social needs of church members are met in an urban setting (:196-199), summarised as follows: the independent church, as a 'voluntary association', provides its members with a sense of family, friendship (providing support groups in times of insecurity), protection in the form of leadership (and

particularly charismatic leadership), social control (by emphasising and enforcing certain norms of behaviour), and in practical ways like finding employment, mutual aid in times of personal crisis, and leadership opportunities. The churches thus provide for their members 'new bases for social organisation' (:199).

4.3 The urgent problems

In our in-depth interviews, African Pentecostal respondents were asked: 'What do you think is the most urgent problem in our country needing to be solved today?' Answers given revealed an amazing conformity and an awareness of the social issues involved. People spoke mostly about the violence in the country, the need for political leaders to talk to each other and to negotiate, the problems of black education, the shortage of housing and the rampant unemployment. The issue of violence was probably uppermost in people's minds. Christians of all churches interviewed said that there needed to be a real and a lasting peace. Some respondents placed the blame on Inkhata, while others said it was the fault of both Inkhata and the ANC. One said that the problem would be solved if people would begin to love one another. Some felt that the church had a responsibility to bring about peace in the land. One person said that the violence was as a result of fear; if through the Christian message people would stop fearing one another, the problem would be solved. Most respondents on this issue felt that the members of the church should not themselves be involved in violence as a means of political protest; there were certain boundaries that could not be crossed by Christians. One Pentecostal said that 'a child of God must not take part in revenge or killings'.

People wanted to see the government provide more houses for the homeless and for the 'squatters'. The problem of unemployment also raised the issue of unequal opportunities between blacks and whites - blacks should receive equal pay for equal work, said one respondent. One person raised the question of *apartheid*, and said that it must be done away with 'in practice and not just in theory'. Another church leader said that he believed that blacks had unrealistic expectations about their political future. This was a problem that needed to be solved before the problem of equal rights could be addressed.

On the final question 'What sort of government would you like to see in the new South Africa', answers were varied, but most people wanted to see a government that would serve the interests of the people first and foremost, in which everyone would have the right to vote and would be free from oppression, in which people would be accorded equal value in the eyes of the authorities. Many respondents acknowledged that the present white government had done something to change

the situation of the oppression of black people, but that some of these changes were too little and too late. Some said that they would prefer an ANC government; others said they would prefer to see the present government of Mr De Klerk continue; but most said that they would like all the different political parties to come together and be represented in a future government. Some people did not want to see a situation arising in which a new form of oppression would result, with one political group oppressing the others.

Although the official stand of most African Pentecostal churches is to abstain from political activity (with few exceptions), this research has shown that members of Pentecostal and Pentecostal-type churches in South Africa are not less aware of or less involved in socio-political issues than members of other churches. This contradicts the generally held idea that these church members are 'apolitical' or supporters of the status quo. This compares significantly with Daneel's (1989b:72) findings among Zimbabwean Spirit-type churches, where 'during the seventies virtually all Independent Churches appeared to have actively supported the freedom fighters'. It appears that in South Africa too, members of these churches have shared to some extent in the struggle for liberation.

**TABLE 8: POLITICAL PREFERENCES OF
SOSHANGUVE RESIDENTS IN 1991**

<i>Political leader or party</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Nelson Mandela / ANC	725	46,7
F W De Klerk / National Party	333	21,5
P A C	61	3,9
Others	53	3,4
Abstained or undecided	380	24,5
TOTALS	1 552	100,0

TABLE 9: COMPARISON OF THE POLITICAL PREFERENCES OF ZCC MEMBERS AND THE OVERALL POPULATION OF SOSHANGUVE

<i>Political grouping</i>	<i>ZCC number</i>	<i>ZCC percent</i>	<i>Overall percent</i>
ANC (Mandela)	70	42	47
National Party (De Klerk)	37	22	22
PAC	10	6	4
Others	2	1	3
Abstained or undecided	48	29	24
TOTALS	167	100	100