

**THE RESPONSE OF AFRICAN RELIGION TO POVERTY, WITH SPECIFIC
REFERENCE TO THE UMZIMKHULU MUNICIPALITY**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements
For the degree of

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

in the subject

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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FEBRUARY 2005

DECLARATION

Student number: 3000-170-6

I declare that

THE RESPONSE OF AFRICAN RELIGION TO POVERTY, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE UMZIMKHULU MUNICIPALITY is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

I am a 51 years old male Mth graduate of the University of South Africa with a Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Pontifical University of Urbaniana Roma Italy. I am a Roman Catholic priest, born in Makhenceni village in Umzimkhulu District in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. I am happily single.

HOBBIES

I love reading and debating. I am an accomplished motivational speaker in the area of community development. As an experienced preacher I have been successful in conducting spiritual conferences and retreats.

PRESENT POSITION

I work in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Umzimkhulu serving the Parish of St. Andrew's in Harding where I am a manager (rector) of Sehole Combines school and Boarding Hostels. I have successfully performed and reached the set targets in these positions for twelve years. I have raised the school from a Junior Secondary to a Senior Secondary School. In their six sittings, our Grade twelves have progressively improved in obtaining qualitative results resulting in a 100% pass in 2003.

During my term of office the quantity and quality of the school and hostel buildings have dramatically improved to the extent that a school that originally accommodated only three hundred learners accommodates one thousand four hundred learners. The capacity of the hostel has increased as well.

CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES

I am for seven years the Vicar general, Chancellor and Consultor to His Eminency W.F. Cardinal Napier. I am the ex-officio president of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, vocations promoter and secretary of the meetings of the presbyterium. I manage Sehole Combined school and the St. Andrew's Boarding hostels.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Since my ordination I have worked in these Parishes:

Our Lady of Sorrows (1985-1987)

Sacred Heart Parish (1985-1987)

St. Adalberos' and St. Paul-Sibusiso (1988-1991)

St. Andrew's Parish (1992-)

From 1989-1992 I held the position of Provincial Director of the Servants of Christ the Priest whose members are scattered in whole Southern Africa (South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia and Malawi).

PLACES VISITED

Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Italy, Germany, Switzerland and France.

REFERENCES

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SUMMARY

“The Response of African Religion to Poverty with specific reference to the Umzimkhulu Municipality” is a particular effort of the wider world that researches the ways and means for combating the scourge of poverty in society aiming at securing a better future for the future generations.

In as much as African traditional religion is part of the culture, tradition and custom of its tenants, and as such aims at the wellbeing of its tenants, it is able to offer a response to poverty. It teaches about the importance of the values of community, meaningful and life-affirming relationships and the value of ubuntu. All these clamour for extended sharing and extended participation which are essential if society will continue to exist.

African traditional religion maintains an ethic that says: ‘Real poverty results from the blockage of the vital links’. Celebrating economic achievements in food must be preceded by the celebration of people. ‘Batho pele’: is the contemporary Democratic South Africa’s slogan that suggests putting people in the center of life. It does not only call us to serve the poor, but also to allow them to champion the courses of the kind of service they desire.

African traditional religion teaches that, together with the other institutions that govern the lives of people, religion and politics should have among other things a concern about production and distribution of the resources, hence the claim: ‘**Food is also politics**’. In their dealing with the problem of poverty, religion, politics and other social institutions

ought to dedicate a special place to instilling positive attitudes towards the concept of work among their tenants. In this way the slogan 'Batho pele' or people first, does not merely mean waiting to be served, but it also means that every body to the best of their ability ought to be doing something towards the production of the items of service.

The inclusiveness of African religion in terms of what it calls 'community' cautions society about the importance of the other beings in its consideration of poverty alleviation. Our economic wellbeing depends mostly on our attitude towards the other non-personal neighbours, prominent among which is our common abode, the earth, the land.

Title of Thesis:

THE RESPONSE OF AFRICAN RELIGION TO POVERTY WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE UMZIMKHULU MUNICIPALITY.

KEY TERMS:

Abuse of power; Colonial psychopaths; Domestic religion; Ecology; Economical poverty; Extended sharing; Fatalism; Organic approach; Subsistence economy; Ritual impurity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have always admired the support one gets from the so-called small persons of this world. The care and the encouragement that I received from my friends have enriched me to a point that I found myself willing and able to undertake this mammoth task. Most of the people I wish to acknowledge and thank for the success of this work are in the poverty stricken side of society. I thank them for teaching me that poverty is just a condition in which people find themselves that it is not meant to destroy the virtue of ubuntu inherent in them.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my promoter Professor G.J.A. Lubbe who dedicated hours of his time to direct my work. The non-confrontational manner in which he challenged my ideas made it easy for me to engage in a much deeper study of and reflection about my project. Thank you Professor.

I must express my unreserved gratitude to Rev. Sr. Richardis T. Phungula FSF. I always felt encouraged when you said in your tiny tone of voice “*Baba! ungakwenza Nkosi yami*” or when you smiled whenever you saw me at the computer and automatically presumed I was writing my thesis. Thank you Mdlovu. May it please you to know that finally ‘*ubaba ukwenzile Nkosi yami.*’ I thank the other staff members of your team at St. Andrew’s boarding hostel as well for making it possible for me to do this work.

The use of computers is very foreign to many of us and without the help from my young friend Mr. Bethuel Nhlanhla Mntambo I do not think I would have succeeded. For the many times that I ran to you for help, thank you. Gratitude is extended as well to the Principal of Sehole Combined School Mr. Cebisa. Special appreciation goes to Miss Ntombenhle Prisca Hlengwa the HOD for languages at Sehole Combine School for her untiring help in proof reading the bulk of my script. I do not undermine the contribution made by Mrs. Nqabeni the HOD for Science Department at Sehole for her assistance in the compilation the research statistics. Thank you very much madam.

This research is the work of many people. I could not have managed to provide the necessary information without the assistance of the many informants who willingly gave their time and knowledge of siNguni culture and tradition towards the compilation of this work. Your willingness to let me into the sanctity of your homes and your rituals is highly appreciated.

The atmosphere conducive to studying is something that one learns at a young age. I was blessed to grow among aMancadi of Umzimkhulu the real pioneers of academic excellence in the area; it is from them that I learned to appreciate the importance of education and religion. Among them I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the late Miss. Mtobhi Hellena Mncadi my maternal aunt who spent all her finances growing us up and educating us. Mncadi aunty!

DEDICATION

Jesus Christ Son of the living God to you I dedicate this thesis during this your year which marks my 51st birthday and the 21st anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. I dedicate it to your Church eternally present in the world, earnestly and always seeking to find you her beloved Lord within the traditions, cultures and customs of the different people who were all fashioned in your likeness.

Tsile Nkosingiphile Makhanya, your untimely death on the 17th April 1996 took from me the honour of academic glory, because as the Chancellor, presented me with my Masters Degree, your tragic death was being announced to your parents Sandile and Phumzile who were with me at the time. It was then that I pledged myself to continue with my studies in your memory and thus celebrate the friendship that your family shared with me. Please dear one say, in proxy for me: 'Soli Deo Gloria'.

To Mrs. Regiswindis maMncadi, my dear mother and my earthly inspiration I say: 'I wish to share this joy with you'. You taught me to appreciate the goodness and beauty of small things especially when they are shared. Your four roomed house Number 465 P. Section at Umlazi Township was never too small for all of us your children and the many cousins and friends who shared your love's wealth. Please Mncadi, Mantshonga, Rhubu! accept my dedication of this thesis to you. May anyone who reads it remember that without you, the old fashioned mother who has time even for the sixth child this thesis is non-existent. "*Ukwanda kwaliwa umthakathi Bayede Mah!*"

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