

8 Micro and macro intergenerational oral communication in the Zion Christian Church



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Introduction

This chapter looks at the cultural significance of poetry that is presented orally within the Zion Christian Church (ZCC). While such poetry belongs to the African-Initiated Church's oral tradition, my method of analysing this mode of oral tradition is one that assumes that as a source of oral history; oral data are situated within specific cultures. It is as a result of this vantage point that historians like Prins (1991: 119) could observe that historians should not presume serial time in dealing with oral traditions of different peoples. He cautions that 'serial time is not the only sort of time that men use' (1991: 119). The other Western hegemonic approach of history writing that Prins (1991: 119) would like to see changing is one in which change is seen as the main index of historical content because 'there are other things than change to explain'.

My approach is thus a close analysis of the poetry aspect of the ZCC oral tradition, using the oral historical method. Leavy (2011: 4) separates the oral tradition from other kinds of traditions that people may have by stressing that 'an oral tradition is one in which stories are passed down through the generations'. Oral history is 'a method of collecting narratives from individuals for the purpose of research' (Leavy 2011: 4). Ontologically oral history as a research method assumes that 'research is a process, not an event' where 'we build meaning through the generation of an interview narrative, and the analysis and interpretation of that narrative' (Leavy 2011: 7). Epistemologically, in the oral history method 'researchers and participants are placed on the same plane' and researchers are 'not conceptualized as "the knowing party" with full authority over knowledge production' (Leavy 2011: 8).

Prins (1991: 120) makes a helpful distinction between two major types of oral source. The first is 'personal reminiscence' which he

describes as 'oral evidence specific to the life experiences of the informant' (1991: 120). The second is oral tradition that is 'systematically and dependently related to the reproduction of social structure', which he adopts from the theorist Durkheim (Prins 1991: 121). As the ZCC is an organization and not an individual, my focus in analysing the content of its oral tradition will be on its usefulness in reproducing the social structure of the organization. It is from looking microscopically at the ZCC social structure as it is reflected in its oral tradition that I shall proceed macroscopically to look for reflections of the culture of the people who belong to its majority membership and thus give the organization a specific cultural identity.

Oral tradition can be further subdivided into four types according to whether it is free and formulaic as in names and proverbs, free and narrative as in recollections of historical and other information by research participants, frozen and poetic as in poetry learnt by rote and passed from generation to generation, or free and epic as in poetry composed by a creative mind using data from the oral tradition (Prins 1991: 121). The ZCC oral poetry I shall be looking at as preserved in audio recordings and transcripts published in its official newsletter named *ZCC Messenger* will be analysed using the criteria outlined earlier. It is important to note that 'the main problems of use and misuse of oral tradition relate to traditions not learnt by rote: epics and narratives' (Prins 1991: 123). Narratives transmit 'traditions of genesis, dynastic histories and accounts of social organization' (Prins 1991: 125).

It will be interesting to check the content of the narrative parts of the oral poetry of the ZCC against the authoritative historical accounts by writers such as Mafuta (2010), Lukhaimane (1980) and Anderson (2001), which employed 'modern' historiography. In order to check the modern historical accounts by the writers mentioned here, oral accounts by elderly members of the ZCC, narrative in their form collected by ZCC leadership and published in *ZCC Messenger*, will be explored. ZCC poetry analysed in this chapter was recorded by the church across the three generations of its leadership since its founding in 1910.

Signs of continuity in the praise poem of the current ZCC bishop

The title of this poem recorded on audio tape and published in the official newsletter by the ZCC is 'Ramarumo Mohwaduba'. Ramarumo is a praise name for the current ZCC head, His Grace the Rt. Rev. Bishop

Dr Barnabas Lekganyane. Mohwaduba, too, is not the bishop's surname. It is a clan name of a broad cluster of Sotho families who venerate the buffalo, whose domestic equivalent is a cattle head. For this reason, when the Lekganyane family members are praised in a manner aligned to Northern Sotho cultural practice, references to them by the totems of cattle head and buffalo are used interchangeably.

Such a traditional emphasis on the clan name or totem in praising African leaders of outstanding stature like each of the ZCC bishops coming from the Lekganyane dynasty serves seamlessly to superimpose the lauded attributes of earlier leaders on to those succeeding them. For this reason, traditionally praise poems do not belong to individuals. Although some parts may be added or subtracted as the praise poems pass down generations, some formulae remain constant, thus paying tribute not only to the individual but also to the entire clan or dynasty. The very same poem now used to pay tribute to the current ZCC head was used to pay homage also to his father, Bishop Edward Lekganyane, except for a few lines that the gifted praise singer adapts from time to time. The praise singer, Petrus Molemane, lived from the days of the founder Bishop Engenas Lekganyane, through to Bishop Edward Lekganyane's reign, up to the early parts of Bishop Barnabas's period. The lines of the oral epic alluding to the founding of the church in 1910 by Bishop Engenas Lekganyane bear testimony to the fact that the same praise poem was used to praise Bishop Engenas during his days, followed by minor adaptations when Bishop Edward Lekganyane assumed leadership of the ZCC in 1948 upon his father's death.

When I compared the taped (*ZCC Church Choir Volume 1 & 2, 1990*) and printed (*ZCC Messenger*, September 1985: 4–5) versions of the praise poem, I noticed that three lines from the original oral rendition were omitted in the printed version. These are:

Gola mogolo ramalala a gola,

Ramahliwa a gola,

Ramahliwa a bolelela ditšhaba go loka.

Grow, one who grows all night, 23

One who grows all day,

One who teaches right all day to nations, 25.

These omitted lines are preceded by and organically expand on the lines:

Ge e le go thakga o thakgile,

O thakgetše Molepo le Mamabolo,

As for doing good you have done good, 13

You did good to Molepo and Mamabolo,

O thakgetšc le Makgowa a Mahwibidu,
 Mohwaduba' Mmaphaka' Monarc;
 Mokgoši wa gago,
 O kwešc Moše wa mawatle,
 Amerika le Yuropa di a Ila,
 Ge e le Jerusalem a o gakiwec,
 Maphutha dišhaba,
 Ke ra makgoka a kgokolla.

You did good even to the red
 whites.
 You a Hwaduba of Mmaphaka of
 buffalo;
 Your surging presence, 17
 Reverberates across the seas,
 America and Europe groan,
 You Jerusalem are petrified,
 By he, nations' sanctuary, 21
 He who ties to untie.

The beginning of the praise epic, entitled 'Ramarumo Mohwaduba' ('Ramaruno of Hwaduba Clan'), up to the lines reproduced earlier, has these lines:

Re e go lotšha Morena Lekganyane,
 Leggansha dišhaba,
 Morena wa kganya ya Sione,
 Re re thobela Morena.
 Re re Morena Lekganyane,
 Golela godimo;
 Mogolo wa go gola re robetše,
 Magoši le narena,
 Ba re ba tsoga ba hwešc a nabile;
 Ga ke go rorišc Morena Lekganyane,
 O rorile –
 O rorišcwe ke mošomo wa gago.
 Exulted by own toil.

We salute you King Lekganyane, 1
 Luminer of nations,
 King exuding Zion glory,
 We say thobela King.
 We say, King Lekganyane, 5
 Tower skyward;
 Elder who sprouts while we
 slumber,
 With rulers and kings,
 Waking in your mazy spread;
 I am not lauding you, King
 Lekganyane, 10
 You are lofty –
 Exulted by own toil.

The praise singer whose performance was recorded first on vinyl in the 1960s and later on audio tape in the collection *ZCC Church Choir Volume 1 & 2* in 1990 performs the praise poem of the ZCC head in the same fashion used in oral literature by praise singers of traditional African leaders. Lines 1 and 4 salute in terms similar to the Zulu *bayedc* used traditionally in praising Shaka and other Zulu kings, this time using the Northern Sotho equivalent *thobela*. This is because the ZCC headquarters are in an area where the overwhelming majority is Sotho-speaking black Africans.

For a leader in the northern province of South Africa heading a Christian religious organization with a stronghold in southern Africa

to be associated with the holiness of Zion/Jerusalem in Israel is significant. This not only reveals that the ZCC headed by the bishop is, as Lukhaimane (1980) observes, a supra-tribal structure. It stretches the influential sphere of the bishop and ZCC globally, though with an African identity exemplified by words like 'king' and 'thobela', whereby the notion of a great leader cannot be divested of majestic supremacy similar to that of a traditional king. Hence, we have references by ZCC followers to the three generations of bishops starting with Engenas Lekganyane both as bishop and as *kgōši/king* (see Lukhaimane 1980).

When in line 20 the praise singer describes the huge Israeli city of Jerusalem as baffled by the transference of Christian glory historically associated with her to a tiny city in rural Mamabolo in the northern recesses of South Africa, cohesion weaving the long praise epic together is achieved. Allusions to Jerusalem of biblical fame cohere with images elicited by phrases from earlier lines like 'exuding Zion glory' and 'sprouts while we slumber' in lines 3 and 7, respectively. After lines 14 and 15 have credited the bishop and ZCC with use of the Gospel to banish darkness from South African blacks and whites, represented respectively by the phrases 'Molepo and Mamabolo' and 'red whites', the lines 'Reverberates across the seas' (18), 'America and Europe groan' (19) and 'By he, nations' sanctuary' (21) yield an overriding image of the ZCC as expanding her mission inexorably from the soil of King Molepo and King Mamabolo to America and Europe. From being a supra-tribal black South African Christian church, the ZCC is now painted as a multi-racial, multi-national organization.

After the ZCC praise singer has charted the demographic constituents and contours of the ZCC thus, the lines that follow revert to the beginning of the ZCC in 1910 by its founder Engenas Lekganyane. Makgoka is the praise name by which Bishop Engenas Lekganyane is known immortally.

E re nka be o be Makgoka
 Wa go kgokela ruri;
 O tla šala le bafe Makgoka,
 O tla boela gape dithabeng tša Sione,
 Go yo rapela, go phuta setšhaba,
 Ge e le mo setšhaba se timela,
 Go timela baetapele!

O that you had been a Tier, 23
 Who ties for ever;
 With what people shall you remain, Tier,
 Shall you clamber again the
 mounts of Zion, 26
 To supplicate, to amass the
 throngs,
 For congregants go astray,
 It is leaders who wander away? 29.

The central lines 26 and 27 state the historical fact of Engenas, after his call in 1910 (see Lukhaimane 1980; Mafuta 2010) praying on the mountain of Zion in Moria, South Africa. Zion is not the original name of the mountain. Engenas renamed the mountain Zion after founding the church to signify Christian ties with Zion in Israel. In the ZCC founder's prayers on Mount Zion, he asked God to send him people that he could teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to (Lukhaimane 1980; Mafuta 2010). As congregants (line 28) and leaders (line 29) within the congregation typically veer into aberration despite the ZCC founding bishop's hard work to show them the way of the Lord, the performer expresses a paradoxical wish that after the ZCC bishop had converted people to Christianity such people would not have remained with a choice either to continue following Christian ways or to revert to dark ways. It is an aspect of the Christian Gospel that human beings differ from all other creation by virtue of having a choice. The praise singer's complaint thus serves to reveal a thorough knowledge by the ZCC bishop of Christian principles.

The previous lines are followed by the oral performer's request for forgiveness from God, trusting this to the ZCC bishop's prayers. He advances as a mitigating factor the fact that unlike heaven, the earth is a place of sin, tempting the children of God to forsake the teachings of Christianity:

Re rapelele Morena Lekganyane, Legodimo le lefase ga di tshwane;	Pray for us, King Lekganyane, 30 Heaven and earth are not the same;
Re a go lotšha; Tebernikele ya Sione re re e tšile,	We humble ourselves before you; The tabernacle of Zion is here with us,
Tebernikele ya Sione e tšile e se na sebopego, E tla bogwa ke bohle, E tla bogwa ke meloko le meloko, E tla bogwa le ke ngwana wa lesea.	Tabernacle of Zion came without form, To be beheld by all, To be beheld by this and coming generations, It shall catch even the eye of a babe, 37.

The oral performer's metonymic hallowing of the ZCC bishop to the point of bestowing on him a halo of holiness should be interpreted in the African cultural convergence of respect for a good leader with a god-like worship, as explicated in Lukhaimane's (1980) study of the ZCC. From an African cultural perspective such a regard for the king or any

leader accorded the stature of a king is ethical. That is why Shai's (2006) biographical study of the Rain Queen Modjadji points the reader to the traditional belief of Modjadji's subjects that the Queen's unhappiness could lead to famine or other kinds of pestilences plaguing the nation, for a benevolent African monarch is traditionally seen to possess god-like supernatural powers. The praise singer understandably asks the ZCC bishop vicariously to forgive congregants' sins.

Pervading biblical allusions continue to tie the black South Africa-founded Christian denomination to the mission of Christ and sanctity embodied in Israel's Jerusalem/Zion, seen in the repeated word 'tabernacle'. According to the oral performer the new tabernacle of South Africa-based Zion is of mystical beauty perceived more by the human soul than physical eye (shown in the phrase 'catch even the eye of a babe' in line 37), with supernal power to rivet all mankind due to its quality to transcend physical form. As the ZCC tabernacle is 'to be beheld by this and coming generations' (line 26), through its historical Christianity is heightened to invoke the ideal in order to satisfy the human need to hope for a paradise by means of which the frailties of this world will be defeated. According to Africanist writers like Abraham (1962) and Mphahlele (2002), the African cultural view of human life and death is that of life continuing beyond death, wrongdoing being corrected by intervention of ancestors during the carnal life of the ancestors' progeny, and an afterlife that is fantastically of ever-lasting bliss. It is not difficult to see that the ZCC notion of an afterlife portrayed by the oral performer is the Africanist one in which sins are cleansed from the congregation by the bishop while the congregants are still alive, so that in their idea of death there is no alien cultural notion of hell.

The redeeming nature of ZCC-style Christian Gospel is depicted in hopeful terms that lean on the traditional mission of the Gospel to banish darkness. Lines 38 to 76 that follow testify to this.

Taba yena A e ke e ngwalelwe meloko Ye e sa tlogo go tswalwa, Le re go bona, Bošego bo fedile, Ga bo sa tla hlwela bo e ba gona; Bohlale bo hloka maelelo, Ditau di fedile meno, Kganya e retra ke bohle; Morena Lekganyane,	May this matter 38 Be written down for generations Yet to be born, Tell them, Night is finished, 42 It won't be any longer; Wit is frozen stagnant, Lions' teeth are filed, All extol light; King Lekganyane,
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Ke molato wa gago;
 O tla re ruta go loka,
 E seng ka bobbe le ge e le kgalefó,
 Gobane modiša wa dinku ga a bolaye,
 Ka mehla o bofa tše šohlagó,
 O bofa a humela digwahla matolo,

O kgoka tše šohlagó,
 Makgoka Morena Lekganyane,
 Thobela Morena.
 Hlaba lešatši le legolo,
 Magola a hlaba,
 Letšatši magoleša le legodimo,
 Letšatši mahloka sereto;
 Letšatši o senyetša batho boroko,
 Mola e se ke ya ba wena,
 Batho nka be re robetše,
 Go buša bošego bja ga malala a putuka,
 Bošego bja go re bo e sa,
 Lefisifi ka katakata ntsweng.

It is your doing;
 You shall teach us righteousness,
 Not through evil or bluster, 50
 For a good shepherd does not kill,
 He ties those that break the kraal,
 He bandages tightening knees of
 the invalid,
 He ties those that break the kraal,
 Tier, King Lekganyane,
 Thobela Lord. 56
 Rise high o great day,
 Rise you who grows with dawn,
 Sun that kindles the heavens,
 Sun defying praise;
 You sun spoil people's sleep, 71
 Had it not been you,
 We would be fast asleep,
 Letting rummaging night reign,
 Night that as it fades,
 Makes dark recede battle 76.

Lines 48 and 49, respectively, attribute the ascendance of light to Bishop Lekganyane's teachings and organization as well as describe the world with such light as a paradise in which 'Lions' teeth are filed' (line 45), where without the ZCC bishop's diligent guidance the followers will be disorientated. In line with what Shai (2006) observes about the pragmatic and visionary ascriptions of a traditional ruler, traditionally the African king is expected to possess extraordinary genius that enables him or her to guide and protect his or her followers as a parent does with his or her children. The image of Bishop Lekganyane here tallies with such an African conception of a king or any significant leader.

Congruous with the feature of African cultures hinted earlier, to expect ancestors and the Supreme Being to recompense the wrongdoing of mortals while they still live in the physical world, the oral praise singer of the ZCC counterpoints the pleasant invocation of worldly paradise with that of a vividly drawn worldly purgatory:

Nto ye nngwe e etla,
 Ke nto ye e se nago lebitšo,
 Ke mantšhekgedile,
 Wa bošego le mosegare,

Some chimera is looming, 77
 Thing without name,
 Thing of spiky tinklings,
 Pounding by day and by night,

Ke nto ya go ja bana le batho ba bagolo,
 Yo e tšago mo feta,
 O tla ba le lehlogonolo,
 Gobane o tla dula le bahu,
 Empa badimo ba sa dule le motho
 no one. 85

Thing gorging young and old, 81
 One whom it spares,
 Will be lucky,
 For he will live with the dead,
 Though the dead live with
 no one. 85

Apart from these lines conjuring up the shape of an anthropomorphic monster sent by the ancestors and Supreme Being to bring back balance among human beings with the harmony of the universe they also paint a picture true to the Africanist understanding of a reality that does not separate the physical from the spiritual, the animate from the inanimate, the empirical from the mystical, etc. That is why line 84 contains the phrase 'live with the dead' bridging the phenomena of life and death, normally known to exist in mutual exclusion. The phrase 'live with the dead' not only defies western Manichean binaries, but reveals that the world view represented by the oral performer is steeped in African cultures that put human beings and the 'living dead' at the centre of their cosmology (see Mphahlele 2002). This, according to African writers like Rafapa (2010), is the fabric of African cosmology which leaders of South African African-Initiated Churches are known to invoke in order to show Christianity is devoid of an African outlook.

In the lines that follow, the oral rendition sketches the anguish caused in non-ZCC members of ambient African communities, whose unmediated belief in traditional religion leads to temperamental anguish. The combined effect of the phrases 'an *inyanga*' (line 89) and 'we have lost it' (line 90) is that of associating unmediated traditional religion with loss, in the light of the advent of the new Jerusalem of ZCC and the gospel heralded by it. This is seen when a visit to the traditional healer yields no respite from rampant deaths dealt human beings by the God-decreed monster:

O ile go e kwa a tlaia pelo,
 A hlano!a dinao,
 Moroma a gara thogwana,
 Ra re ge e le ngaka,
 E ka hlolela re palešwé;
 Mme a boa a nyamile pelo,
 Gobane a hlokile motlaši,

Someone got vexed to hear
 this, 86
 And then hurried,
 Till speed tossed up the skirt,
 And we opined if an *inyanga*,
 Were to stop the deaths we have
 lost it;
 Yet he returned with a sad heart,
 For he had not found one in agree-
 ment,

mothetši a ditaba,

A ditaba tau ya go ja e sa kgore,

Sebata se se nago boya;

Tseba legodimo,

Ga le a ka la ahlolwa le batho.

Re a go lotšha,

Morena wa kganya ya Sione,

Re re thobela Morena,

Marobathota a kgomo

Lepelle la Mmamogodi,

One with agreeing ears to

listen, 92

News of lion eating with leaping
hungers;

Predator without body hair;

Know that heavens,

Can never be judged with men.

We salute you, 97

King exuding Zion glory,

We say *thobela* King,

Breaker of bull hump

In Lepelle River of Mmamogodi,

101

As those nearby witnessed,

They hid their faces saying,

One with Cow totem, mother of

nations, is coming.

Ba ile ba re ge ba go bona,

Ba ikhurumetša difahlogo ba re,

Kgomo mma 'a ditšhaba o ye tla.

The imagery of motherly love and protection in the words 'Cow' and 'mother of nations' in the closing line of the long oral praise epic signifies that if human beings were to defer to the conquering crusade of God's new kingdom coming through the ZCC leader, a paradise would be experienced on earth.

The content of this praise epic departs from some deeds of the present generation leader of the ZCC in order to recall the history of how the Church was founded in 1910 and later heightened during the reign of the second bishop. Timeless formulae that transcend individual ascription are a vehicle for transporting the memory of the audience to the past. These are what Prins (1991: 123) describes as 'crystal of wording' that 'remain unchanged within a changing kaleidoscope of structures adapted to particular purposes'. These are words like 'Mohwaduba' 'Mmaphaka' 'Monare' (line 16); 'Sione' (lines 26, 33 and 34); 'Makgoka' (lines 22, 23, 24, 25, 54, 55 and 98); 'Morena Lekganyane' (lines 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 30, 47 and 55); 'Thobela Morena' (lines 4, 5, 10, 56 and 99); 'Re a go lotšha' (lines 1, 32 and 97); 'Morena wa kganya ya Sione' (lines 3 and 98) and 'Kgomo' (lines 100 and 104).

With regard to narrative parts of the epic that by their nature are not constant but vary in keeping with the purpose of the poem's structure that is adapted to the present times of an organization, these stand out and perform a separate function from that of the history conjuring formulae. The present-reconstructing narrative parts of the ZCC praise

epic below distinctively dwell on Bishop Edward Lekganyane's second-generation segment in the continuum of ZCC leadership now in its third generation. Clearly there are bound to be in the praise epic individual leader-specific qualities that set the achievements and character of the specific leader apart from his predecessor and successor. These are parts that offer the performer leeway to apply his or her creativity and expertly compose lyrics of his own, which the historical formulae should only serve to frame within the epic mode.

Continuity and rupture during the second-generation ZCC leadership of Bishop Edward Lekganyane

The poem below has not been reduced to writing by the ZCC, forcing me to transcribe from a taped oral rendition of it. The oral performer starts by naming it 'Sereto sa Bishop Edward Lekganyane' ('Praise poem for Bishop Edward Lekganyane'). Bishop Edward is the second-generation ZCC leader who took over after his father's death in 1948 (Lukhaimane 1980; Anderson 2001). When Bishop Edward died in 1967, his son, the current ZCC bishop ascended the throne (Lukhaimane 1980; Anderson 2001; Mafuta 2010).

Ga e le ka direkto,

Re a mo phopholetša,

Re re ke Edward ke Morena

Lekganyane,

Ke Mohwaduba wa Mmaphaka

Monare,

Re re a a ratana marena,

Bošego a a etelana,

A a rera sephiring,

A rera ka lebitšo la gago.

Morena Lekganyane,

Re re ka mahlo ke e bone kgoši,

With praises,

We merely grope for him,

We say he is Edward he is Lord

Lekganyane,

He is a Hwaduba of Mmaphaka of

buffalo,

We say rulers lick each other, 5

Paying each other visits by night,

They conspire underground,

They rue your name.

Lord Lekganyane,

We say I saw a ruler with naked

eyes, 10

Clad in sack and blowing plaintive
horn,

E re batho re tshwenyegile,

Re tshwentše ke pitša e tala mafapanya,

E re fapanštša le batswadi,

Ke phefo ye kgolo mahube,

Ye e tšamago e kgobakantšha ditšhaba,

Declaring anguish among people,

Cursing the green pot sowing gulfs,

Ripping us from parents,

Blasting wind dawn,

Raking in nations,

Ditšhiwana ga re hologe re kokobetše,
 Re emetše go phetha diporofeto,
 Ditšhabeng tša Sione,
 Gobane re mo dumetše motho
 yo moso Lekganyane;

Gobane ba bašweu ba e tlišitše mmetc,
 Ya mmakgodi 'a kgookgoo,
 Re re dumela Morena Lekganyane,
 Kgoši maaga a rutla,
 O agile sefateng sa Kwenane,
 Mokgahlong ga Molepo le Mamabolo;

O duletše go hioma sefoka,
 Folaga ye tala ya boReuben Lekgasa,
 Ngwanabo seahlola ka pula le maru,
 Re re ahlola Morena Lekganyane,

Mohlala wa pula o go wena,
 Re gana phefo fela,
 Phefo matšama a roba dihlahle makala,
 Naga ya šala e apotše.
 Mola e se ke ya ba go ja thapo
 ye ntsho mogolo,
 Nka be a re porofetela mangaka
 'a koma,
 A phulakanya mašoba,
 A re epela dihlahle re alafa;
 Ge e le ditaola di gakile barei ba tšona,

Di bolaiile nanane,
 Pheko ya dithebele e re,
 E yong botšiša Bible se lo sa go seba,
 E sebile Kgoši Moraswi e sebile
 Setlakalane,
 cautions for Settlakalane
 Ya re ge e seba ya šupetša
 marena bophelo,
 Ya re Kgomo e tšwa Leboya,
 We orphans too low to gain,
 Shelved to live prophecies,
 Amid Zion throngs, 19
 For we believe in black man Lekg-
 anyane;
 For whites came with truth,
 Nothing but the truth,
 We greet you Lord Lekganyane,
 King that erects and breaks,
 Resident in the Kwenane pass, 25
 Between Kings Molepo and Mam-
 abolo;
 With mission to hoist laurels
 Green flag of Reuben of Makgasa
 regiment,
 Sibling of judge wielding rain and
 clouds,
 We prostrate to your verdict Lord
 Lekganyane,
 Trail or rain rests in you,
 Only storms we loathe, 32
 Storms of broken boulders,
 Stripping land naked.
 Were it not of eating and dark
 string gullet,
 Initiation healers would prophesy
 to us,
 Tearing ground to pitted furrows,
 Digging herbs for our healing;
 Diviners' bones baffle their
 namers,
 They predict defeat, 40
 Remedy bones point to,
 Is perusal of Bible of cautions,
 Cautions for King Moraswi,
 Pointing the rulers towards life,
 Speaking of Cow totem from the
 north,

E a getlagetla e phutha se hlotšago,
 Le se ometšego ditsho,
 E se bokelela GaLeshasha,
 Ga Willie ga morwa lekgowa;
 white man;

Kgomo e buša ka go etiša leje pele;
 Ge e le yena Engenase o bolela
 ka lentšhu,
 O boelela GaMamabolo Bopedi
 Thabakgone,
 Thabakgone of Pedi,
 Go yo phetha dikano.
 Re re Edward Morena Lekganyane,
 Go tla ba lehlogonolo,
 Ba 'a tlang go o bona mmušo wo
 wa gago,
 Gobane batho re a bitšwa re bitšwa
 ke lehu,
 Lehu madula a bogwa lehu nka
 be le tšwaelwa,
 Nka be re le apara la diala,
 Mohla re tlogang lefaseng ra lokelela,
 column, 60
 Ra bina kgotso mpogo koša ye mpsha,
 Koša ye e se nago leepo.
 Edward Morena Lekganyane,
 A o tla re rapelela go yo fihla
 Le wena mafelelong Morena,
 Ge e le mona re eja ke seja,
 Lehu madula a bogwa Morena?
 Ge e le sebe sona mphapantšha,
 Se mphapantšha le wena,
 Morena wa kganya ya Sione,
 Ge o re bileditše go loka,

Se re ntšha lešakang la gago;
 Mmušo wa gago morwa Khutane,
 Re be re o letetše ka go sa feleng,
 Empa ge e le lefase le re thetšitše,
 us,
 Le re fapantšha le wena morwa
 Khutane.

Actively saving that which limps,
 And those with stiff joints, 47
 Gathering all at Leshasha's abode,
 At shelter of Willie son of the

The Cow reigning with the rock;
 As for Engenas he speaks through
 the word,
 Turning back to Mamabolo in

To live the covenant.
 We say Edward Lord Lekganyane,
 Blessed are those,
 That will see your kingdom,

For we are beckoned by death,
 Death ever puzzling were it
 scrutable,
 We would adorn in trophies,
 Upon departing earth and wind in

And chant born song mpogo,
 Song with no vile tail.
 Edward Lord Lekganyane,
 We beseech, pray for us to reach
 With you the end of time's Lord,
 For we fall in the eater's mouth,
 Death living always with us?
 As for divider sin,
 It makes me differ with you,
 King exuding Zion glory, 70
 After you have redeemed us to
 righteousness,
 It pulls me out of your kraal;
 Your kingdom son of Khutane,
 We have always awaited,
 Yet as for the world, it has tempted

In the preceding praise epic, dedicated to the second-generation ZCC bishop Edward Lekganyane, there are formulae already encountered in the analysis, earlier, of the praise poem for the third-generation ZCC bishop Barnabas Lekganyane. Some of them are 'Morena Lekganyane' (lines 3, 9, 23, 30 and 54); 'Mohwaduba wa Mmaphaka Monare' (line 4); 'Kgomo' (lines 45 and 50); and 'Morena wa kganya ya Sione' (line 70). The bulk of Bishop Barnabas's praise epic, except for the narrative sections that are attributed specifically to him, was also used to praise the first and second-generation ZCC bishops. The present poem, though dedicated to second-generation Bishop Edward, was used to praise the founder Bishop Engenas, but for the narrative parts referring specifically to him. That this is the case is borne out by the presence of the same formulaic phrases that are in Bishop Barnabas's praise poem.

In the same way as third-generation Bishop Barnabas is uniquely credited with expanding the church beyond South Africa and the continent of Africa in non-formulaic parts of his praise poem, similarly non-formulaic parts of the present poem spell out second-generation Bishop Edward's specific achievement. Lines 1 and 2 of this poem reveal that there is more than meets the eye in Bishop Edward Lekganyane. Although this quality of inexplicable spiritual power is true also for Bishop Edward's predecessor, it has heightened and intensified during Bishop Edward's rule. Hence the content of the two opening lines of the poem. Bishop Edward's reference as 'morwa Khutane' (lines 73 and 76), using second-generation Bishop Engenas's nickname of Khutane instead of the formal Engenas, signifies such a deepening of inscrutable spiritual power, for the meaning of Engenas's nickname is 'One who hides'. In other words, Engenas and Edward prefer to appear in front of their followers like ordinary men while they are actually masking their true, celestial identity. Parts of the taped poem that single out Edward's most outstanding achievement of drawing his followers away from the spell of traditional healers known also for their use of divining bones are lines 35 to 49. One reason for traditional healers having lost their former noble role in society, now overtaken by the ZCC leader, is that they started lying to their patients and spreading unwarranted malice to thrust battles in the midst of society, as long as they extorted money to satisfy their own greed. This is revealed in the lines 'Mola e se ke ya ba go ja thapo ye ntsho mogolo' ('Were it not of eating and dark string gullet') and 'Nka be a re porofetela mangaka 'a koma' ('initiation healers would prophesy to us').

In the way described earlier, both rupture and continuity are represented by parts of the praise epic dedicated to Bishop Edward Lekganyane.

Conclusion

Rafapa (2010) describes the Zion Christian Church mores at the least as an abrogation of Western Christianity to imbue it with African Humanist values that have, through history, proven to be the survival kit of Africans whose identity was being smothered by the alien cultural sensibility of the protagonists of apartheid. Hence the basic commonness with Shembe's Church of the Nazarites, which Pongweni (2000: 195) and Anderson (2001: 101) credit with attempts at spiritual and cultural survival of the underprivileged in its heyday. Anderson (2001: 101) furthermore highlights this culturally and economically affirming tenet of the ZCC throughout its existence in his observation that 'the ZCC has emerged from the fear of a powerful and oppressive regime to attempt to play a role in the radical changes that have taken place'. As a result of this place of the ZCC on the fringes of power and its holistically salvaging message for the underprivileged, Matuta (2010: ii) is able to describe the consequences of this in his remark that

empowering its adherents economically through a religious soteriology, the ZCC has become an example of a trend that is shaping the Global South and is reviving the interest of social scientists and theologians to further investigate the impact of religious and theological formulations on the economic conduct of individuals.

Because the ZCC is a church, all the social and nation building roles described earlier start with spiritual salvation borne of a distinct African cultural identity that excludes the traditional use of healers, drinking of traditional and other beer and taking of any drugs including smoking. The reality constructed by the ZCC among Africans is forged through adjustment towards insights the praise epics discussed earlier contain. As a researcher my approach was that of reconciling my horizon, categories and values with those of the poets and the organization they present. A horizon is 'a set of cultural and personal categories and values' which any researcher shapes an understanding of researched entities 'based to a certain extent on them' (Michrina and Richards 1996: 28). Values reveal to a person what his or her culture 'prefers, what is allowed, rejected, or is forbidden; they indicate what is beautiful, good, fun, helpful, distasteful, bad, boring, or destructive', while 'categories indicate the most important qualities of things' (Michrina and Richards 1996: 28).

This is the oral history approach outlined at the beginning of this chapter, which in my view is reconcilable with what Michrina and Richards (1996: 28) refer to as a 'systematic investigative method called dialogical hermeneutics'. According to Michrina and Richards (1996: vii), the word 'dialogical' refers to 'the use of dialogue – dyadic conversation, negotiation of an understanding' – while the word 'hermeneutics' refers to 'the construction of a description of a whole scene or phenomenon through an incremental analysis of information', leading to a holistic description through incremental analysis of dialogue. Dialogue in this case is the semantics of the formulaic parts of the praise epics signifying historical and cultural continuity, as well as the meanings of the lyrical parts of the poetry performances defining the character and achievements of a specific ZCC leader and the body of the ZCC at a certain juncture. These complementary functions of ZCC epic poetry coincide with Prins's (1991: 123) definition of the epic as 'heroic poetry composed orally, according to rules . . . written down subsequently' with a structure that is 'strong enough to transcend' the process of writing and later oral modifications, having a 'fixed form'. In keeping with Prins's definition, the ZCC oral poetry analysed in this chapter performs the category of researched data called the 'narrative' in the oral tradition analysed by means of the oral history method.

Of significance is the achievement of ZCC micro intergenerational communication by means of the endemically recognizable epic structure of the poems analysed above to magnify into a macro intergenerational communication that is an index of the evolving cultural outlooks of the African communities in its ambience, who are not necessarily members of the church. This is achieved by means of the extraorganizational cultural content of the ZCC oral poetic performances, hinted at by the descriptions of the ZCC represented by the writers Lukhaimane (1980), Mphahlele (2002), Mafuta (2010), Rafapa (2010) and Anderson (2001). It becomes clear from the writings of these researchers on the ZCC that to talk about the evolving cultural identity of the ZCC is to talk about the cultures of the African communities around it that have evolved across generations. The communication of these cultural traits internally within the ZCC by means of the oral tradition is tantamount to macro intergenerational oral communication of the greater community within which the ZCC operates.



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