

**THE COMMUNICATIVE POWER OF BLOOD
SACRIFICES: A PREDOMINANTLY SOUTH AFRICAN
PERSPECTIVE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**

BY

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, the researcher discusses the topic: “The Communicative Power of Sacrifices: A Predominantly South African Perspective with Special Reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews”. It investigates blood sacrifices among Xhosa people, and includes some Zulu and Tsonga thoughts, as well as a few examples from elsewhere in Africa. The research findings support the fact that both animal and human blood sacrifices are still performed today.

The comparison between biblical blood sacrificial rituals and African ones reveals striking similarities and a few differences. The existence of such similarities poses a pertinent question: to determine whether or not African traditional religious sacrifices, like biblical sacrifices, could also be acknowledged as originating from God. This seems indeed difficult, because such an affirmation would suggest that God has revealed Himself through African traditional religious sacrificial rituals, and would therefore call into question the unique and exclusive biblical claim to revelation.

Neyrey’s (2005) model of benefactor-client, benefactor-patron has been instrumental in illustrating the mutually influential communication and exchange existing between deities and their worshippers. In order to obtain benefactions from superiors, subordinates have to use inducement and influence - inducement has to do with all sorts of gifts and services, while influence refers to reasons for doing what one does, hence requests, petitions and the like. In religious terms,

inducement is called sacrifice, and influence is called prayer. The intensification of the materialisation of anticipated benefits by worshippers entails the multiplication of interactive contact through blood sacrificial rituals, as well as the strengthening of ties between deities and their worshippers, creating a seemingly unbreakable bond. The results of this study's qualitative, empirical research in Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and North West provinces have substantiated the above ideas. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the communicative power of the blood sacrifice of Jesus provided worshippers with eternal salvation, forgiveness of sins and the removal of guilt feelings. Unlike Old Testament animal blood sacrifices, Jesus' once and for all blood sacrifice has communicated powers for soteriological, psychological and sociological benefits. This superior power should be scholarly defended through amicable dialogue.



SUMMARY

In this dissertation, the *communicative power of blood sacrifices: A predominantly South African perspective with special reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews* has been investigated. The researcher has focused mainly on blood sacrificial performances among the Xhosa people, as well as some Zulu and Tsonga peoples' sacrificial ideas, including a few examples from elsewhere in Africa.

Blood sacrifices have proved to be a way of life in all the contexts investigated. They have served as media of communication with supernatural powers in the metaphysical world, and as a means for acquiring material and spiritual benefactions from them. In the process of blood sacrificial performances, reciprocity is viewed as a fixed, ubiquitous element of the benefactor - client relationship. When a man provides a deity with a benefit (blood sacrifice in this specific case), he aims at serving and pleasing that deity. If the giver's intention is conveyed to the deity and stirs in him a joyful response, then he obtains what he was seeking.

Therefore, it is quite obvious that, in order to receive benefactions, subordinates have to use inducement and influence. In the language embedding religion, inducement is called sacrifice and influence is called prayer. The entire process in all the contexts considered in this dissertation can be assimilated in a scheme of exchanges and compensations through power and effects. Power seems to

invite and reciprocate power, and effects of power demand more power. The researcher has shown that there are many similarities between biblical and African traditional religious animal and human blood sacrifices. However, there are also a few dissimilarities. Biblical animal blood sacrifices are acknowledged as originating from God (YWH: the God of the Bible), if viewed from a Christian perspective. However, similarities in blood sacrificial performances in both contexts seem to support the idea of one unique origination, that is, the God of the Bible (YWH). The comparison between blood sacrifices in both the Old Testament and African traditional religion and blood sacrifices in the Epistle to the Hebrews has revealed the fact that the blood-sacrifice of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, is by far superior and more effective than Old Testament and African traditional religious blood-sacrifices. It fulfilled God's will, communicating super-abundant power for consecration and sanctification, and it has also achieved eternal forgiveness of sins for mankind by removing sin and guilt. It communicates power for soteriological, psychological, and sociological benefits. Inferentially speaking, this power has transformed millions of men and women who consequently have become centripetal forces in bringing many to the church.

The researcher suggests that the truth of Jesus' once and for all blood sacrifice should be exclusively adhered to and lovingly but convincingly defended at all costs. Theological studies should also aim at influencing various Christian communities by grounding them in the sound biblical teaching in relation to the



effectiveness and all-sufficiency of Jesus' blood sacrifice. As a result, entire communities, even the whole society of the human race, can experience the manifold benefits communicated by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

TEN APPLICABLE KEY TERMS

God, Ancestors, Sacrifice, Communicative, Blood, Salvation, Power,
Forgiveness, Sin and Spirits.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about sacrificial performances within Christendom, in the Bible (Young, 1975; Kodell, 1988), world religions and African traditional religions, including some tribal, traditional religious groups of South Africa (Awolalu, 1973; Ukpong, 1982; Mbiti, 1975; Magesa, 1997 and Ngubane, 1977). It seems as though all the areas connected to sacrificial performances have already been invaded through academic exploration. However, one of the rhetorical questions relevant to all this remains unexploited. This dissertation will attempt to uncover this mystery. But, before this, let us attempt to uncover the meaning, as well as some interpretations, of the concept of sacrifice in general. This study will look at the definition of the concept of sacrifice, the classification of the concept, how it can be classified, instances occurring in everyday life, human and divine benefits of sacrifice, and sacrificial ideologies. It will then go on to discuss sacrificial interpretations, that is, sacrifice as a gift exchange and renunciation, the sacramental sacrificial meal, sacrifice as a communicative act, sacrifice as a purifying power, as well as some spiritualised modes of sacrifice. Following this will be a statement of the problem, outline of the study, motivation for the study, as well as its hypothesis and methodology. Finally, this study will draw conclusions. Therefore, it is appropriate to begin with a definition of the concept of sacrifice.

1.1.1 Definition of the concept of sacrifice

Sacrificial performances play a significant role in the religions of the world. “They are most of the time very complicated ritual performances through which communication between worshippers and spirit beings may be made viable, impeded and severed” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1657). Attempts to define the “concept of sacrifice” have revealed that it is “problematic”, given the fact that such differentiations in “religious phenomena” are known under “sacrifice” as “Jesus’ sacrifice of atonement, votive gifts, and animal sacrifices, that are basically distinct, in the intentions of actors as well as in the main theological picture and faith systems” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1657).

Van Baal claims that there is a difference of meaning between sacrifice and offering: “an offering is that act of presenting something to a supernatural being, a sacrifice an offering accompanied by the ritual killing of the object of the offering” (Van Baal, 1976:161). This meaning seems too narrow, since killing is only applicable to “living beings, animals, human beings and not to some other sacrificial materials such as food stuffs, drink offering and libations”. A “supernatural being with supernatural power” constitutes the most critical element that the worshipper desires to relate to and stay in communion with (Eliade,

1987:544). According to Eliade, bloodless sacrifices also include “consecration of human beings and animals” (Eliade, 1987:546).

A sacrifice is” a cultic act in which objects were set apart or consecrated and offered to a god or some other supernatural power” (Fahert, 1977:128b). Therefore, the ideas of “bloodless and bloody offerings” (sacrifices) are to be taken into account. Blood functions as an important “power-laden substance that brings fertility”; it is moistened over the fields in order to increase the harvest. “Head-hunting and human sacrifices belong to the same complex of ideas and rites”. The compound term “human sacrifices” has to do with all “cultic killings” of human beings. This also includes “self-inflicted death...the complete laying down of one’s life in order to pay a debt or to make atonement” (Obstat, 1967:831). Blood rites are often combined with fertility concepts. Usually, blood sacrifices are primarily made from “domesticated animals” (sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, fowl, horses and camels). The objective of the sacrifice will determine the characteristics of the sacrificial animal. Brightly coloured animal victims are sacrificed to the divinity of the sky, and black animals to the divinity of the “underworld and the dead, or to feared demonic beings” (Eliade, 1987:545-546 - see Zulu sacrificial thoughts later on in this dissertation). Therefore, let us now look at the classification of the concept of sacrifice.

1.1.2 Classification of the concept of sacrifice

The words that are used for the concept of sacrifice are not only clear, but are also ambiguous. In other modern languages, the word for “sacrifice” is not a “scientific concept, but a loan word”, coined from the church Latin word *Operari*: “to serve God through works”. Modern, everyday speech therefore uses the word “sacrifice”, on the one hand, in keeping with Christian moral conceptualizations, for the designation of non-ritualised, ethical activities, distinguished by renunciation, suggesting “painful loss for a higher end”. For instance, one sacrifices a day for one’s family (Ubrurhe, 1996:13). Theological ideologies of renunciation can be re-formed and harnessed for political ends. In sacrificial ideology, the sense and meaning of cultic sacrifice is equated with giving one’s life for the good of the community (Hinnells, 1995:440). For example, one can mention soldiers of a given country in general, and freedom fighters during the apartheid era in South Africa in particular. However, this does not meet the objective of any of this dissertation’s rubrics.

On the other hand, the meaning of the Latin word *victima* passively refers to the “sacrificial animal” that is given without its consent, or through exercising its will, and this “led to the now metaphorical altar of slaughter as ‘road casualty’”, or indeed, that which is produced as a sacrifice of the holocaust, that is, a whole burnt offering” (Hinnells, 1995:439). “This double meaning has been understood against the background of the Christian theology of sacrifice “(Von Stuckrad, 2006:1658). “These ambivalent uses and subtexts of words used for ‘sacrifice’ have led to conceptual confusion. Hence, modern religious studies seem more

precisely orientated in the context of the Latin concept *sacrificium*: sacred action: however, no unitary scientific usage prevails” (Eliade, 1987:544). How can we then classify sacrifices as such?

1.1.3 How can sacrifices be classified?

Sacrificial rituals are classified in accordance with the make-up of the sacrificial materials or how they are used. Nevertheless, one can distinguish between “vegetable sacrifices, animal sacrifices, human sacrifices, bloody and non-bloody sacrifices, or again, immersion sacrifices, drink sacrifices (libations), and sacrifices of annihilation” (Hinnells, 1995:439-440). Typologies have more to do with the actors’ motivations that support “sacrificial rituals; the traditional categories of praise, thanksgiving, impetration, and satisfaction would correspond here” (Eliade, 1995:545). Theoretical works, as well as those concerned with description, “classification and sacrificial types, frequently overlap” if sacrifice is “conceptualized as an action performed by human beings, one effectuating a symbolic exchange with gods or spirits”. Thus, in a “communicative structure then, the ‘connecting’ type of sacrifice versus the ‘dividing’ will be conceived as following: sacrifices are then rituals performed by the actors in order to produce or to discontinue a communication with the sacred region, the divine powers” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1659).

The type of sacrifice that connects the worshipper to a deity is equivalent to “sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving and impetration”. In fact, the material of the sacrifice that generates “connection between human and spirit beings, and in the course of communicative process, human intercourse is withdrawn, destroyed” (Hubert & Mauss, 1968:11). Some examples of a connecting aspect would be the “food sacrifices” in African religions, or votive gifts based on the *Do ut des* concept - “I give in order that you give”. In the “dividing type of sacrifice, the ritual process is set in motion in order to break off the contact with spiritual beings by means of a communicative act” (Obstat, 1967:831).

Thus, in the African rite of the “exchange of heads”, evil, psychic or physical infirmity is transferred from the head of the patient to that of the sacrificial cock-interpreted as a “quest for a homecoming” on behalf of the malevolent spiritual being. The animal is then exposed or slain, that is, offered as a whole to the deity in question (Figge, 1973:131-132). In scapegoat rituals, however, the meal to be eaten by human beings is absent (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1659). What are the occasions for sacrifices in the real world?

1.1.4 Instances occurring in everyday life

Convenient opportunities for sacrifices that emerge in everyday life are as numerous as the circumstances in which human beings are forced to live – here, sacrifices are made in order to secure the benefaction of the deity out of actual need, to give thanks to it (sacrifices of thanksgiving, first fruits, thanksgiving

festivals after harvests), to increase the fertility of the field through the use of sacrificial blood and other matter (“agrarian religion and agrarian magic”), to appease the wrath of the deity or cleanse the community (scapegoat), or to make the dead friendly by placing food and drink offerings on their graves (sacrifices to the dead). Sacrificial acts can also form sets of complicated rituals, for instance, of prophecy: or the “sacrificial reading of the innards of the slain animal, or of initiation or feasts” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1659). A person may then ask: what are the human and divine benefits of sacrifices?

1.1.5 Human and divine benefits of sacrifices

Sacrificial offerings are visibly divided among participants, and symbolically between sacrifice makers and mythic powers. In Africa, during serious crises such as droughts, famine and war, this apportioning can take the form of an independent “eradication sacrifice”. The animal victim is slaughtered in the bush, where the sacrificial meat is completely given to hostile spirit beings. Here, renunciation is a tormenting setback. Sacrificial offerings are not only given to gods, but also made against them, in order to keep them aloof, repelled, reconciled, accorded sacrifices. The “sacrifice of satisfaction” or “sacrifice of the first fruits” helps to control fear: they are moistened, as “the inimical spirits are demonstratively awarded the best or first portion” (Gladigow, 1984). With this in mind, this study will now examine some sacrificial ideologies.

1.1.6 Sacrificial ideologies

Sacrificial rituals underlie a variety of religious worldviews. For instance, the word for sacrifice among the Dogon people of West Africa is *bulu*, “to restore to life”. The reference here is to the idea of bloody sacrifice as a technique for a new distribution of the power of life, *nyama*. The “different linguistic usages betray culture-specific conceptual worlds, and sacrificial ideologies, that cannot be brought under a common denominator”. This diversity caused the downfall of older scientific theories of sacrifice, because they sought to formulate a “general theory of sacrifice” in accordance with a unitary “meaning and end of sacrifice”. This arose “as an illusion and the theoretical construction was already penetrated by Christian conceptions” (Drexler, 1993). However, “ethnographic observation can in no way justify the emphasis on bloody, even on ‘bloodthirsty’ rites of sacrifice that occur in recent theories” (Girard, 1977; Burkert, 1983). From this perspective, the latter must be interpreted as exoticising reception of the “other” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1664). But how should we interpret sacrificial rituals?

1.2 SACRIFICIAL INTERPRETATIONS

Some aspects of sacrificial rituals or “components of the bloody-sacrifice complex” are emphasised in the scientific theories of Burkert (1987) and Girard (1987), as we will see later on in this dissertation, through the slaying, apportioning and sharing of the material of sacrifice.

1.2.1 Sacrifice as a gift exchange and renunciation

In his concept of animism, evolutionist E.B. Taylor defined sacrifice as a gift formed as an exemplar of human social relations: originally, sacrifice was not a selfless gift, but a bribe. In higher evolutionary development, gifts were offered in homage or, in the properly ethical form, out of renunciation. In the animistic view of sacrifice, deities take their nourishment from the substance, essence or soul of the sacrificial material. African sacrificial rites confirm this view, in that the duty of the adherents consists of “giving the gods to eat” (Figge, 1973:90). “Blood, innards, extremities of slain animals, are set before the images of gods, that the gods may consume their ‘essence’. In ethnographic literature, the dynamistic interpretational variant occurred as well, meaning that this kind of sacrifice of foodstuffs is a matter of a reciprocal and magical exchange of power between gods and believers”; thus, the “sacrificial acts of Africans are also ritual techniques of the redistribution of life power, so that the theoretical model in the sense of dynamistic tendencies remains debatable” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1664). At this point, this study will look at the sacramental sacrificial meal.

1.2.2 The sacramental sacrificial meal

William Robertson Smith, a Scottish theologian and Oriental scholar, acknowledged the significance of the sacrificial meal (communion or communal meal) for the creation of the community. He holds that, by way of sharing the collectively slaughtered animal, mystical unification takes place between the worshippers and the deity being revered. “Smith’s speculative theory of the origin of the sacrificial meal influenced Freud’s psychoanalytical interpretations of sacrifice as murder of one’s father, and anthropophagous sacrificial meal” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1664). Smith’s “understanding also influenced the sociological approach of Emile Durkheim, who, like Smith, saw the animal totem as a symbol of the society”. However, “the sacramental eating of God at the Lord’s Supper that Smith did choose as the patron of his theory must be distinguished from the eating with the gods of African festival of sacrificial food” (Von Stuckrad, 2006: 1664). The above reference to communion between worshippers and gods is insufficient without considering the idea of sacrifice as a communicative act.

1.2.3 Sacrifice as a communicative act

The most important interpretation of sacrifice is that of the French sociologists Henry Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1968). They defined sacrifice as a “mediated communication between the profane and the sacred world”: the sacrificial animal, which must first be made sacred, is a means of communication, and the sacrifice itself is a rite of passage between the worlds. “Rites of entry and exit, or sanctification and de-sanctification, place a framework around the actual sacrificial act which climaxed in the slaying of the animal with which the sacred and dangerous ‘energies’ have been released, which now flow out both to the

holy and to the persons performing the sacrifice”. Socially, it serves as a means of reconciliation between those performing the sacrifice and the gods for whom the sacrifice is made (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1665).

1.2.4 Sacrifice as a purifying power

Around 1900, J.G. Frazer talked about scapegoat rites based on the “magic transfer/conveyance of the insalubrious to the matter or material”. René Girard (1977) found that the philosophy of the scapegoat procedure meant to control the threat of violence that constantly hangs over the community being, by transferring it on to a surrogate sacrifice (Burkert, 1983). This will be elaborated on in the heuristic framework of this dissertation. However, before this, a look at some spiritualised modes of sacrifice will be taken.

1.2.5 Spiritualised modes of sacrifice

The crisis of sacrifice within the Christian theology of sacrifice refers to Jesus’ eschatological sacrifice of atonement, which put an end to the biblical practices of bloody sacrifice. Old Testament prophets spoke against the whole sacrificial system as being external ritualism. The centering of Israel’s sacrificial rituals in Jerusalem resulted in the cessation of institutionalised bloody sacrificial performances after the destruction of the Temple 70CE (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1665). The temple sacrifice gave rise to the “divine service of the word”, and was celebrated in the synagogue; spiritualised and conventional ways of sacrifice replaced the bloody sacrificial system. The holocaust and the burning of the fat gave rise to humility and prayer. The “metaphorization and spiritualization of the Hebrew biblical concept of sacrifice” seem to have been fostered and intensified in Christianity. Human beings are to offer themselves as a “living, holy, sacrifice pleasing to God” (Rm 12:1). Therefore, the “spiritual sacrifices of the Christian include all acts of self-giving and surrender to God, all ascetical self-denial, all altruistic works of love for the neighbor” (Von Stuckrad, 2006:1665). Therefore, let us now turn to the statement of the problem of this study.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In this dissertation, the researcher will deal with what may be called “The communicative power of blood sacrifices: A predominantly South African perspective, with special reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews”. To communicate means: to share or exchange information, to pass on or convey an emotion, disease etc. Therefore, communication is the “action of communicating, a letter or a message” and communicative is an adjective which means: “willing or eager to talk or pass on information” (Stevenson, 2002:133). The word “communicate” is “historically related to the word ‘common’. It stems from the Latin verb *communicare*, which means ‘to share’, ‘to make common’... When we communicate, we make things common. We thus increase our shared

knowledge, our 'common-sense' -the basic precondition of all community" (Rosengren, 2000:1).

To communicate means "to make known, pass on and to transmit". Communication means an "interchange of thoughts or opinions through shared symbols". The adjective 'communicative' means: "inclined to talk freely and sometimes indiscreetly, communicable, demonstrative or effusive" (Mirriam, 1976:153-154). Communication stands for the "exchange of information, expression of feelings, correspondence, writing". Communicative means "forthright, expressive, revelatory, revealing or informative" (Stein & Berg, 1984:147).

Power can be defined as "the actual or potential possession of control, authority, or influence over others"... Basically it means "strength", from which the words "army" and "wealth" are derived. The term is used more than eighty times in the Old Testament as an "attribute of people in the sense of strength, power or might, and strong hands" (Myers, 1987:844-845; See also 1Chr 29:11-12; Ps 65:5-13; 2Sm 22:33; 1Ki 17:17). It can also be viewed as stemming from the "Greek words used in the singular to express the idea of power: $\beta<\forall:4H$ which describes the general ability to perform, $f>\cong 1\Phi$: \forall the authority of freedom from any inward restraint... And $f>\cong 1\Phi$: \forall is used for spiritual agencies (Rm 8:38; Eph 6:12), generally of adverse character, but sometimes neutrally for earthly rulers, as indicated in Romans 13:1-3 (Harrison, 1999:411).

Myers (1987:844) maintains that the New Testament claims that the Greek concept of $\beta<\forall:4H$ can have meanings ranging from "ability or means, a powerful work or mighty works, principalities and powers, power and dominion, supernatural gifts and supernatural forces of which Jesus is the mediator", as reflected respectively in the following scriptures: 2Corinthians 8:3, Acts 2:22, Matthew 7:22, Luke 10:13, Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 9:15. However, Harrison (1999:411) adds that, unlike in the Old Testament, the New Testament shows that the idea of the overwhelming display of the divine power of God leads to its personal manifestation in Jesus Christ. His Messianic power, though linked with God's overwhelming power in the Old Testament, is described as far greater than the power with which the prophets were endowed. This power was first manifested in Jesus' life through His miracles, which "were signs to corroborate the powerful effect of His teaching".

At this stage, the researcher will not concentrate on the theme of power, because it is not the purpose of this dissertation. Instead, this study is just looking for a way to explain what is meant by the phrase "communicative power of blood sacrifices". From the above definitions of both "communicative" and "power", as well as the related materials, one can infer that the communicative power of sacrifice is a reversible, mysterious transference of power through shared symbols during sacrificial rituals, release, sharing, conveyance of supernatural power, or just a willful, automatic passing on of power in or from the

spiritual realm, that might have either positive or negative effects on both the worshipper or sender of the sacrificial signal, through offering a sacrifice, or the addressee, that is, the receiver, usually a perceived supernatural being. This could be explained in terms of results: that is, blessings as an outcome of an offered sacrifice, and abortion or diversion of wrath on behalf of a deity.

The appeased deity or spirit(s) refrains from carrying out their prior destructive plan, because the wrath and malefic evils primarily conceived are transformed into a pleasurable relationship, a peaceful and reconciliatory condition through the power that emanates from the sacrificial offering. It seems that there is always some energy communicated during a sacrificial offering in general and blood sacrifice in particular, which disposes the perceived deity favourably towards the giver, by bestowing spiritual and material blessings, physical healing and good crops, atonement for sins, protection etc.

In this dissertation, the researcher will endeavour to discuss the communicative power of blood sacrifices in South Africa and a few other selected countries in Africa, and will then focus on the theme of blood sacrifice in Hebrews, especially the sacrifice of Jesus. After this, the study will attempt to show how it rendered communication with God an unhindered relationship (Heb 10:19-23), as well as how it communicated salvation. At this stage, one might ask: what relationship exists between the Hebrews' material and material on the communicative power of blood sacrifices in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa? First and foremost, it should be noted that the researcher is not going to link the two and say that one is dependent upon the other. Instead, this study is only going to compare the material relevant to the topic, in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa, with the material in Hebrews, and show the differences and similarities in order to make some hermeneutical applications. In this situation, if one has information about what the New Testament says concerning the communicative power of blood sacrifices, and what African traditional religions (South Africa: Xhosas, Zulus, Tsongas and elsewhere in Africa) say about it, one can use the material from Africa to link the current situation to the Bible.

This study is not interested in clear independence, since it only needs information from Hebrews, as well as that from a South African perspective, including a few examples from elsewhere in Africa, so that in talking to people in Africa, they become aware of the information provided in Hebrews, and can thereby discover where it overlaps with their own situation, and use it as a type of entrance into biblical material. This study has purported to investigate the theme of the communicative power of blood sacrifice in Hebrews, especially through a theological exegesis of the blood sacrifice of Jesus.

This dissertation comprises three major tasks: The first consists of an extensive reading of literary sources on sacrifices among the Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga people, including qualitative, empirical research, whereby fifty-four informants from Gauteng, Kwazulu Natal, and North West provinces respectively are

interviewed using a homogeneous qualitative data collection methodology - that is, a focus group interview, in which grassroots people (Christians) are the targets of investigation, in order to indicate how the communicative power of blood sacrifice is shown among South Africans today. The second task will deal with a theological exegesis of the blood sacrifices in the Epistle to the Hebrews, especially the sacrifice of Jesus, in order to compare both the validity and significance of bloody sacrifices in all the sacrificial contexts used in this dissertation.

This task will consist of finding relevant occurrences of the theme in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the exegetical analysis of the theme of blood sacrifices in Hebrews, this study will focus on the sacrifice of Jesus. The purpose here is not to study Hebrews for the sake of blood sacrifices, but rather to establish a Christian framework relating to sacrificial practices.

The selection of the Epistle to the Hebrews was motivated by the fact that it is the major New Testament book that reflects on the Leviticus sacrificial system, which seems to have parallels with African traditional religions' sacrificial systems, thus allowing some type of extrapolation. Secondly, the occurrences in Hebrews of the theme of blood sacrifice will help to evaluate both sacrificial systems, with regard to the sacrifice of Christ and those occurring in the church today, serving as a basis for showing how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is viewed in the Old Testament sacrificial dispensation, in African traditional religions, in the New Testament (Hebrews), especially in the sacrifice of Christ, and finally, in both African traditional religions in South Africa (Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga peoples), including some examples from elsewhere in Africa, as well as Christianity (church-restricted) today.

The researcher will attempt to bring to the surface similarities and differences with regard to different sacrificial cults dealt with in this dissertation, and then, a summary of this dissertation's results will be provided, in which this study will attempt to show how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is viewed in the various contexts considered in this dissertation. Finally, the researcher will make some recommendations in this regard.

1.4 DELINEATION OF THE STUDY

The investigation with regard to the communicative power of sacrifices will cover the area of the Republic of South Africa, as well as some other examples from the rest of Africa. The Xhosa people will be focused on, making comparisons with sacrificial thoughts among the Zulu and Tsonga people. This is a very extensive field, but this study will still attempt to cover it as thoroughly as possible. If one deals with a single sacrificial system, one can write a whole dissertation on the finer details. However, the purpose here is rather to examine the effects of communication, and this study will therefore not be looking at every detailed aspects of sacrifice. Some important groups of people, such as the Zulus,

Xhosas and Tsongas, who are some of the biggest nations in South Africa, will be focused on, in addition to a few other peoples in Africa, in order to broaden the research base. The researcher will illustrate how sacrifice occurs within each group, in order to determine whether or not there are major differences. Therefore, the hypothesis that every group is the same will not be used.

Primary and secondary information will be gathered respectively through focus group interviews and extensive reading of existing material on the topic. The interviewees will be randomly selected from people living in Gauteng, North West Province and Kwazulu Natal, as a representative sample of the population of the Republic of South Africa, whose responses will be generalised to the whole area of the Republic, according to scientific regulations of qualitative research (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990:4; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984:5; Steyn & Uys, 1988:22).

This dissertation will comprise twelve chapters: chapter one, an introduction consisting of the statement of the problem, delineation of the study, as well as its motivation, hypothesis and methodology. Chapter two will comprise the heuristic framework, incorporating some scholarly desiderata on Christianity and African traditional worldviews (religions), as well as the perspective of missions in Africa, including some recent scientific theories on sacrifices. Chapters three to eight will consist of a review of relevant literary sources on sacrifices in the South African context, specifically among the Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga peoples, including a few examples from elsewhere in Africa. Chapter nine will deal with sacrifice in the Old Testament, as a background to the exegesis of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Chapter ten will focus on the sacrifice of Jesus in Hebrews, and is an exegetical analysis. Chapter eleven is a dialectical discussion comparing the biblical material about sacrifices with African traditional religions' material, within the limits of the study's contexts. Chapter twelve will be a conclusion, and the dissertation will end with a list of all works consulted.

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The researcher's attempt to investigate the "communicative power of blood sacrifices" (both biblical and traditional blood sacrifices) has been prompted and fuelled by the need to know why people in both traditional religions and Christianity, in South Africa in particular, have never completely abandoned blood sacrifices. The practice of blood sacrifice seems to have enjoyed continuity in African traditional beliefs. However, in African Christianity, it has been both continuity and discontinuity that have created syncretistic types of beliefs. Some people tend to hold on to their traditional sacrificial rituals, and at the same time claim to adhere to Christian beliefs in matter connected with Christ's sacrifice and Christian New Testament sacrifices (Mckenzie, 1997). This was paired with some desiderata pro-sacrifice, and it was in defence of it and its practice that some post-modern pluralistic tendencies or attitudes were propagated with regard to biblical and extra-biblical sacrifices. Claims for sameness and interchangeability

propagated the idea that biblical sacrifices are of the same essence and implicitly complementary to traditional ones, thus attributing the same extrinsic and intrinsic values to traditional blood sacrifices (Mckenzie, 1997; Crafford, 1996; Dhavamony, 2001).

The motivation for this study grew even more when the researcher read that orthodox Christian communities have expressed the desire to revive animal blood sacrifice performances within the mass liturgy, alongside the sacrifice of Christ (Sexton, 2002:2-3). It was then that the idea to investigate why blood sacrifice performance rituals were so attractive, captivating and enslaving as to make people adhere so strongly to them, and what was so real about blood sacrificial exercises that people should proclaim an re-awakening of such practices. This seems to be also partially true of biblical blood sacrifices (Old Testament blood sacrifices), as biblical discontinuity seems to be grounded in a more superior and effective sacrificial performance. There must be something peculiar to blood sacrifices, both Old Testament and African traditional religions' ones, as well as Jesus' blood sacrifice, including Christian sacrifices, that so strongly influences worshippers.

The very manifestation of the same thing in varying degrees has curiously aroused in the researcher the motivation to investigate the topic: "The communicative power of blood sacrifice: A predominantly South African perspective, with special attention given to the Epistle to the Hebrews". The following hypothesis will guide the investigation throughout this dissertation.

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

In this dissertation, the following hypothesis will be investigated, namely: the reality of the communicative power of blood sacrifices - that is, whether or not there could be any release of power during blood sacrificial performances, and how it is manifested or shown in the various religious contexts mentioned in this study. The fact that people crave for, and cling to, blood sacrificial performances, seems to reinforce the assumption that some forces inherent to blood sacrificial rituals effectively stimulate and enhance the interest of those involved in them. If this were not so, there could have obviously been a complete disintegration of blood sacrificial performances, and a disengagement on behalf of those participating in them. Blood sacrificial performances would have been reduced to mere ancient history. Nevertheless, given the ongoing existence and continuity of blood sacrifice on the one hand and discontinuity on the other, also continuity-discontinuity and discontinuity-continuity in some religious circles, the probability that some invisible forces associated with blood sacrifices, and working through and around blood sacrificial performances, endowing participants with supernatural abilities to communicate with entities within the non-physical world or to effect any person's impairment and hinder natural cataclysms, needs to be investigated.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this dissertation is basically founded on sound exegetical approaches, as is actually described in Fee (1993:63-114), Van der Watt (2001), Kilian (1993:26-34), Porter (1997) and de Vos (1999). It is not the purpose of this study to evaluate or develop [or even propose] any exegetical method to be used in studies on Hebrews. For further reading on exegetical methods, one can refer to extensive research conducted by scholars such as Wilhelm Egger (1996); Joel Green (1995); Stanley Porter and David Tombs (1995); Stanley Porter and C. A. Evans (1996); as well as Stanley Porter and Dennis Stamps (2002). This study does not use a single methodology, but rather a combination of methods based on the requirements of the text that will be analysed. Therefore, this study will not be method-driven, but rather text-driven, and the text actually invites particular approaches or methods needed in order to analyse it properly. In the researcher's approach to the text containing the theme of blood sacrifice in Hebrews, the question regarding the communicative power of blood sacrifice and how it is shown in the text will basically determine the exegetical approach. This study will also use a qualitative, empirical research methodology, by means of focus group interviews conducted in the Gauteng, Kwazulu Natal and North-West provinces respectively. It is the researcher's hope that all these methods will somehow respect the criteria of scientific objectivity, reliability and explicability as far as the exploration and evaluation of the "communicative power of blood sacrifices" is concerned. The terms "African traditional worldviews" and "African traditional religions" will be used. Therefore, before concluding this chapter, it is necessary to explain some such terms.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF SOME TERMS

Qualitative research refers to research that elicits participants' accounts of their meanings, experiences and participation. It also produces descriptive data in the participants' own written or spoken words. It thus involves identifying the participants' beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984:5). By *focus group interviews*, the following is meant: "group" can be defined as a number of individuals between whom a distinguishable pattern of interaction exists (Steyn & Uys, 1988:22). "Interview" signifies the presence of a trained moderator who can skillfully facilitate the discussion that takes place between all the members in the group, in order to elicit information on the desired topic. "Focus" implies that the discussion that takes place within the group will be limited to the specific theme under investigation (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990:4).

A focus group interview could therefore be described as a purposive discussion of a specific topic or related topics, taking place between eight to ten individuals with similar backgrounds and common interests. The group interaction will consist of verbal and non-verbal communication and an interplay of perceptions and opinions that will stimulate discussion, without necessarily modifying or

changing the ideas and opinions of individuals. The focus group interview is conducted as an open conversation on a specific topic, in which each participant may make comments, ask questions of other participants, or respond to comments by others, including the moderator (Ferreira & Puth, 1988:167). Therefore, blood sacrifice and sacrifice will be used interchangeably to mean animate sacrificial victims and, given the fact that either the flesh of a sacrificial victim or its blood may be offered separately as a burnt offering or a sprinkled or poured-down offering, blood-life sacrifice and blood sacrifice will also be used interchangeably to mean sacrificial blood, sacrificed blood or blood for sacrifice.

1.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the blue-print or design of this dissertation has been provided. The researcher has attempted to succinctly define the concept of sacrifice and its classification, instances arising in everyday life, human and divine benefits of sacrifice, sacrificial ideologies, sacrificial interpretations, sacrifice as a gift exchange and renunciation, the sacramental sacrificial meal, the sacrificial communicative act, sacrifice as a purifying power, and spiritualised modes of sacrifice. The chapter then went on to discuss the statement of the problem, the delineation, motivation, hypothesis and methodology of the study, and the clarification of some terms. The following chapter will be dedicated to the heuristic framework of this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: HEURISTIC FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The heuristic framework encompasses brief descriptions of African traditional religion, Christianity and mission perspectives in Africa and South Africa, as well as a critical approach to some modern theories on blood sacrifices. However, given the fact that the face of Christianity is so diverse, wide and complex, and that there are so many churches in South Africa, this study will discuss this only as a background, by providing a general description. It is not a comprehensive description, as it does not include a history of the whole situation, but is rather a way to sensitize oneself to the diversity of Christianity. The purpose of this dissertation is to determine how people from Africa can use the Epistle to the Hebrews in order to better understand their culture, and to understand how they can link Christianity and African traditional religion as far as the communicative power of blood sacrifices is concerned.

Therefore, this background to the abovementioned issue is necessary. This discussion will therefore not go into any details about blood sacrifice, but will instead just provide brief descriptions of Christianity and African traditional religion. In this dissertation, information on the reading strategy of the Bible from project reading of the Bible in Africa will be incorporated, which summarily and clearly highlights the reflections of various scholars on the nature of Christianity, African traditional religion and Western missions in Africa (South Africa in particular), as well as the diverse perceptions about each of them as far as Bible reading strategy is concerned. “African Christianity can only be able to tackle the identity problem of the hour if it remains faithful to the basic convictions of the New Testament” (Rakotoharintsifa, 1999:8).

This study understands that reading and interpreting the Bible in Africa cannot be separated from interpreting biblical sacrifices. The perspectives from worldviews help one to recognise those aspects which constitute knowledge within a person, and which function as a cohesive unit. It helps us to understand how problematic it was that missionaries could simply declare ancestors or sacrifices to be taboo, without recognising that these things were bound to other objects which necessitated the presence of sacrifices and ancestors. This is why, after centuries of Christianity in Africa, one still finds ancestor worship or forms of sacrifice, even among African Christians (Adamo, 1999:1-2). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the perspectives from worldviews.

2.1.1 Perspectives from worldviews

Relevance in the true sense of the word is significant here (other factors such as “social play” do not play a role). The type of communication that “goes in one ear and goes out the other” is only possible when a person is met “within his context and where he stands”. Relevance relates to applicability to a situation or context, and the needs of the user, as stated in Webster’s Dictionary (1988). If there is no need for the applicability of the material, communication is restrained. It follows therefore that one should be familiar with a particular person’s context, in order to achieve effective communication. The sociology of knowledge and especially the influential work of Berger and Luckmann (1989), provide stimulating insights. However, their concept of symbolic universe is so loaded with implicit meaning and implications that this study will not use it – it will, however, use insights gained from the sociology of knowledge. The term “sociology of knowledge” might imply things that are not intended, and this study might want to express aspects not covered by this concept.

The researcher prefers to use the term “*worldview*” in order to describe the social constructs that people make from the accumulation and processing of their total acquired knowledge. Adamo (2001:8-22) uses the expression “African worldview”. It is not an effort to create a new word, but in this way it is possible to fill the word with the content that the researcher wants to express. This term is a combination of two Greek words, namely *kosmos* and *skopeō*. *Kosmos* (*kosmos* is spelled with a “k” to emphasise the Greek roots of the word as it is used here) has a wide variety of possible uses in ancient Greek literature (see for instance Bauer et al, 1979: ad loc). It may also be used to refer to “the sum of everything here and now, the orderly universe” (Bauer et al, 1979:445). It is in this broadest sense that the word is used here. This study is interested in the visible and invisible, the real and fictional (fictional here refers to mythical construction aspects of “*kosmos*”, which are real to people), and the flesh and spiritual aspects of the universe.

This includes God and the spiritual world, even the realities of faith, dreams, visions, etc. *Skopeō* has more limited meanings, but may be used to mean: “keep one’s eyes on or notice someone or something” (Bauer et al, 1979:756). With the combination of these two words – worldviews – it suggests the process of taking notice of, accumulating, systematising and integrating knowledge about reality (*kosmos*), in its widest sense, and using this knowledge as a basis for existence. Existence refers to the process of making decisions and motivating them (rationally, religiously or mythologically), which then determines one’s behaviour and actions (some might prefer the expression “worldview”, but this expression has the same problem as the phrase “symbolic universe”-it is too vague and has already acquired too many

meanings). In describing what a worldview entails, the research would like to make use of the terms 'objects', 'abstracts', 'relations', 'activities' and 'motifs'.

In the "*kosmos*", objects – whether they are real or fictional (mythological objects are real to the "believer", while others might regard them as fictional) – are to be found. These objects can be called "worldview objects", since they are not neutral. Each person attaches a different value or meaning to a specific object. In this way, a network of associations is created around a particular object. For instance, if one mentions the word "God" to someone, that person will immediately associate a large number of ideas with that word. These ideas might be positive or negative, but as long as they are linked to the idea of "God" for that person, it is part of the worldview object "God". Anything a person knows has a number of associated ideas linked to it. If one talks of "father" or "family" or "money", everyone will have certain ideas about that object. According to those ideas, a person will either value the object or not. Money as a worldview object includes all the ideas and feelings that a person associates with that specific object.

Within the wider framework of its worldview, that particular object will function in relation to other objects, according to the value or meaning that is attached to it. For instance, if a person attaches a very positive and influential value to God, God will play an influential role in relation to other objects in that person's worldview. If choices are to be made, the influence of God will be seen in relation to those choices or actions. On the other hand, if a person holds God in low esteem, the opposite will be true. God will not influence the person's behaviour.

There are also abstracts involved, such as grace, friendliness, patience, etc. Although the qualitative aspect is emphasised here, these words might also be used to express actions (if a quality such as one of these is expressed in an action, it should be treated as an action). Within a worldview, values are also attributed to these qualities, as is the case with objects of worldviews. For instance, patience might be positive for one person, but negative for the other. If the latter is approached, you might not expect much with regard to patience from him/her.

2.2 [PLUS EVENT]

These different objects also stand in specific relations to one another. Relations between different objects in the "*kosmos*" may be called worldview relations. It describes the way in which specific objects and even abstracts are organised within the worldview of an individual. This organisation determines the relative positions of objects, and the mutual influence that they have on each other within one person. For instance, a person might value money more than his family. This priority given to money will determine his attitude towards the other objects in his worldview, and consequently determine his actions – he will

therefore not spend much money on his family if he can avoid it, but will rather save the money. However, if he loves God more than his money, this relation will motivate him to give money for “God’s work”, which he will not give to his family. In this way, the objects are organised according to the value attributed to each. Causality and reasons for actions might be found by focusing on the organisation of relations within the worldview of a particular person. Based on these relations, cohesion exists within a worldview.

Activities also form part of a worldview. Objects and abstracts stand in relation to one another. The situation is, however, not static but dynamic. As the opinion of an individual changes with regard to an object within his worldview, the inner dynamics and arrangements within his worldview will change accordingly. New relations and positions of authority are formulated within his particular worldview. For instance, imagine that a person thinks very highly of his pastor. He is prepared to follow him without reserve. Then, he finds out that his pastor has feet of clay and has cheated the congregation by having an extramarital affair. A worldview activity now takes place – the estimation linked to the worldview object “pastor” now loses its value, and a rearrangement of objects takes place. From a worldview perspective, a relation between a feeling of mistrust (abstract) and the pastor (object) is established. These dynamic changes are part of the worldview reality, and this is what is meant by activity. These objects, abstracts and the relations between them are in a constant internal movement of redefinition, rejection or confirmation (there are events theorists who claim that changes take place each time one person has contact with another). In the process of reading the Bible, this activity will allow the integration of different worldview perspectives.

It might also be that, with the introduction of new objects or the rearrangement of worldviews, objects in the worldview might clash and therefore exist in a state of tension in the worldview of a particular person. For example, the object “Jesus” might be associated with the care and well-being of a person. However, the object “ancestors” might have the same associations in the worldview of that same person. This creates tension in the dynamic relations within the worldview of that particular person. To whom should such a person turn if he needs care? External forces such as experience, social or religious pressures, family expectations, etc. might then cause that person to give priority to one of these two objects. Thus, he redefines the relation between these two objects, by granting the one a higher status in his worldview than the other. In many cases, tensions such as these persist within that person.

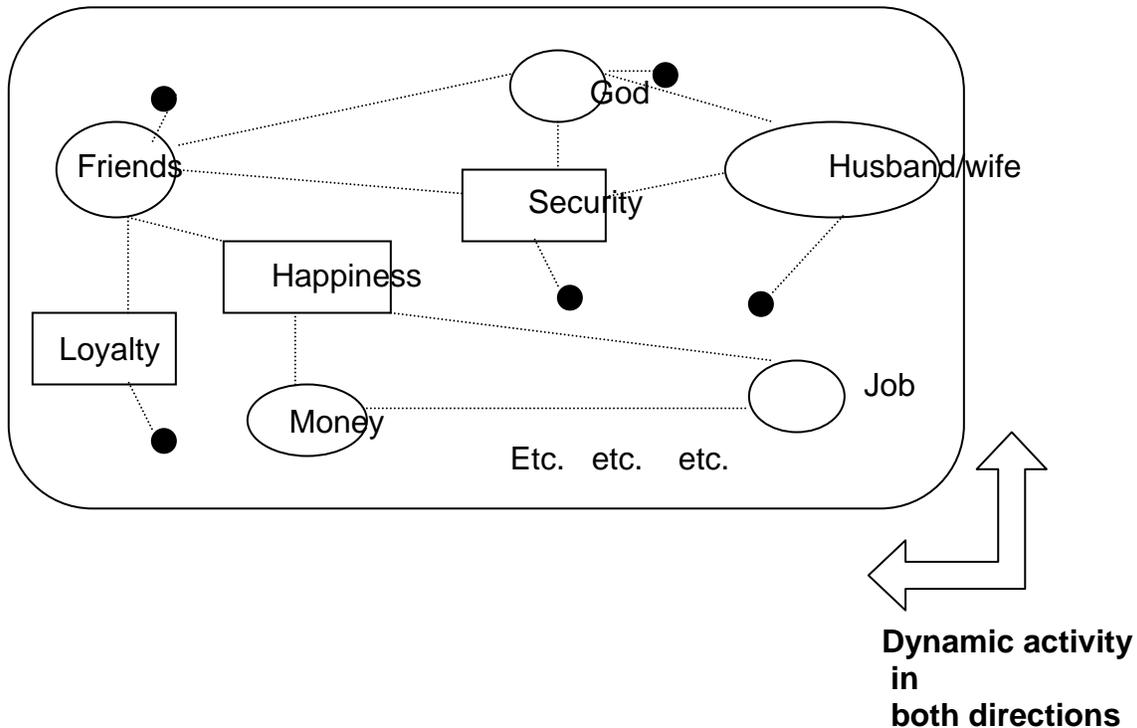
Then, there is what a person can call motives. These are the reasons why an object holds a specific position and stands in a specific relation to other objects. Motives include myths, historical narratives, traditions, dogma, wise sayings, etc., that motivate how and why certain things should happen. Take, for instance, the view held in parts of Africa that it is necessary to kill a crippled child. A myth is found in Africa that the mother of the first ever crippled child

was ordered by the gods to kill the child. She did not do it, and in the end this child was instrumental in killing his mother as well as many other living beings – in the myth, the child becomes the personification of evil. This story motivates the negative value accorded in this situation to a cripple child. Another example could be that God is valued highly because He is creator of all things. This is a basic assumption of Christian faith (1Cor 8; 1Th 1). The stories of creation in these traditions then motivate and explain how creation took place, and why God should be valued. Dogma also plays an important role in this regard. Religious dogma is intended to motivate and explain the organisation of religious and related aspects within a worldview. The believer is then supposed to organise his own worldview according to the one described in the dogma.

These motivational materials play a very important role in the nature of the worldview of a person. If the story about the first crippled child is rejected, then the crippled child will have a higher value and be treated differently. The relative positions and resulting interrelatedness are therefore always motivated, which emphasises the strong cohesive nature existing within the worldview. The origins and sources of these motifs are varied. Why does one love one's wife? An emotional or perhaps practical reason – and not some or other myth - might motivate why one's wife is valued highly by you. If one listens to people who want to divorce, they will entertain one with fictional and real stories which serve as motives for their planned action.

This study regards it of utmost importance to see this cohesion, but also to understand the motives for certain people regarding certain objects or abstracts as of more importance than others. It is also an illusion to think that one can simply tell a person to abandon certain objects or abstracts, without understanding the reasons why those things are of value to that person. If that person still holds those reasons as important, he will not change or abandon those objects or abstracts within his worldview. If one wants to know what is relevant for a particular person, one should have insight into his worldview. Schematically, the previous explanation might be illustrated as follows:

Fig. 1
Circles = objects
Squares = abstracts
Dotted lines = relations
Dots = motives



For instance, God might move down in value and money up (vertically). This will make the influence of money on actions and behaviour stronger. Job and friends (social acceptance) might move closer together (horizontally), while job moves further away from happiness. This would imply that a person works for acceptance, and not for satisfaction or happiness.

A few remarks can be made here:

- The perspective from the worldview allows one to recognise those aspects which constitute knowledge within a person and function as a cohesive unit. It helps us to understand how problematic it was that missionaries could simply declare ancestors or sacrifices as being taboo, without recognising that these objects were bound to other objects, which necessitated the presence of sacrifices or ancestors. This is why, after centuries of Christianity in Africa, you will still find ancestor worship or forms of sacrifice, even among African Christians. Within a worldview, relations exist between different objects and abstracts, which means that

these cannot be treated in isolation, as if each element stands on its own. The whole worldview is interwoven with stronger or weaker threads, which also explains causality within worldviews. This means that if the current worldviews of African Christians are studied, individual elements in worldviews should not be isolated, but rather approached as a whole. Adamo (1999:1-2) illustrates how the worldview of Africans is integrated -evil, spirits, protection, nature, etc. are all interrelated and influence each other.

- In dealing with the views of people, a distinction should be made between the more and less important ideas. From the perspective of worldviews, not all ideas are central - some are peripheral and can simply be forfeited without any significant loss. For an atheist, disregarding God would not really matter. In any cross-cultural discussion, the discussion partners should know what is important and what is not in their respective worldviews, in order to facilitate the discussion.
- The process within a worldview is dynamic. With every new influence, smaller or larger changes in relations or relative positions occur within the worldview. New motives might replace older ones. This means that people might change their opinions, but they will do so with reasons. These changes might affect a wide range of interrelations within the worldview. If the “object” God is, for instance, taken out of the worldview of a Christian, major changes will occur within his worldview. Questions will arise, such as: what object will now be the most important? Where will the motivation for norms come from, etc, and these will then force a reorganisation of his worldview. In dealing with central issues such as ancestors or diviners in African worldviews, attention should be paid to the abovementioned point. It is not just a matter of rejecting or accepting ideas. The process is much more complex.
- Since there is a constant process of attributing values to objects and abstracts within a worldview, burning issues can be more easily identified. Simple questions such as: what is important to you? or what concerns / troubles you? will lead directly to these burning issues. If the word “why” is added, the answer will expose aspects of the worldview of that person. The person’s reasons, what he/she regards as important and what not, how he/she views the relations between different objects in his worldview, and so on, will give one insight into his/her worldview. This is what relevancy is about.

From the above, it becomes clear why relevance is significant. Relevance means that a person feels that his worldview is of importance. The way in which he views objects or abstracts in their respective relations is being addressed and challenged, and therefore, his worldview is being engaged.

2.2.1 The issue of intra- and interaction between Euro-American Christianity and African traditional worldviews

Frequent mention is made of African culture (the issue of unity or diversity in Africa will be discussed elsewhere. The term is used here in its broadest sense), inculturation, African Christianity etc. in literature. These types of terms and phrases are problematic for several reasons. One is the diversity within Africa. The second is that in previous centuries, the traditional way of living was confronted with strong influences, inter alia, Christianity in a Euro-American form (Christianity's influence was mainly on a religious level, although it was in some sense interpreted in a holistic way, which meant that it had a strong social impact in the areas of hospitals and schools), colonialism (this had a strong political and social impact), capitalism (this had an economic impact), and modernism (this had a philosophical and religious impact). These forces had a definite impact on the African psyche and way of thinking – they resulted in significant changes in Africans' traditional worldviews. The influence was not uniform in all areas, or even in all individuals. The result is that one finds a wide variety of opinions being prevalent in Africa. Africa is “in movement” – one might find traditionalists rubbing shoulders with people who are largely westernised. Slogans such as “African Renaissance” (the phrase introduced by President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa to propagate a movement back to the cultural and historical heritage of Africa), as well as the end of colonialism, fuelled movements that advocated a return to African heritage. This makes the picture even more volatile, and the so-called African identity even more elusive. Adamo (1999:1, see also Mbiti, 1978) also emphasises the importance of recognising the unique nature of the worldview of African people. Their actions should be viewed in this light.

This makes the challenges of a “hermeneutics of relevance” even greater. In order for something to be relevant, it must touch the heart and mind of a person. But, what is the heart and mind of Africa or of a particular group in Africa, especially in a time in which so many changes are taking place in Africa? Since this question lies at the center of what is unique to the reading of scripture in Africa, it should be approached and answered with care. It is noteworthy that many (see Ukpong, 1999; Mosala, 1989; Mugambi, 1999) efforts of inculturation focus on issues such as poverty, hunger, HIV/Aids, stress on family structures and the like, which are generally described as suffering due to oppression. In many cases, the reading strategy followed is basically a social program. These types of approaches often only deal with physical issues, and in this sense, they are restrictive. This study does not deny that hunger, as experienced in parts of Africa, has definite social and philosophical impacts. However, there is more to a hermeneutics of relevance than meets the eye. It has to do with the inner convictions and worldview of

people. This worldview is their “database”, to which they turn to answer existential questions – in the broadest sense of the word – and this is where one should look for relevance. The way in which a person constructs their worldview should therefore be understood and used as a point of departure. It opens up and explains the way in which people think. A worldview which is dominated by Christian (biblical) objects (with Christ in a central position), abstracts, relations and activities, could be described as a Christian worldview. The same applies to a worldview which consists of African traditional objects, abstracts, relations and activities. It may be called an African traditional worldview.

This brings us to the next question. What is the African worldview, if there is such a thing? This is a complex question. This study will, however, try to explain the problem (this can be done in a very technical way, but the researcher will try to do it as simply as possible, focusing only on the main issues) and suggest a viable way to approach it. To do this, the researcher will start with a diagram or schema. Each aspect represented in the diagram will be individually discussed according to the schema. The schema indicates two points of focus, namely Western (where the missionaries came from) Christianity and the African traditional worldview (the reason why the phrase “African traditional worldview” and not African traditional religion is used will be explained shortly) Obviously, these two are fictional points of focus, since both are characterised by variety, as is indicated in the schema. In exposing these two worldviews to each other, different people and groups responded differently. Since the interaction took place during the colonial period, the movement of change was from the African traditional worldview to Christianity.

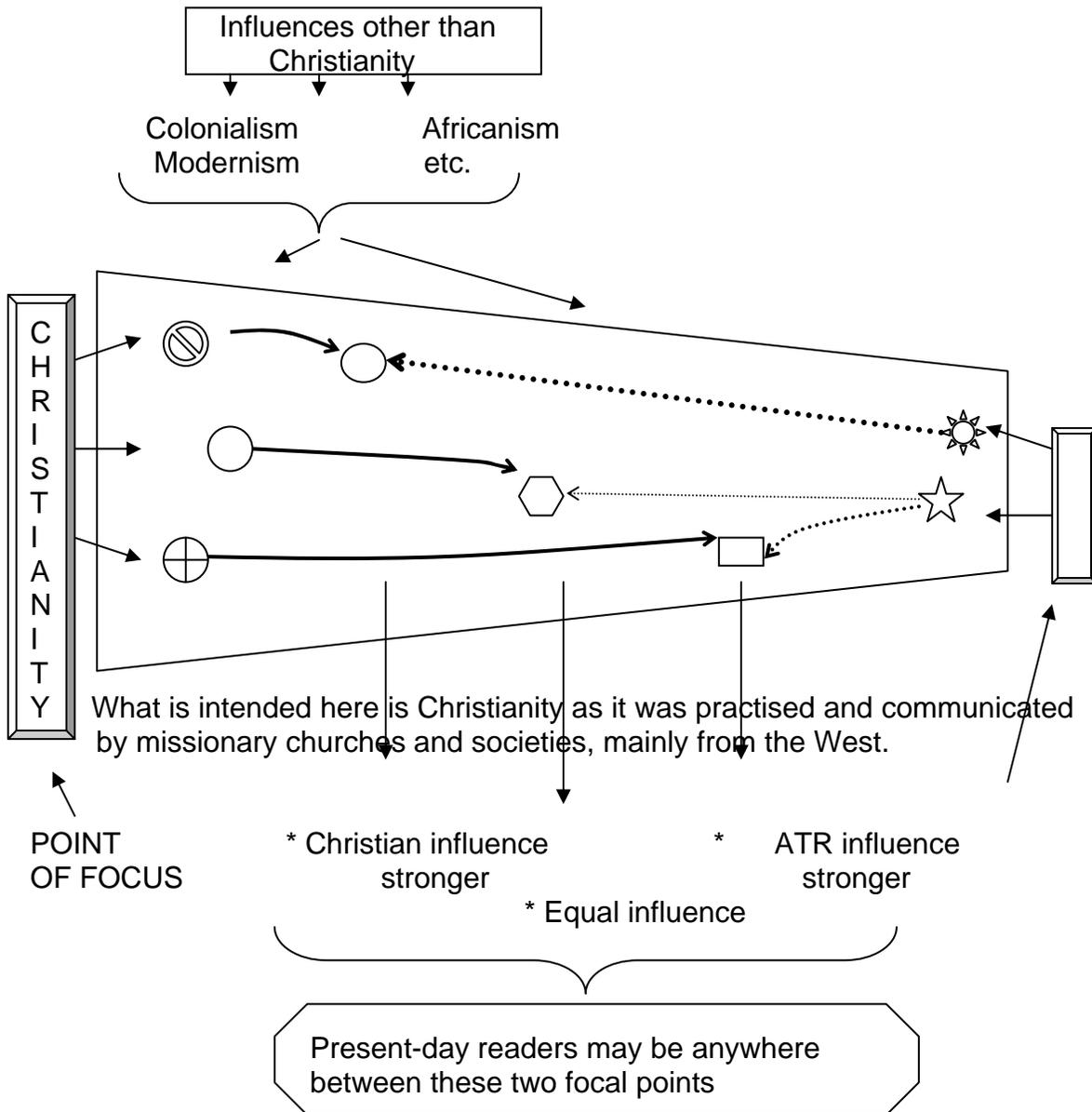
Only today, after the end of the colonial period, is there a noticeable movement from Christianity to more traditional ways. In the early 80’s, Prof. (JvdW) experienced this movement first-hand. Students were eager to learn more about their roots. African thought and literature was a very popular subject at the University of Fort Hare. This resulted in a situation in which a person may be closer to Christianity, but still accept certain objects or relations from the African traditional worldview - note that this is not necessarily a negative thing. It might refer to certain family customs or practices such as singing, dancing or certain forms of hospitality, which are foreign to Christianity but do not create any tension. In other cases, a person might still be closer to the African traditional worldview, or perhaps somewhere in the middle, between these two focal points. There are also other influences which should be considered, namely colonialism, capitalism, modernism, pan-Africanism etc. These political, economic and philosophical movements left profound marks on the souls and bodies of Africa and the ways in which their worldviews are constructed.

What follows is a schematic representation of the situation, followed by a discussion of the different aspects represented in the schema. This schema

attempts to provide a diachronic as well as synchronic picture. It endeavours to illustrate where people come from, as well as where they are:

Two worldviews in interaction

Fig. 2



2.3 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL WORLDVIEWS OR RELIGIONS

2.3.1 Is there something such as African traditional religion?

The first question should be whether or not there is something like African traditional religion (Ganusah, 2000:29 speaks of African indigenous religion) or an African traditional worldview? This question leads to several problems.

Terms may be confusing. For instance, is it possible to accurately determine what is meant by Western theology, European theology, or even Lutheran or Roman Catholic theology? The same applies to phrases such as African traditional religion or African theology. Answering this question is notoriously difficult. On a very basic level, there are questions concerning what Africa is, and who decided that this is what Africa should be. Maluleke (1999:3) emphasises the diversity of the African continent, and notes that people such as Appiah or Mudimbe call Africa a European invention (See also West, 1999a:18). The area north of the Sahara was strongly influenced by Europeans (as part of the Roman Empire) and then Middle Eastern cultures (Islam, therefore, plays an important role here. It is, however, not the only place where Islam plays a role in Africa). The tendency is, therefore, to use Africa in the sense of sub-Saharan Africa when reference to religion or culture is made. This study will also use it in this way. Nevertheless, even sub-Saharan Africa is characterised by its variety – as can be seen in the variety of clothes, languages and houses. In some cases, one will find dozens of different languages within one country, or even within one province in that particular country (South Africa has eleven official languages, while travelling to places such as the Democratic Republic of Congo is even more confusing).

Although scholars from different disciplines increasingly emphasise the diversity within sub-Saharan Africa, one can look at Teffo & Roux (1998:136), who refer to the intense ongoing debate in this regard. One should also acknowledge the strong views of Maluleke (1999:1-3). Okure (1999:1) also emphasises the “fragmented and multi-faceted reality of the African continent”. Wendland (1999:3) mentions that there are 2000 languages in Africa alone, not to mention the vast differences in history and customs, for instance, between the patrilinear-patrilocal and matrilinear-matrilocal peoples of central Africa. There are, nevertheless, certain prominent scholars who do still not hesitate to keep on referring to African religion or theology in the singular. See Mbiti (1969, 1986); Paris (1995); Kalu (1999:8); and Manus (1999:5) in this regard. Adamo (2001:8-22) refers to an African worldview or African indigenous tradition (1999:2) in the singular, although he concentrates on the Yoruba of Nigeria. Maluleke (1999:2), however, attacks the singular use when it comes to forms of Christianity in Africa, when he says that: “links with such titles as ‘Christianity in Africa’, ‘African Christian theology’, ‘Bible and theology in African Christianity’... are rather ‘colonialist’ and ‘modernist’ in scope”. Materials that are available

and that give generalised descriptions of spirituality and religious expressions in Africa are usually received with general acceptance throughout the continent. Similarities in central themes, which will be described later in this dissertation, seem to reoccur throughout Africa, although ways of expressing or motivating them (myths, other stories or cultic practices) might differ. This study acknowledges that this is not a watertight academic argument, but it is nevertheless a fact which must be noted, especially in light of the lack of detailed studies. Professor (JvdW) had people from all over Southern Africa as well as Nigeria in one classroom, discussing these matters, and there was general agreement on the basic principles of African traditional Christianity. In using the word 'Africa', it does not mean that there are no differences, neither is it an expression of absolute unity. It locates the area and people with regard to which or whom we attempt to make some careful and critical generalisations – what exactly this entails will be discussed shortly.

The direct focus of this study will, however, be on South Africa. Qualitative research has been done in several major regions such as Kwazulu-Natal, North West Province, Northern Province and Gauteng, the industrialised and demographic centre of South Africa. This has been done in order to identify trends prevalent in South Africa. However, by means of the available literature from scholars in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, this study will constantly evaluate its own information in the light of the broader picture in Africa.

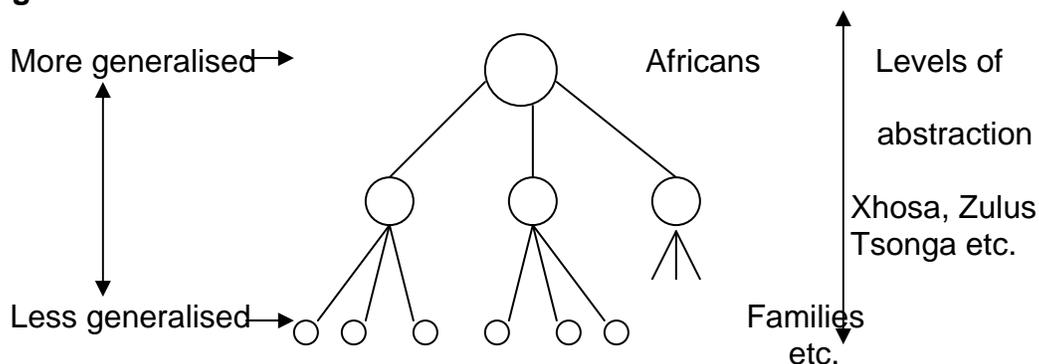
Apart from the above observations, the discussion about the unity or diversity of African traditional religion(s) has its own dynamics. Nobody can deny that there are differences as well as similarities within this religious system. Consider the strong remarks made by Yorke (2000:132): "The sheer size of the continent, the multiracial complexity of its demographics, the profusion of indigenous ethnic communities (over 3,000), a continental plethora of religious cultural traditions, and the missiologically created denominational fragmentation of the church in Africa has actually dissuaded some from speaking and writing in the singular" . However, he acknowledges similarities, which makes it possible to generalise. Equally, one should not overemphasise either of these. A complicating factor at this stage is that insufficient research has been conducted on individual groups in Africa to have adequate insight into the differences and similarities between all groups in Africa. Teffo and Roux (1998:136 - see also Oosthuizen, 1991; Tutu, 1978 and Setiloane, 1986) also stress this point in support of a culture-specific reading of the text. The result is that one might find doom prophets who will keep on arguing that one can actually say nothing about African religion. People who try to presume to write on the subject of African traditional religion have been severely criticised by some authors (see Wendland, 1999:3). One can only say: "A few people Professor (JvdW) knows in the area of Pretoria have these or those ideas". Nothing further can be said. This approach hinders any effort to make a more general description of the African worldview. It does serve as a warning not to

generalise too easily, and this must be taken seriously. However, this minimalist approach is overemphasising the particularities and differences.

On the other hand, Teffo & Roux (1998:137) argue that a generalised approach, as such, is not out of order. We constantly use phrases such as Western philosophy or theology, German or Euro-American theology, Calvinism or Lutheranism, and the like. None of these descriptions imply that everybody within such a group thinks alike or should do so. It indicates things like common activities based on more or less shared presuppositions. No scholar would like to force every German theologian into the mould of what may be called German theology. Life is too varied and dynamic for that. However, there will be commonalities. Even if a generalisation does not fit everyone or is later proven wrong, it at least stimulates efforts and research to correct or adjust it. In this way, ideas and opinions are refined. Moreover, an approach which reflects a tendency for critical generalisation will also stimulate descriptive and detailed research, since there are opinions and views to critically test and evaluate. See Teffo & Roux (1998:137) in this regard. This is one of the reasons why this study opts for both qualitative research and research from written sources. The latter presents us with generalisations which can be tested and refined through qualitative research. A minimalist approach, on the other hand, will stay minimal in its results, and most probably in its efforts too. The implication of the minimalist approach is that every piece of evidence must be processed before one can start to make remarks that are more general. That this will or can ever happen in Africa is a dream that will not come true in the near or foreseeable future. Therefore, the minimalist becomes a victim of his non-criticism.

These arguments are expressions of the age-old universality-particularity argument: are there things that everybody shares? And are there things which only one person in the whole universe has? The answer appears to be yes to both these questions, and this seems to be why this debate is never-ending – for every argument in one direction, there is another argument in the other direction. But how should we understand this? It has to do with the level of generalisation. Let us look at the following illustration:

Fig. 3



Efforts to describe a typical African, Xhosa, Zulu or Tsonga (tribes in South Africa), or a typical Ndwandwe (Zulu family), will all have to be abstractions or generalisations, although on different levels. There will be aspects in which each individual Zulu will differ from the general description of a Zulu. Max Weber has pointed this out as inherent to sociological descriptions, while Teffo and Roux (1998:137) draw attention to this fact in the following way: "...in philosophy we are concerned with general or universal matters". However, the higher the level of abstraction, the more differences there will be. Thus, the argument that one must not talk about Africans in South Africa, but rather Zulus or a particular group of Zulus in a specific area, does not escape the problem of generalization - one simply moves to a lower level of abstraction. The reason why this is an ongoing debate is because there are aspects that all of us share and differences between all of us. Weredu (1998:31-40) discusses the problem of cultural universals, and shows how things like the ability to perceive, deduce, act etc. are common to all *Homines Sapientese*. Therefore, whichever position one takes, there will be criticism from the other side. Try, for instance, to describe the group/nation you belong to. There are general elements, but one will immediately be able to think of people who do not fulfill those requirements. It remains in itself a cultural construct. See Van Staden (1998:25) in this regard.

Different people try to solve this problem in different ways. Paris (1995:21-22), for instance, argues that "the traditions of African peoples... are diverse in cultural form yet united in their underlying spirituality". Others such as Teffo and Roux (1998:136) refer to the severe criticism levelled against the idea of a common set of ideas which may be termed African philosophy (see Wendland, 1999:3; Anum, 1999). They point out that, since people are becoming aware of the vastness of the continent, the tendency is to approach philosophy and religion in a more culture-specific way. They therefore warn against efforts to generalise too easily by speaking of an African metaphysics. Nevertheless, they opt for a more traditional approach: "We argue that, generally speaking, metaphysical thinking in Africa has features which make it a particular way of conceptualizing reality" (Teffo and Roux, 1998:136). They therefore choose to work on a specific level of abstraction (generalisation) when it comes to the conceptual scheme of Africa, because this reflects the true situation. Kaphagawani & Malherbe (1998:206) take the same line. They say that the general trend of thought is that there is such a thing as African philosophy in the singular. They remark that people who believe in witchcraft or a supreme being will share certain conceptions of reality, which usually include aspects such as causality, responsibility etc., and this makes certain generalisations possible.

This study adopts the position taken by Paris, Teffo and Roux that generalisations are possible and indeed necessary. Like Wendland (1999:3), the researcher prefers not to use "either-or" language but rather "both-and". In

speaking of African religion or African worldviews, this does not literally mean that every African (or even every tribe out of the hundreds of tribes in Africa) shares (or shared) a particular opinion. It rather refers to general trends or what Kaphagawani and Malherbe (1998:206) refer to as what may reasonably be viewed as “generic features of knowledge”. If this is no longer a trend within a particular group, descriptive research must point this out and propose alternatives to the general description. The researcher has taken pains to “critically test” general opinions against current ones in conducting qualitative research among different groups in South Africa (some of these groups included people from other parts of Africa). The presence of differences and similarities is acknowledged, and the researcher therefore endeavours to work with great care in terms of the way he generalises and particularises.

As was mentioned above, this study aims to take both similarities and differences seriously. On a practical level, this will be done by both providing a generalised description of African traditional religion, as well as being aware that this is a generalisation and that there might be many exceptions to the rule. The researcher is, however, confident that such a careful generalisation is possible and usable. However, in order to identify differences, qualitative research is necessary. In this way, particular differences can be highlighted. By having a generalisation, differences may now be identified more easily. The generalised description and particular results of the qualitative research will be read in constant relation and necessary tension. It is a matter of “unity in diversity”, which means that one does not focus so much on the one as to ignore the other (Wendland, 1999:3).

Recently, the word “religion” in the phrase “African traditional religion” has been questioned. In a short discussion, the African Diaspora specialist, historian P. Lovejoy, questioned the use of the word “religion” to identify the worldview of Africa with, as is often done by using “African traditional religion”. Teffo & Roux (1998:136) use African philosophy to include many of the things which are usually included in the phrase African traditional religion. This is a general trend in an important collection of articles by Coetzee and Roux (1998). This phrase asks for a closer definition of what religion is. There are no clear margins where one could say: this has to do with spirituality and this not. What theologians might call African religion is, for instance, called African metaphysics or philosophy by philosophers (see Teffo and Roux, 1998:134-136 or Kaphagawani and Malherbe, 1999:1-2). This is partly due to the holistic approach of most African people to life. The problematic feature is that African spirituality is usually integrated with everything that is done or thought. More accuracy in the use of terminology should receive serious attention, but it cannot be done here. This is why this study has opted for the new phrase “African traditional worldview(s)”. The way in which a person sees and approaches his “*kosmos*” is thus the focal point.

What does the word “traditional” in the phrase “African traditional religion” signify? As Onyeidu (s.a.:20) states, Africa traditional religion “is a heritage of the primal society whose forebears could be regarded as the collective founding fathers of the religion”. He further points out that Africans do not “denominate their traditional beliefs”, and therefore no special name is attached to their beliefs. It is simply accepted as “the people’s way of life and part of their culture” (s.a.:20). He also emphasises that, irrespective of the differences, African religion reflects a system in which objects, activities etc. form a coherent system (see Onyeidu, s.a.:12-13; Adamo, 1999:1-2 and Ganusah, 2000:291). The different aspects of this system should be interpreted and understood in relation to each other. Inherent to this is the possibility of expressing oneself in different ways with different myths and folktales. Diversity was accepted as part of the religion which they speak of in the singular (see Onyeidu, s.a.:12-13; Adamo, 1999:1-2 and Ganusah, 2000:291). It is also called “traditional” because of the force of custom. “Traditionally, all beliefs and practices were not so much rationalized as justified on the basis of the customs of the fathers” (Onyeidu, s.a.:24). As an oral culture, the “ways of the fathers” were transmitted as tradition, and this was a determining factor in the worldviews of people who belonged to these African groups.

2.3.1.1 The reality of African Traditional Religion

African traditional religion is Africa’s own way of coming to terms with reality (Olupona & Nyang, 1993:67; see also Crafford, 1996). “In the African experience all men are children of God. None is a child of the earth” (Groyter, 1993:98; see also Mbiti, 1990). “It is quite evident that African traditional religion plays an important role in shaping the character of African society and culture today” (Olupona 1991:1; see also Oduyoye, 1991). According to Olupona (1991: 35), “African traditional views in Africa present an affinity with post-modern worldviews. Because of Africa’s predominant cultural heterogeneity, none could speak of a single worldview in Africa”. The heterogeneity aspect of Africa’s traditional cultures and religions makes the integration of ethnic groups difficult, even impossible (Olupona, 1991:35-36).

With regard to traditional religion and the sense of community, one can say that the metaphysical world of Africa is full of beings. Thinking is synthetically, not analytically, orientated. There is a total interdependence with religious values. There is “an intense sense of the community”. “In modern thinking, the principle of identity prevails; there is no sharing of being”. “Humanity in Africa is basically family, basically community” with strong stress on traditional religion and its “symbiotic union with ancestors and spiritual entities ‘through animal sacrifice performances’ in the metaphysical world” (Shutte, 1994). A person’s deeds from birth to death and thereafter only render him/her answerable to the community. Sacrificial meals are symbolic; stressing the fact that the living and the living dead are gathered together (Olupona, 1991:41; see also Mahlangu, 1999; Van der Watt, 1977b and Sundermeier, 1999). The researcher is of the

opinion that similarities between African traditional religion and animal and human blood sacrifices would serve as a fertile ground on which some missionary endeavours could help Africans to understand the message of Christianity.

2.3.1.2 African Traditional Religion: a stem of Christianity

The nature of denial has it that, to regard African religious beliefs as a foundation for faith in Christ, not dead works, but one of the pathways to God, is crucial. It has ingredients which qualify it to be an example of religion for Christians. For instance, priest Laurenti Magesa of Tanzania said that: “Ujamaah should be emulated by Christianity. He claimed that Dr. K.J.Nyerere’s vision of the ideal African society was equal to the Gospel” (Nyirango, 1997; see also Mbiti, 1977 and Mugambi, 1989). Ebolaji Edowu equates the African experience of God to that of Christians. He accepts the view of researchers such as Lang and Schmidt that ancient Africans were monotheistic, just like Christians. He asserts that pre-Christianity Africans knew God and worshipped Him rightfully. He also affirms that “African religion contains abundant truth” (rich heritage), qualifying her to be a “stepping stone for Christian faith”. These theologians and scholars attempt to find truths isolated from pagan religions since “truth (and lies) don’t disintegrate into separate bits but form an organic whole” (Nyirango, 1997; see also Bediako, 1977; Crafford, 1996 and Maimela, 1990). Therefore, this study will now look at why literary and qualitative research is necessary in this regard.

2.3.2 Literary and qualitative research are both necessary – why?

The African traditional worldview forms one point of focus. However, social dynamics, especially over the last two centuries, were so diverse and vibrant that the ideas and views of Africans changed considerably. In South Africa in particular, influences such as Christianity in its diverse forms, the political situation of colonialism, which grew into apartheid, capitalism with its devastating influence on family life, the growing awareness of Africanism, education with its particular emphases, urbanisation etc., exercised a strong influence on the worldviews of Africans. It should not be assumed that what is commonly described by phrases such as African traditional religion or African traditional thought or philosophy is still the dominant orientation, especially in big cities. However, the other mistake which should not be made is to presume that African traditional religion has no influence any longer or has simply disappeared. Qualitative research has shown that the worldviews of even urbanised young people are still well-founded in ideas which could be called traditional, or are at least related to the traditional.

The first question to ask is why it is necessary to take cognisance of African traditional religion’s views if it is not that prevalent in its pure form any longer. This is of course a statement which should be made with caution. There is also

that which could be called traditional in its pure form, which is still common today. Why should it still be taken into account as a point of focus in the hermeneutical process?

- The roots and foundation of African worldviews lie in traditional views. Adamo (2001) uses this argument as the basis for his African cultural hermeneutics. According to him, the Bible should be read from this perspective. As Teffo and Roux (1998:136) rightly suggest: “It is clear... that views which are called ‘traditional’ still play a role, indeed an important role, in the lives of Africans”. Taking note of traditional views becomes even more important, since African traditional worldviews are not sets of atomic, unrelated ideas, but rather a coherent system of interrelated ideas.

It serves as the framework within which changes as well as resistance to change may be evaluated and understood. For more specificity, it is now increasingly acknowledged in semantics that in reading a text, the (macro) genre determines understanding. Take, for instance, the following sentence: “Honey, are we eating out tonight? I do not smell anything burning”. If this sentence is uttered in the form of a joke, the effect will be laughter. If it is uttered as part of the genre of serious talk, the effect might be divorce or serious injury. Genre contributes substantially to the semantic function and effect of the text. Meaning is not just words or sentences. In a circular way, the parts contribute to the meaning of the whole, and the meaning of the whole to that of the parts. In the same way, it is necessary to understand the whole of traditional thinking in order to understand the individual parts.

- Inculturation may be facilitated by being aware of traditional beliefs. Africa has experienced an abuse of its ideas, which were in the past described by outsiders as primitive, pagan, superstitious absurdities, uncivilised, stupid ‘mumbo jumbo, and the like (Onyeidu, s.a.:1-5). This resulted in ignorance about the strong systematic nature of traditional ideas. The conversation needed for proper inculturation and contextualisation i.e. for the hermeneutics of relevance, will be difficult without understanding why certain aspects are still accepted and others not, or why certain elements are defended and others do not seem to matter. The issue of healing can be taken as an example. People often go to a medical doctor or a diviner. To the outsider, this seems questionable and superstitious. However, if it is realised that within traditional views, illness is not necessarily a biomedical problem (sickness) but also a social one. Therefore, this need for social reflection and advice regarding illness requires the intervention of a diviner.

The description of traditional views will be done based on available sources. These sources will be read both critically and in order to obtain information. Information will be gathered about traditional religion(s) through these available

sources – this study will “stand on the shoulders” of these researchers. By reading critically, the researcher will try to determine the measure of similarity of opinions in sub-Saharan Africa by comparing books written by scholars from different parts of Africa. This study will also be sensitive to differences which might militate against too strong a systematisation, but at the same time will note the similarities in these descriptions.

The second question deals with the necessity for qualitative empirical research. The method of research and what it entails have been discussed in the first chapter. Relevancy means that one meets people where they are. Contextual reading means that one meets them in their context. Through qualitative research, it can be established what people today think and why – one can indeed explore their worldviews in a detailed way, and determine what their positions are between the two points of focus (Western Christianity and African traditional Christianity), as illustrated in Figure 2. Le Marquand (2000:96), for instance, points out that African male scholars are more positive towards patriarchal traditions in Africa than women scholars, who also question these themes in the Bible. This is significant in dealing with the current context of African believers. Adamo (2001:112) also acknowledges the necessity for more knowledge of the current ways of experiencing and thinking about Christianity in Africa (see also Mbiti, 1986). This will also accommodate the differences which might exist between different groups within Christian movements in Africa. Maluleke (1999:2) emphasises the variety of Christianity in Africa – there are a host of Christianities, and even Christianities within Christianities. This cannot be ignored, and should be accommodated in any responsible approach towards the Bible.

The reason for combining qualitative research with literary research is to establish to what extent traditional ideas have remained intact, and to what extent they have changed. So-called unstable areas, where changes occur rapidly, will also be identified. Groups from different major areas in South Africa are identified to see whether or not there are significant differences between the different areas. In this analysis, the researcher will focus on the similarities as well as the differences. He will also strive to determine to what extent current ideas are still reflecting the traditional worldview. The ideas will not be treated in an atomic way, but causality and interrelatedness will play an important role.

By combining these two methods of research, this study hopes to outline and discuss views which are alive in a large part of Africa. In this way, it is hoped to encourage similar detailed studies elsewhere, through using, comparing and adjusting this study’s results. How, though, did Christianity come into being?

2.3.3 The emergence of Christianity

The rich diversity of Christian traditions worldwide, including Christianity, historically and in all its present forms, cannot be extensively dealt with in this dissertation. It is only for the sake of background that this issue is being included here. Only a look at some Christian doctrine developments, accepted as authoritative in the majority of Church traditions, can help in providing a profile of Christianity. Thirty percent of the world's population call themselves Christians, which shows the importance of Christianity among world religions (Meiring, 1996:128, see also Kärkkäinen 2004).

Christianity evolved from a non-famous Galilean Jew, and it came to have thousands of adherents, most of them non-Jews, in the Eastern Mediterranean wider world. Its expansion was considered to be a divine intervention in the history and affairs of the human race. This view was shared by Christian contemporaries of the Jews and later generations. Enthusiasts and opponents alike saw its rapid growth as an extraordinary achievement, unparalleled in the religious history that preceded that time (Hastings, 1999:7). Around C. 120 C.E., when all New Testament canonical books had already been written, Christianity was distinguishable from Judaism by its own extensive history (Hastings, 1999:7). At this stage, one can also ask how the church came into being.

2.3.3.1 The emergence of the Church

It was after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection in or around 30 C.E. that Christianity truly began. The first century Judea had several charismatic teachers, but none drew as many followers to himself after his death as Jesus did (Hastings, 1999:16). Therefore, this study will begin the description of Christianity with Boulaga's (1984) criticism: "Christianity has expanded to all the nations of the world in about two millenniums; it has enjoyed ample success, constancy and brilliance. Christianity is the ultimate religion. It is the genealogical and cultural religion. Christianity should be untouchable for churches have indefectibly handed down on the essential of the revealed message, self-identical, necessary for salvation, universal and in no way tied to any civilization whatsoever" (Boulaga, 1984:3-6).

"Thus all that is just, good and true, today as yesterday and tomorrow, attaches to this church, and thus belong to Christianity; it emanates from its saving superabundance, or else its pre-figuration...outside of visible and invisible pole of Christian religion... There is but error, ignorance and evil" (Boulaga, 1984:6). It is the researcher's belief that, even though the biblical message is irrevocably true, men, not angels, have always been the vehicles of the divinely revealed truth. The study of church history highlights both human strengths and weaknesses. The lives of the Old Testament heroes of faith, including those of the New Testament, testify to this. It would therefore be unrealistic, on behalf of

anyone, to attribute people's erroneous attitudes and behaviours to Christianity as a religion. Boulaga seems here to go a bit far in his satire. He goes on to say:

"Simply the application and recognition of true biblical knowledge can easily win the case. True knowledge is obedience to the sovereignty of God. One recognizes it only in submitting and worshipping it. Not to understand it is to disobey, to rebel, and to prefer the human to the divine and ultimately preferring oneself to one's Creator and Savior". "Thus the proof from scripture comes down to the argument from authority. What is to be made of Christianity is the framework of an ethics of historical responsibility, and in a view of the experience of language limitations that forbid us to speak from God's viewpoint"(Boulaga, 1984:6-15). In the researcher's opinion, Boulaga's ironical portrayal of Christianity does not seem to validate its distinctiveness, as compared to other world religions.

Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, and the incarnated Son of God, accomplished reconciliation between the Father and humankind. His vicarious, atoning death and resurrection constitute an emphatic point and backbone of Christian confession (Meiring, 1996:128). Many people in Africa, and specifically South Africa, have been influenced by Christian traditions. Seventy percent of the South African population has embraced Christianity, with approximately 13.5 million Protestants and 2.5 million Roman Catholics. The Methodist Church is the largest, with about 2.5 million adherents. This is followed by the Anglican Church with 2 million, and finally, the Dutch Reformed Church with 1.4 million. South Africa comprises many rapidly growing independent churches, among which the Zionists have gathered about 2 million members. Independent churches' membership accounts for one third of the entire black population (Meiring, 1996:142; see also Mbiti, 1986).

The person and work of Jesus (His self-sacrifice on the cross, shedding His blood for us and being resurrected) constitute the bedrock of Christianity. Jesus' ministry upon Earth, as well as His death and resurrection, create a strong platform and nucleus for Christian creeds and teachings. God's special and final revelatory act on Earth fulfilled the reconciliation and restoration of humankind into fellowship with God through Jesus' sacrifice. He is the mediator between God and men, and the sole intermediary by virtue of His vicarious and atoning sacrifice, granting to Christianity a distinctive nature among world religions (Meiring, 1996:148; see also Stoker 2006).

2.3.3.2 The nature of Christianity

Among Christianity's features, particularism and universalism paradoxically occur. It is known to be both exclusive and inclusive. Particularism is seen in God's calling: God called a particular man, Abraham, to whom He disclosed His will for mankind. He also chose a particular line through which to convey His

eternal redemptive message, namely Abraham's progeny. This calling entailed that, through Abraham, all the nations of the world would be blessed. Therefore, it must be understood that the phrase "God of Israel" does not suggest bigotry, nationalism or racism (Kato, 1985:35).

Christianity's universalism only refers to the redemption of all mankind. Acts 2:9-11 shows this universalistic aspect of Christianity, because Asians, Africans and Europeans were represented on the day of Pentecost. The apostle Paul conveys the same understanding in 1Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:28 respectively saying: "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (NIV). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (NIV). Genesis 12:1-3 and Isaiah 45:22-23 vividly add to the portrayal of Christianity's prophetic and historical nature (Kato, 1985:35). Therefore, Christianity is African, Asian, European and American, since its followers are distributed all over those continents (Kato, 1985:35-36). But what are the beliefs of orthodox Christianity?

2.3.3.3 Beliefs of orthodox Christianity: An African religion

Doctrinal disagreement within the three branches of Christendom - Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant - "doesn't supersede their agreement on the vital essentials of the faith. The following information serves as a yardstick to evaluate the errant beliefs of some erring religions: African traditionalists normally say that Christianity is a white man's religion; this is even so true in the Republic of South Africa due to the historic sequels of the apartheid regime whereby there was no separation between the state and the church" (Gibellini 1994:1, see also Jansen 1995; Pobe 1992).

This study will attempt to establish and explain why Christianity is an African religion. Christianity has been on the African soil since as early as the first century A.D. Some important centres of Christianity were witnessed in Alexandria (Egypt) and Carthage (Tunisia). During the fourth century, Christianity came to the kingdom of Axum in Ethiopia. It was only in the course of the 15th century A.D. that Christianity reached the sub-Saharan regions of black Africa. With the emergence of Islam in the seventh century, the Latin Christianity that had been formerly established was swept away, and disappeared from North Africa, with the exception of Coptic Christianity (Gibellini, 1994:1-2). At this point, one wonders about the historic relationship between Christianity and African traditional religion.

2.3.3.4 Christianity and Africa's historic relationship

Historical accounts show that Christianity was linked with Africa, even before the advent of European and American missionaries. The first man to whom God revealed His will was Abraham, an Asian – then, through his posterity, the

Jews. He gave them the message of salvation, not a monopoly on the Gospel. This did not include any culture gradation - God simply used them to carry out His eternal redemptive purpose for all humankind. Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was born, raised, educated, died and resurrected in Asia. He never walked on the European soil (Kato, 1985:34).

Among the writers of the Bible, none is of European origin as far as history is concerned, and Christianity reached Europe only twenty years after the death and the resurrection of Christ, with Lydia's conversion through Paul's missionary, evangelic journey (Acts 16:15). There are many historical facts that prove the relationship between Africa and the biblical land, Palestine:

- God's people were saved from Egyptian bondage in Africa (Ex 1-14).
- The Queen of Sheba, who paid a visit to King Solomon, was from Ethiopia in Africa (2Chr 9:12).
- Moses, the leader of the Israelites, married an African girl (Nm 12:1-2).
- An African pulled prophet Jeremiah out of the pit (Jer 38:7-8).
- Prophecy specified that God's work would expand tremendously in Africa, and that African countries such as Egypt and Ethiopia would play a representative role, and would stretch out their hands to God (Ps 68:31).

There is also a direct link between Africa and the New Testament:

- Baby Jesus was brought to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill him (Mt 2:13-15).
- On the way to Golgotha, Simon of Cyrene, an African, helped to carry the cross of Jesus up to the crucifixion hill (Mt 27:32-33).
- At Pentecost, Africa was represented, as there were some people from Egypt and parts of Libya near Cyrene (Ac 2:10).
- The Ethiopian eunuch was the first convert outside the Jewish circle (Ac 8:26-38).
- Simeon, nicknamed Niger, after whom the river of Niger and countries of Niger and Nigeria were named, and which means black, was a member of the leadership of the church at Antioch (Ac 13:1).

North Africa and Asia Minor were big centres of Christianity, with very strong churches during the first four centuries:

- For instance, Agustin of Hippo was an outstanding theologian who had a lasting influence on Christian theology after Paul. "His African practical mind can be still noted in both Roman Catholic and Protestant theology" (Kato, 1985:35).
- Cyprian, Athanasius, Tertullian, and Origen were all outstanding theologians. "It was due to internal squabbles and to lack of vision that Christianity spread northward to Europe and British isles. Then the converted Europe brought Christianity back to Africa. Therefore, it is historically inaccurate to say that Christianity is not an African religion,

since those who confess to be Christians in many African countries constitute the majority of the population” (Kato, 1985:35, see also Ott 2007).

2.3.3.5 The practice of Christianity

Given the fact that Christianity is truly an African religion, African believers must be encouraged to feel comfortable in the church. The Christian doctrine must be expressed in words or terms understandable to Africans. Church leaders should promote practices that contribute to the growth, maturity and spiritual welfare of African believers. For instance, a formal prayer written in the 18th century sounds unintelligible to young people - it must be rewritten in a modern language so that it is easy to grasp for African youth. More reflections should be undertaken in order to promote whatever strategic plan necessary to make the African feel that “Christianity is his/her faith” (Kato, 1985:36, see also Kinoti 1997).

With regard to alien beliefs that might have mingled with Christianity, the best solution would be to purge biblical faith in Africa of those foreign and indigenous accretions, and to declare immutable biblical faith in Africa for Africans. As Kato remarks (1985:37). “Since it is an African religion inasmuch a European religion. In today’s Africa we need not return to the old traditional religion, or borrow some of the pagan practices to add to Christianity”. The above summary of Christianity is relevant to this study because it shows that Christianity stands upon the platform of Jesus’ self-sacrificial death as carrier of our sins, the fulfillment of biblical sacrificial typologies. Like all animal substitutes, Jesus shed His own blood to achieve mankind’s redemption as well as spiritual and physical healing (Sloyan, 1995:99, see also Munga 1998; Bujo 1992). The following section on Christianity as a point of focus will provide the reader with more insight in this regard.

2.3.4 Christianity as a point of focus

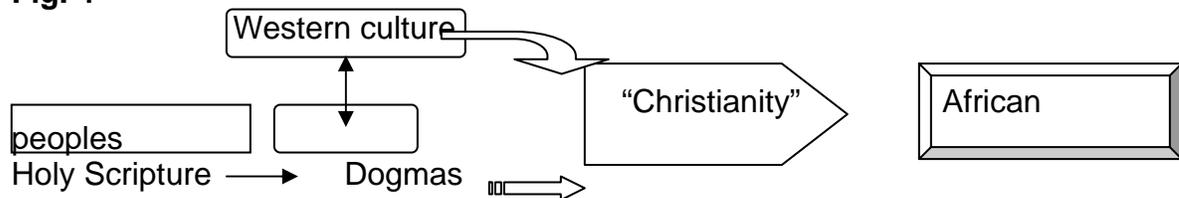
Christianity did not come to Africa as a single set of ideas, and does not exist as such in Africa. The history of missions in Africa presents us with a varied, complex and controversial picture. In Southern Africa, initial missionary efforts were so confusing to the indigenous people that the churches were forced to sign a triangular agreement, reserving the eastern part of the country to English-speaking churches, the centre of the country to Dutch Reformed churches, and the western part to the German Lutheran church. From the very outset, Africa was confronted with Christianity in its diversity, since the Christian message was presented with strong systematic and dogmatic convictions, which of course differed from church to church.

Missionaries usually promote their brand of Christianity with vigour, a tendency that often creates a social atmosphere of dogmatism. Apart from this, Le

Marquand (2000:87) points out that “the missionary worldview and the ethos of the New Testament were sometimes quite apart” (see also Onyeidu, s.a.:6-7 in this regard). Furthermore, West (1999a:37) reminds us that the reception of Christianity and the Bible in Africa did not necessarily amount to the same thing. A second complicating factor was that the dividing lines between the culture of the colonialists and Christianity were vague, and often not recognised by the indigenous people. The dress, manners, general conduct, race and so forth of Western colonialists were linked to Christianity, and in this way received religious sanction. This was not a problematic link for Africans to make, since they traditionally approached everything in life from a religious perspective.

Christianity was received in a mixed form, which combined ideas from the scripture with dogmatic and cultural elements. Part of the problem, according to Nkomazana (2000:235), was also that “missionaries did not realize that their interpretation of the Bible was basically European”. They hindered the rapid development of an authentic Christianity in Africa, according to him. West (1999a:17) applies the statement of Bush to the African context, which implies that the role of the Bible was initially not primary. The impact was indirect, since it was often imbedded in catechetical materials, doctrinal statements or sermons. What happened may be simply illustrated as follows:

Fig. 4



In qualitative research, as mentioned above, the mixed nature of Christianity and its “triumphant entry” into Africa (Western culture is also a varied phenomenon - Germans are unlike the English or Portuguese in many ways, and vice-versa. The term is used here in a general sense) via the Western culture (or was it vice versa?) are duly taken into account. There are places where traditionalists will tell you that God was initially rarely mentioned. With exposure to Christianity, an awareness of God and His presence were created, which forced formulations about God into the foreground. Often, typical scholarship qualities of God are found in these formulations. It leads to the suspicion that these formulations were taken over from Christian dogmatism. In different parts of the country, you might therefore get different dogmatic ideas, which play a role in the worldviews of the people. LeMarquand (2000:87) rightly points out that the “missionary worldview and the ethos of the New Testament were sometimes quite far apart. This tension between African and

western world-views continues in scholarly circles”. Onyeidu (s.a.:6-7) refers to the efforts of missionaries to uproot African culture and religion.

Reactions to Western culture and elements of Christianity soon became evident. In South Africa alone, there are approximately 8,000 indigenous churches, a number which increases daily. See Obeing (1999:1), who claims that churches are springing up in Ghana too. This is emphasised by Maluleke (1999:2), who reminds us that “the continent hosts various Christianities – even Christianities within Christianities”. These different forms of Christianity combine Christian and indigenous elements according to different mixtures. This is a common way in which Western dogma was absorbed. What was practical or of use was accepted. This means that the worldview of Christianity was also not accepted as a whole. Maluleke (1999:3; see also Mugambi, 1999 and Nkurunziza,1989) complicates the situation even more. Because of the diversity in the Bible itself, “there is tremendous variety of reception, use and interpretation of the Bible”. The implication here is that different Christianities in Africa are all based on the Bible, but in different ways and emphasising different texts or ways of interpreting or using the text. Nevertheless, the Bible remains a fundamental criterion for theological activity (see also Schronhoven, 1989; Ukpong, 1995; Punt, 1997).

Recently, charismatic churches, focusing very strongly on the work of the Spirit, are fast gaining ground. Elements are freely integrated into their forms of spirituality, according to the guidance of the Spirit. There are, therefore, clear efforts to short-circuit the dominant influence of Western culture and its accompanying dogma. There is a clear tendency towards relevance and personal involvement. In an attempt to be more specific, this study is going to describe the perspective of mission in Africa for the sake of background.

2.3.5 Mission perspective in Africa

Christianity and African traditional religions are the main religions on the African continent. African Christianity has always been called the religion of the European missionaries. Yet, Christianity has strong claims to be reckoned as the oldest of the religious traditions known to Africa, with a continuous history on the continent of nearly 2000 years. Lamin Sanneh, a West African historian and theologian, said that Christianity in modern Africa is a preservation and affirmation movement for African culture. This sounds debatable, given the widely held view that Christian missionaries were despisers and destroyers of African cultural heritage. It is quite interesting to note that Sanneh holds that the main emphasis on the Bible’s translation into African peoples’ mother tongues has contributed to the enhancement of African culture in its particularities and diversities (Hastings, 1999:192).

The intention here is not to write the history of missions in Africa, and specifically South Africa, but rather to point out the negative impulses on behalf

of missionaries that caused unbelief, divisions and a rise of black independent churches, as well as a relapse back to, and promotion of, African traditional beliefs and syncretistic ways of worship. The dehumanising slave trade in Africa and the apartheid regime in South Africa, initiated by some Christian missionaries, inhibited to some extent the preaching of the Gospel (Mugambi, 1985:27; Hastings, 1999; Shaw, 1996; Pobee, 1999; Anderson et al, 1994; and Baur, 1994). At this point, it would be useful to briefly discuss the perspectives of mission in South Africa.

2.3.5.1. Mission perspectives in the Republic of South Africa

The Republic of South Africa has had over 150 years' history of Christianity. In the Republic of South Africa, the Protestant Church has the largest membership. In 1900, approximately one quarter of all Africans professed the Christian faith. In 1970, this had risen to three-quarters. However, "South Africa has also the greatest proliferation of separatist churches than any other country in the world". In 1970, this amounted to one third of all African Christians, with three and a half million distributed among 3000 distinct bodies. However, racial discrimination and sectarianism are eventually symptomatic of South Africa's greatest problem. This raises the following question: How far is Christianity in South Africa truly Christian (Baur, 1994:403)? At this juncture, a short look at apartheid and the churches is necessary.

i) Apartheid and the Churches

"Apartheid" or separate development was the ideology proposed in order to guarantee the survival of the Boers as a nation. Defeated by British imperialism (Boer War of 1898-1902) and forced into the South African Union, they became scared of an eventual submersion by the ever-increasing black race. The Industrial Revolution brought Boer farmers to urban centres, where they called themselves Afrikaners. Africans also left homelands to become urban dwellers. After World War II, the liberal government of General Jan Smuts "envisaged the eventual opening of a multi-racial parliament but the whites voted into power Dr. Malan and Dr. Verwoerd's Party" (1948). They started to "struggle for racial purity" (Nazi ideology), coupled with the war against "godless communism" (the devil at the wall), in the name of "Christian civilization" (Baur, 1994:406). Therefore, because of practical discrimination in both "daughter churches" and multiracial churches where blacks felt dominated by either missionaries or white members, tensions were common. The founding of independent churches was the earliest and most radical black reaction against white churches' historical bigotry (Baur, 1994:409). "Indigenous churches symbolise the Black revolt against European spiritual and cultural domination". Why did independent churches establish themselves?

ii) Reasons for the rise of independent churches

The Protestant practice of separatism seems to be the principal cause for the rise of independent churches. Related to this are “missionary authoritarianism and the desire to preserve something of the African heritage and rituals...” However, the problem of evil was understood differently by African Christians and missionaries, since Africans looked at the problem functionally, not philosophically. Africans distinguished between three levels of evil: the first being humiliation or human shame... “Africans were the most dishonored of all races that God created in this earth”. The second evil originates from the mysterious world of spirits: illness, infertility, pestilence, famine, and sudden or inexplicable death. Ancestral and demonic spirits constitute the underlying causes of these events. Witchcraft was built around the existence of the second evil. The third face of evil was that of alienation (Shaw, 1996: 241). Following this brief overview of mission perspectives in South Africa, this study will now examine some recent scientific theories on blood sacrifice.

2.4 SCIENTIFIC THEORIES ON BLOOD SACRIFICE

2.4.1 Introduction

The following scientific theories on blood sacrifices will be included here in order to ground this dissertation within the field of scientific studies. They are the most recent, and information about them is needed in order to have knowledge about the framework of sacrificial theories in the field of science, as far as blood sacrifices are concerned, so that when analysing the material later on, one is sensitive to the different approaches. Therefore, before specifically approaching blood sacrificial performances in South Africa and providing some examples from other parts of Africa and the New Testament (Epistle to the Hebrews, this study would like to critically survey some modern scientific theories on blood sacrifices in order to provide a reliable, tangible theoretical framework. The focus will be on the following modern theorists: Burkert (1987), Girard (1987) and Smith (1987). The following theories serve as a background to both this study’s approach to blood sacrifices in South African traditional religious beliefs, especially among the Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga peoples, as well as to its exploration of the theme of blood sacrifice in Hebrews, chapters five to thirteen.

2.4.1.1 Walter Burkert

In his *Homo Necans*, Burkert’s approach comprises an eclectic mixture of functionalism, structuralism and socio-biology (Burkert, 1983:xix; 1987:150). He terms rituals as *Δεῖ, <∇ (things done): “action patterns used as signs, in other words, stereotypic demonstrative action” (Burkert, 1987:150). Further definitions encompass forms of non-verbal communication and patterns that are accompanied by motives (Burkert, 1987:150). These definitions are

revelatory of Burkert's structuralist and socio-biological background that the following declaration more clearly illustrates: "Even philosophy depends on a biological, psychological and socially determined environment and tradition to provide its basis of understanding" (Burkert, 1983:xix).

According to Burkert, human society has been moulded through the history of the past. Consequently, its development over long periods of time needs to be examined. He examines religion as a historical and social phenomenon - people's traditional communication medium (Burkert, 1983:xxii). His emphasis is on the primary function of religious rituals. In this, he heavily depends upon the scholar Meuli (1946), who suggested that "aspects of Greek sacrificial practices, especially the caring and handling of bones of animal victims, were similar to the practice of Paleolithic hunters" (Burkert, 1987:24).

Meuli pointed out that sacrificial practices originated during the Paleolithic hunting periods. After hunting, game meat was distributed among the community members anticipating its consolidation through communal eating. Sacrifice became "a transfer of property", a "gift" with the introduction of animal domestication during the Neolithic Age (Burkert, 1987:165-166). Burkert's ritual and religious theory was developed out of the establishment of the Paleolithic hunting culture (Burkert, 1987:24).

i) Burkert's view of ritual and myth

Here, Burkert takes into consideration the meaning and function of ritual, as adopted from Huxley and Lorenz. Consequently, ritual stands for "a behavioral pattern that has lost its primary function...and persists in a new function, that of communication" (Burkert, 1983:23). According to socio-biologists and Burkert himself, repetition and theatrical exaggeration constitute two characteristics of ritual. Burkert's further argument maintains that a ritual activity needs to be viewed in a communal context, since its function "normally lies in group formation, the creation of solidarity, or the negotiation of understanding among the members of the species". The ritual activity comprises a combination of extremely threatening and alluring things such as fire, blood and weapons on the one hand, and food and sexuality on the other (Burkert, 1985:54).

Ritual makes up and concretely sustains social interactions (Burkert, 1983:24). $\forall \exists \Delta (\forall$, that is, corporate or individual gestures and postures including signs, declare an individual's belonging and place in the community. Thought structures and behavioral patterns pertaining to a certain community are occasionally allocated collective expressions through ceremonial customs, and recognised as the participants' social universe (Burkert, 1983:24). With regard to this, Burkert adds that: "Ritual is, after all, communication of a special sort: it is an action rooted in pragmatic interaction, and thus not only transports information, but often directly affects the addressee and possibly the 'sender' as well". Socio-biologists and functionalists' traditions hold that religious

ceremonies constitute communication forms that “create, commemorate, and preserve solidarity among group members” (Burkert, 1983:155).

In terms of the relationship between myth and ritual, Burkert argues that ritual as a form of communication should be equated with verbalised language and vice versa. Contrary to Harrison, who considers myth as essentially text or scripts to ritual, Burkert enjoins that, according to historical evolution, myth and ritual are not of the same age. Myth does not simply grow from ritual, but possibly dates back to the advent of speech. Ritual, on the other hand, started with animal evolution. Paradoxically speaking, the two systems became intimately connected. However, they can exist independently of each other, but might sometimes be intertwined (Burkert, 1983:29-34).

ii) Burkert and sacrificial ritual

In this section, Burkert discusses the slaughtering of animals and shedding of their blood as central to religious rituals. From his perspective, the practice paradoxically confirms the fact that violence is unavoidable for the foundation of human culture (Burkert, 1987:163). Violence and blood “lurk fascinatingly at the very heart of religion”, for even to be delivered from the “evil of aggression”, they must be confronted with human butchering at the very core...the death of God’s innocent Son” (Burkert, 1983:2). Of the elements that Burkert analysed, aggression and violence are the most significant, since they marked mankind’s progress towards civilization, and currently grow continually as the generation’s central problem (Burkert, 1983:1).

Burkert situates the roots of aggression within human evolutionary biology. With regard to Lorenz, the socio-biological theorist whom Burkert noticeably depends upon, the human species’ aggressive capacity appears to be unique in terms of self-destruction. Consequently, communal rituals and the resulting sacrifice curb intra-specific aggression, thus preventing the species from self-destructing. His analysis of sacrificial ritual structure identifies a three-fold death structure:

- The preliminary rite of purification and preparation;
- *?**8**≅8A(0*. emotional climax sealed by a piercing scream; and
- The concluding rites comporting animal sacrifices and the sharing of a communal meal. This serves as peace restoration, formerly disrupted by the killing. Thus, the sacrificial shift “from an inhibited labyrinth begins through a terrifying midpoint to a scrupulous tidy conclusion” (Burkert, 1983:12).

A sacrifice turns death into life-affirming enjoyment (Burkert 1985:58). Sacrificial rituals grant society a specific shape or form. “A sense of community arises from collective aggression” (Burkert, 1983:35). The shock experienced during the act of killing is followed by consolidation, guilt is followed by reparation, and destruction gives way to reconstruction (Burkert, 1983:38). It

means that “killing justifies and affirms life; it makes us conscious of the new order and brings it to power” (Burkert, 1983:40). Hunting rituals mould society, define it and protect it from destructive, intra-specific aggression. “Sacrificial killing is the basic experience of the sacred...*Homo religious* acts and attains self-awareness as *Homo necans*”. In other words, only man, the killer (*homo necans*) has the ability to change into a truly religious being or *homo religious* (Burkert, 1983:3).

iii) Sacrificial ritual and the hunting hypothesis

As mentioned earlier, Burkert’s theory states that sacrifice ultimately derives from hunting ritual, which has its origins in Meuli’s work on customs of hunting and herding communities during the Paleolithic times (circa 30 000 B.C.E). Aggression, among other elements of hunting activities, is “necessary to kill and bind the hunting group together”, and is an “essential deeply-ingrained element in man’s nature, acquired over many years in this stage of his biological evolution” (Lambert, 1993:305). Burkert suggests that aggression is released during a dangerous and bloody hunt. He contends that intra-specific aggression is sublimated and redirected if the hunting party were to succeed (Burkert, 1987:24). This was intimated by the failure of adult males to co-operate.

Adult males’ aggressive nature fuels the group’s demonstration of aggression towards outsiders, creating a sense of communal personal cohesion (Burkert, 1983:20). The hunting act of killing is practical, not ceremonial. It is subject to chance and profane aim: to obtain meat for food (Burkert, 1983:15). However, depending on circumstances, killing can become ceremonial, even among hunters. Investigations conducted in societies accessible to ethnological studies revealed that hunters expressed guilt feelings following the slaughtering of what they primarily considered to be quasi-human (Burkert, 1983:160). Afterwards, hunting focused on large mammals that “consciously resembled men in their body picture and movements, their eyes and faces, their breath and voices, in fleeing and in fear, in attacking and in rage” (Burkert, 1983:20).

Burkert points out that there is an invasive feeling of fear and guilt when a person sees the “flowing of blood” that indicates “the remnant of biological, life preserving inhibition”. He finally mentions that “weapons, blood, and death establish a sense of the community...The power to kill and the respect for life illuminate each other” (Burkert, 1983:21). Later, guilt is “evinced in the ritual attempt to restore or re-constitute the beast after the hunt-bone gathering, the raising of the skull and the stretching of the skin” (Lambert, 1993:305). The complexity of guilt feelings in this encounter rest on the fact that, undoubtedly in ancient Greek sacrifice, the one offering the sacrifice begs for the beast’s permission prior to its slaughtering. In accordance with Burkert’s understanding, the requirement for permission from the animal victim substantiates the fact that “forgiveness and reparation...are critical to sacrificial ritual” (Burkert, 1983:16).

Nevertheless, ritual is incapable of channeling, sublimating or erasing anxiety completely, but it creates anxiety on the spot or before and during the immolation, in order to comfort it and channel it creatively (Burkert, 1987:27). While on the subject of ritual and death, Burkert suggests that “The ritual betrays an underlying anxiety about the continuation of life in the face of death”. Consequently, the shedding of blood is critical for the perpetuation of life and for new life to start again (Burkert, 1983:16).

iv) Funerary rituals and sexuality

According to Burkert’s argument, the fact that ritual ceremonies include eating signifies that funerary rituals are also born out of hunting. He argues that, since in funerary rituals every burial is accompanied by sacrifices, this adequately proves the existence of a relationship between ritual hunting, sacrificial and funerary rituals. They mutually influence each other. The equal treatment of dead animals and dead humans by Paleolithic people shows that “*Homo sapiens* were also *homo necans* and *homo sepeliens*”. In other words, *Homo sapiens* were man the killer and man the burier (Burkert, 1983:49).

Burkert highlights the function of the funerary meal in funerary rituals, and argues that: “At first, the necessary combination of death and eating appeared only in the hunt. In that regard, there is a two-fold transferal procedure:

- The deceased person replaced the hunted quarry.
- The sacrificial animal replaced the quarry, or mourners were prohibited from eating their dead. Furthermore, he singles out the fact that, though “feasting follows death, death must be repeated immediately before the feast, through ritual killing” (Burkert, 1983:50-51).

The treatment of bones in funerary rituals is also interesting and typical of hunting customs. The dead person’s bones are assembled, as in the case of the guilty hunter who attempted to reconstitute the quarry by collecting the animal bones. The scene that takes place after this is characterised by lamenting, weeping and wailing, tearing of clothes and hair, and the use of aggression elements issuing from hunting behaviour to pollute oneself. The aggressive behaviour at funerary rituals turns death into killing, celebration into an aggression eruption, followed by reparations. Killings (that is, of sacrificial animals) connected with funerary rituals are perceived as serving the purpose of re-establishing the context of the hunt. In this way, the deceased person becomes the focal point again, with recognition and a renewal of power (Burkert, 1983:55-56).

In looking at human sexuality, Burkert argues that human impulses and sexuality must be viewed within the ritual context, considering the fact that “male aggression and male sexuality are closely linked”. He advocates that the “act of killing is sexually charged” and “sexual abstinence is frequently a part of preparing for sacrifice, war, and for the hunt” (Burkert, 1983:64). With regard to

this, he writes that: “If the preliminaries and the aftermath of the great experience correspond, the sequence of guilt and atonement can be reversed, that is, the sacrifice of a maiden or a woman can follow the battle...In this way, feelings of guilt and readiness to atone can be expressed, just as death previously has been given the form of killing, in aggressively and sexually motivated act” (Burkert, 1983:67).

In conclusion, Burkert notes that: “Sexual reproduction and death are basic facts of life. Mutually determinant and interwoven, both are acted out in sacrificial ritual, in the tension between renunciation and fulfillment, destruction and reparation”. Consequently, according to him, the stele erected on a grave might take the form of a phallus. “Orgies and death are close neighbors. Therefore, the ritual itself serves as the process with which the group perpetuates its existence through death” (Burkert, 1983:72). After the above description of Burkert’s theoretical desiderata, some criticisms of his views need to be provided. This is the task of the following section.

v) Criticisms of Burkert’s hypothesis

Lambert provides some criticisms with regard to Burkert’s theory of ritual sacrifice’s Paleolithic origin, by testing his theory’s universal assumptions in another sacrificial culture. For instance, Lambert denies the view that Zulu people who offer a sacrifice experience guilt or anxiety at any time or in any way before and after the immolation of the sacrificial victim (Lambert, 1993:307). He points out that, unlike ancient Greek sacrificers who used to conceal the weapon inside a basket of grain, Zulu sacrificers do not even try to conceal violence. On the contrary, the “*giya* almost tends to accentuate the act of violence” (Lambert, 1993:305, 308).

Moreover, French structuralist scholars who conducted some studies in the area of ancient Greek sacrifice, pointed out that Greek people differentiated hunting from sacrifice, and never related one to the other (Durand & Schap, 1989:61-70). In the same way, Lambert’s comparative study advocates the fact that Burkert’s theory does not appear to be universally valid, because the link between sacrifice, guilt and hunting is not necessarily the same in all cultures - similarities do not eclipse strong differences. With regard to participants in the ritual process, Lambert raises a crucial question: “Do all the participants in ritual acts ever know precisely why they are performing an act?” (Lambert, 1993:309).

The answer to this question sounds undoubtedly negative. The participants in a ritual are only capable of explaining behaviours in terms of their tradition or immediate function, but not in terms of origin, as Burkert alleges. This disproves Burkert’s theory of “formative antecedents” as “always fraught with speculative trap”, as Burkert himself concedes (Lambert, 1993:307). With regard to Burkert’s theory, Kirk contends that there is no particularly valid system in

studying sacrifice (in particular, ancient Greek sacrifice). With regard to Mauss's attempt to utilise the concept of gift to study sacrifice, Kirk argues that the scheme suffers from incompleteness and one-sidedness. Accordingly, he points out that: "There are different kinds of gifts with many different possible motives, and yet phrases like *do-ut-des* (I give in order that you may give)...Are now used as though they were self-explanatory and needed no further discrimination" (Kirk, 1980:42).

Kirk rejects the allegation that ritual acts are to be viewed as single motives or states of mind, and he seems to be sceptical about the structuralist approach to the treatment of matters connected with sacrificial rituals. Moreover, he argues that even psychological interpretations may sometimes be misleading (for more information, see Freud, Adler, and Jung). Burkert's particular insistence upon the association between sacrifice and sexuality is more or less a matter of Western psychoses and romanticism, rather than science itself (Kirk, 1980:42-43). With regard to Burkert's work, Kirk's preliminary conclusion reads: "any view of society and its institutions, whether it is termed functionalist or structuralist or something else, which insists on society as a bound and self-consistent organism, is wrong" (Kirk, 1980:53-54).

Kirk does not entirely doom a functionalist approach, but suggests "rather the careful re-statement of functionalism in relation to those accidents, confusions, syncretism and historical changes that make religion in particular, including its rituals and the practices of animal sacrifices not least of all, such a multifarious and often contradictory affair". He emphasises the fact that some scholars understand that rituals can only be viewed in terms of concrete physical performance and not in terms of beliefs. As far as this matter is concerned, two functions emerge: either they are performed to respond to some urgent needs and interests, or they try to give some explanation concerning something in the traditional past itself. Therefore, since rituals are adjustable, not static, there will always be new propositions and new adjustments of ritual to purpose. A specialist or historian of rituals should be able to unearth and discern the "serious re-casting of the whole complex" (Kirk, 1980:54-55).

Returning to Burkert's reconstruction of ancient Greek sacrificial ritual, Kirk disagrees with Burkert's account of this type of ritual. The $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\delta\beta.T$ (the ritual scream of a woman), which according to Burkert's understanding accompanies terrible slaughtering or killing, appears only once in the Homeric epics in direct connection to sacrifice. Furthermore, the $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\delta\beta.T$ never accompanies slaughter, death and blood-shedding, but rather the puzzling stage that preceded them. Kirk goes on to specify that Homer does not mention any bones, contrary to Burkert's allegation that burnt thigh-bones were placed on the pyre. He disagrees with this aspect of Burkert's interpretation, which is critical to his notion of guilt and reconstructing the beast (Kirk, 1980:56-66).

In approaching Karl Meuli's theory that sacrifice originates indirectly with the Paleolithic and Mesolithic hunters, Kirk agrees with the view that prehistoric hunters surely reconstituted the bones of their animal victims, granted them special treatment by burying them, setting them on trees or taking out some internal organs and handling them in a special manner, and that Neolithic herdsman "maintained many of these practices, and in particular, increased the tendency to throw the specially-treated bones on to a fire". Kirk warns that, in light of the above facts, one should not "encourage the conclusion that everything of importance about Greek sacrifice has been said, even in relation to its Olympian developments, once hunting analogies have been fully set out" (Kirk, 1980:70-71).

There is a need to fully understand Greek religious concepts and attitudes "in the periods to which we have access, those from Homer onwards..." Briefly, Kirk argues for particularity, rather than for the generalised theory that Burkert contemplates (Kirk, 1980:72). He cautions that Burkert's views on anxiety and aggression with regard to Greek sacrificial ritual should be understood as a precarious business, since they include a lot of speculation about a period for which we have no concrete evidence. Furthermore, in attributing anxiety and guilt to Paleolithic hunters, it seems as if Burkert is projecting twentieth century notions onto prehistory.

Nevertheless, Burkert's understanding of the origins and function of sacrificial ritual are viewed as being bold and typically imaginative (Kirk, 1980:76). One should be cautious about the notion of bone collection, hunting theories and theories of sexual aggression. However, one can agree with the idea of the relationship between sacrificial rituals and the renewal of life. There is also a need to support the community-affirming and building role of sacrificial ritual. René Girard's theory is examined in the next section.

2.4.1.2 René Girard

i) Background influence

René Girard is a privileged French literary critic whose views on violence, sacrifice and aggression have been moulded by literary texts such as Euripides' *Bacchae*. His major work: *La violence et le Sacré* (violence and the sacred) was first published in French in 1972, the same year in which Burkert's *Homo necans* first appeared in German (Girard, 1987:171). Written independently of each other, these works are both dubious reactions to the horrors of the Vietnam War and the problems it raised concerning human aggression and the very survival of human culture and society. Girard's literary approach is close to that of Burkert, and he claims to have also been influenced by structuralism (Girard, 1987:108).

ii) Girard's view of ritual and myth

Girard utilises Freud's model of the conscious and unconscious. He defined ritual as a replacement act for a prior event. Myth stands for a verbalised concealment of the original event. Therefore, ritual belongs to the dynamic social institution known as repetition, since it presents itself as a mimetic re-enactment of a prior event. Afterwards, the myth-beautifiers emerge who replace "the truth of the scapegoat phenomenon". Myth serves to describe "the safer course, the most reassuring course from the standpoint of the community at large" (Girard, 1987:99-100).

Girard alleges that: "all myth is born out of non-conscious efforts to repress, distort, marginalize or erase the original pattern itself, they tell tale signs of collective scapegoatism". Therefore, "myths that contain something else and do not clearly support my case I regard it as having been tampered with" (Girard, 1987:103). He suggests that: "In an enormous number of myths, we find a cluster of themes that, despite the extremely diverse variations they undergo, always remain compatible with the pattern I have in mind, the pattern of scapegoatism delusion narrated from the standpoint of the deluded persecutors" (Girard, 1987:79). Now, the question is: What is collective scapegoatism, and how is it connected to sacrificial ritual?

iii) On generative scapegoatism and sacrificial ritual

Girard concedes that sacrifice has its roots in a prehistoric, fictional mob violence act which was engendered by the fact that "humans have no breaking mechanism for intra-specific aggression". The solution to one murder is another murder. This points to the second feature of human behaviour: mimetic desire. The vicious cycle of revenge murder proves to be a necessity due to the simple fact that desire is learned through emulation. For instance, person A desires object C; person B emulates the desire of person A for object C. In this process (mimetic desire), the closer person A gets to object C, the more persons A and B fall into lethal rivalry. Consequently, emulation turns into killing (Girard, 1987:8-9).

A surrogate victim was finally selected to annihilate the cycle of murders and revenge murders. The killing of the victim temporarily grants peace to the community. Therefore, violence is both collective and spontaneously unanimous. Its role is to bring the community together (Girard, 1987:100). The unanimously and spontaneously selected person becomes a scapegoat, which constitutes the basis for the formulation of Girard's theory of "generative scapegoatism", generative in the sense that the mechanism (i.e. the scapegoat) is instrumental in the generation of human societies and cultures. Girard views scapegoatism as the "generative principle of mythology, ritual, primitive religion, even culture as a whole" (Girard, 1987:106).

According to Girard, only positive effects can be inferred from this (Girard, 1987:120). He perceives as true the fact that “scapegoat murder holds in check the intra-specific fighting among human beings” (Girard, 1987:121). The death of the scapegoat brings about harmony and peace. What is noticeable is the contrasting aspect - before the scapegoat death, there is disruption, while reconciliation is achieved afterwards. These binary opposites are crucial and central: social order, which is a symbol of supreme benevolence, while disorder is the symbol of supreme malevolence (Girard, 1987:92)

In this regard, the “transcendental of the divined scapegoat is very harmful as well as beneficial” (Girard, 1987:97). The obvious ambiguity of the scapegoat results from the fact that “victimizers see themselves as the passive victims of their own victim, and they see their victim as supremely active, eminently capable of destroying them. The scapegoat appears always to be a more powerful agent; a more powerful cause than he really is” (Girard, 1987:91). In conclusion, Girard states that the victim is both malefactor and benefactor. The whole “mimetic cycle is projected on to him and interpreted as supernatural visitation destined to teach the community what to do and not to do in the future”. This is motivated by the fact that people fail to share “peacefully an object” they all desire, but they can always share an enemy they all hate because they can join together in destroying him (Girard, 1987:128). In this case, the cure is really the same as the disease, and the Greek word for scapegoat ($N\forall\Delta:\forall I\in H$) in fact conveys this perfectly, for $N\forall\Delta:\forall I\in H$ stands for both “cure” and “poison”.

Girard makes use of the Oedipus myth to illustrate the above argument. Oedipus brought a plague upon the city of Thebes, but his expulsion brought about the necessary cure. He is thus both the cure and the poison. Girard considers the word ‘sacrifice’ to be an important one in the portrayal of the original event, as well as later sacrifices that commemorate the original mob killing that brought peace to the community (Girard, 1987:10). Therefore, unanimous victimisation is vital for the stabilisation of human communities, since it offers “a model for the whole elaboration of human culture beginning with ritual sacrifices” (Girard, 1987:121).

iv) Criticisms of Girard’s theory

Burkert criticizes Girard’s theory of the original, fictional, collective murder for its lack of foundation in historical fact. Accordingly, he writes: “...there are clear advantages to this construct, as compared to many controversial items of evolution history adduced in *Homo necans*. There is no need to hypothesize about evolution or even animal behavior, and the equivalent of man and animal plays quite a secondary role. In fact Girard is not primarily interested in ritual; works of literature turn out to be the more revealing source” (Burkert, 1987:172).

Burkert argues that Girard combines two different mechanisms gleaned from the Greek literature: the scapegoat $N\forall\Delta:i\cong H$ and $\Phi B\forall\Delta\forall(:\cong H$ (the tearing into pieces), which one finds in the rituals of Dionysus, as described in Euripides' *Bacchae*. Burkert denies the allegation that Oedipus was killed by a mob in a spontaneous collective killing, but rather that he was "voluntarily led away". He says: "If there is annihilation in the scapegoat complex, it is characteristically left to the 'others', to hostile forces, be the demons or real enemies. The basic action seems to be abandonment; it is different with normal sacrifice through which killing leads to the communal meal" (Burkert, 1987:172).

Burkert emphasises the fact that Girard's theory of generative scapegoatism has really failed to account for the origins of sacrifice: "the basic fact that man has always eaten animals in sacrifice comes in only as an additional, secondary trait, a form of deterioration" (Burkert, 1987:172). He clings to his own hunting hypothesis that "envisages the one situation in which killing is as legitimate and necessary as it can possibly be, namely, the quest for food in the competitive system of life" (Burkert, 1987:176). Although Burkert disagrees with the details of Girard's theory, especially the reduction of everything to binary opposites and the positioning of the hypothetical original situation, the idea of projected guilt is critical and could be combined with Burkert's, especially in terms of the community-building aspect and the death-life exchange.

2.4.1.3 Jonathan Smith

i) Background Influence

Smith is a religious historian with a specialisation in Hellenistic religion. He uses a comparative methodology, which consists of juxtaposing Hellenic text with another text from a completely different historical and cultural context. He cautions that comparative activity is never identity. It calls for "postulation of differences as the grounds of its being interesting....and a methodological manipulation of difference, a playing across the 'gap' in the service of some useful end" (Smith, 1987:36). He argues that *homo religiosus* is *homo symbolicus* (Smith, 1987:39).

ii) Smith's criticism of Burkert and Girard

Smith argues that ritual activities should be combined with the concept of incongruity. He cautions that while dealing with issues of ritual and myth, one has to be sober enough not to prioritise action and experience categories at the expense of rationality and language (Smith, 1987:103). He defines a ritual as a mode of paying attention and a process of interest (Smith, 1987:103; 1982:54). He presents the church as an example, because people consider this to be a marked-off space. The person who enters the church is expected to be attentive. This marked-off space functions as a focusing lens, "establishing the

possibility of significance by directing attention, by requiring a perception of difference” (Smith, 1987:104; 1982:54).

The strength of this view lies in the fact that someone or something is made sacred (see *sacrificium*). Ritual process brings about transitive categories - that is, divine and human, sacred and profane (Smith, 1987:105). Smith emphasises the realm of thought as opposed to the realm of reality. He rejects the allegation that ritual elements should be joined together with substances, but rather that ritual elements work as purely differential and infinite signs constituting a system comprised of elements that are signifiers, and yet, at the same time, signify nothing (Smith, 1987:108; 1982:57, 60).

Smith maintains that action and speech, ritual and myth, are modes of human cognition. He utilises the theories of Freud and Levi-Strauss. His argument is that “ritual activities are an exaggeration of everyday activities, but an exaggeration that reduces rather than enlarges, that clarifies by miniaturizing in order to achieve sharp focus”. According to him, rituals are no “big deal” (Smith, 1987:194-95). What is significant in ritual is “its infinite and infinitesimal elaboration”. It is impossible to find the theory of sacrifice in a quest for origins, but this can only “be found through the detailed examination of elaboration” (Smith, 1987:195).

Smith theorises that ritual as an assertion of difference denies or provides an opportunity for reflection on rationalisation of the fact that what ought to have been done was not, and what should have taken place did not. Ritual brings forth the relationship between present reality and an ideal world (Smith, 1987:109). Smith’s theory is comparable to that of Vedic scholar, Frits Staal. Staal analysed the Agnicayana ritual, a 3000 year old Vedic ritual performed in a southwest Indian village by Nambudiri Brahmins. He argues for the essential meaninglessness of ritual (Staal, 1979:2).

Staal disagrees with the view that ritual consists of symbolic activities that refer to something else. He maintains that participants in a ritual process concentrate only on the rules of their performance, not on symbolic meanings “going through their minds when they are engaged in performing ritual”. It is only the outsiders or bystanders who may suggest to them ideas “about religion and philosophy generally”. Therefore, he narrows down ritual to a simple activity legislated by specific rules. The most important thing to be considered is what a person does, as opposed to what he thinks or believes (Staal, 1979:3-4).

There are two reasons for performing rituals: obligation and option. Staal asks the question: “Why should anybody wish to re-enact a myth? Why should social structures be represented or enacted ritually”? With these questions, he challenges ritual theory that still maintains that rites re-enact myth. According to him, “ritual exhibits its character of pure activity most readily when it is contrasted with the applied activities of our ordinary, everyday life. In ritual

activity, the rules count, but not the result. In ordinary activity it is the other way round". On a positive side, a ritual is viewed as creator of a bond between participants that "reinforces solidarity, boosts moral and constitutes a link with the ancestors". However, he cautions that positivism in this matter can only explain ritual preservation and not its origin (Staal, 1979:7-11).

2.4.1.4 On sacrificial ritual: Smith's theory of domestication

Smith stipulates that the Paleolithic indications for sacrifice are uncertain. "...If Walter Burkert attempts to prove something about the Paleolithic era, it has still no data, because I do not admit anything from that era as evidence" (Smith, 1987:206). Animal "sacrifice appears to be, universally, the ritual killing of a domesticated animal by agrarian or pastoralist societies and so is a component of secondary and tertiary cultures - a product of civilization (Smith, 1987:197).

In suggesting a probable link between sacrifice and domestication, Smith indicates that: "A theory of sacrifice must start with the domesticated animal and with the socio-cultural process of domestication itself". He defines domestication as the "process of human interference or alteration of the genetics of plants and animals", understood in terms of time and place. This makes it possible to distinguish a paradigm shift from the nomadic social world of hunter-gatherers to the social world of settled societies with their notion of continuity of time and place. Within the settled social world, the art of breeding and selective killing is introduced (Smith, 1987:200).

Therefore, "Sacrifice is an elaboration of the selective kill, in contradiction to the fortuitous kill". Sacrifice becomes an "exaggeration of domestication, a meditation on one cultural process by means of another" (Smith, 1987:199-200). Given the fact that domestication emphasises selected characteristics of the animal and thus targets the perfection of the species, sacrifice therefore becomes emphatic about this emphasis. "It can do this precisely because it is a ritual". Sacrifice in the agrarian or pastoral context is the artificial (i.e realised) killing of an artificial (i.e domesticated) animal (Smith, 1987:201).

i) Criticisms of Smith's theory

Smith did not escape from structuralist approaches to rituals that emphasise the language and structure of ritual acts as the essence of their meaning, rather than the function of ritual within a community. Smith's language betrays the influence of Levi-Strauss (Smith, 1987:202). French structuralist studies of ancient Greek sacrifice equally reveal the same concerns about the grammar and/ or syntax of sacrificial acts, and the way that these mediate between nature and culture. According to these scholars, sacrifice is not "mediation on domestication", but the means by which human beings identify themselves as cooked meat-eaters, as opposed to beasts that eat raw flesh and gods who eat

none. In transforming raw meat into cooked meat, sacrifice thus mediates between nature and culture.

In conclusion, it is clear that Smith and Staal belong to non-sacrificing societies. Smith fails to explain the power and meaning of sacrifice to an insider. The most important point is that there is some collective process that results in a kind of communal transformation. Here, Burkert's theory of sacrificial ritual as social affirmation and community building, through a transforming ritual process between life and death, is capable of offering a more satisfactory explanation. Smith and Staal's theories have no regard for the sacred. They leave in its stead meaninglessness and random actions.

Smith also fails to understand the transforming power of the scapegoat ritual, as clarified by Girard. Therefore, this study accepts Burkert's main theory, as modified by Girard. So far, this study has dealt with three theorists, namely Burkert, Girard and Smith. As it has already been stated, aspects of Burkert and Girard's theories are instrumental in providing this investigation on the communicative power of sacrifice in the South African context with an interpretative framework in the light of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Those aspects are indeed relevant to this study, because they similarly stress the motivational essence of sacrificial violence and its positive, purposeful effect upon the community as a whole.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the heuristic framework of this dissertation. It made use of information on the reading strategy of the project reading of the Bible in Africa to describe various perceptions of African scholars on Christianity, African traditional religions and missions in Africa (South Africa), merely for the sake of background and for positioning this dissertation. The heuristic framework has included some recent scientific theories, as well as their respective criticisms, which have attempted to show the essential significance of sacrifice in a given community. Sacrifice has the power to bring people together, achieve peace and harmony in traditional communities, and to effect reconciliation and forgiveness (Burkert, 1987; Gerard, 1987; Smith, 1982, 1987). Burkert alleges that a ritual is a communal activity whose function is group formation and communication (Burkert. 1983:54). He insinuates that rituals make up and sustain social interactions that create, commemorate and preserve solidarity within group membership (Burkert, 1983:155).

According to him, the slaughtering of animals and shedding of their blood is central to religious rituals, and is significant in dealing with aggression and evil, as in the case of the death of the innocent Son of God. "The shock of slaughtering is followed by consolidation, guilt by reparation and destruction by reconstruction", which necessitate a release of certain power (Burkert, 1983:12, 35, 40). The flow of blood instills great fear and guilt. Burkert goes on to say

that forgiveness and reparation are critical to sacrificial rituals: the shedding of blood is critical for the perpetuation of life and for new life to start again (Burkert, 1983:16). Girard's generative scapegoatism enjoins that the killing of the surrogate victim grants peace to the community (Girard, 1987:100).

There is a question that one needs to ask oneself before concluding this section: what can we learn from all this, what can we apply and why? It is the researcher's opinion that the abovementioned modern theories, that is, Burkert's theory of ritual sacrifice and Paleolithic origin, Girard's theory of the original, fictional, collective murder, and Smith's theory of the transforming power of the scapegoat ritual, seem relevant to the theme of this dissertation, despite their respective weaknesses. From these theories, one learns that there is material that has been developed in the field of science upon which any study regarding sacrifice can be based.

One also learns that violence or blood sacrifices can scarcely be separated from individual human beings and communities at large, because blood sacrifices contribute to the establishment of human communities, protecting them from aggression, ensuring their continuity, and providing the power for reconciliation and the establishment of harmonious relations, communion and fellowship between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. It is also evident that blood sacrifices are as old as mankind is, and the former appear to be inherent to the latter and at the very core of their survival.

These theories are applicable to Old Testament blood sacrificial rituals, the African blood sacrificial system in general, and to Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga sacrificial rituals in particular. They also agree on the sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament as a scapegoat, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). In terms of individuals and the community, these theories seem to offer similar benefits. They also constitute a scientific framework for this dissertation, and people from Western Christianity as well as Africa can relate to them as they seek to understand their respective situations and to iron out their differences by finding a scientific framework to which they can all refer. The following chapter will focus on blood sacrificial rituals among the Xhosa people.



CHAPTER THREE: XHOSA PEOPLE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Fundamental to this study of Xhosa people's sacrificial ritual performances is an acquaintance with the Xhosa people themselves. This background information will enable one to identify them within the context of other groups within Southern African. Afterwards, this study will approach them as a unique tribe by taking a look at their traditional kinship structure, as well as their cosmology, which constitute a logical context for understanding their sacrificial rituals in their traditional and modern contexts.

However, it is important to note that the aim is to have a broad overview with a specific focus. This study has purported to discuss the communicative power of blood sacrifices in South Africa (among Zulus, Xhosas and Tsongas), including a few places in Africa, as well as in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is therefore important to examine a broader field concerning sacrifices, in order to sharpen the focus. In the meantime, this study will begin with the quest for the Xhosa people.

3.1.1 The quest for the Xhosa people

South Africa consists of various groups of people and different tribes, as with any other African country. With regard to this, Maylan testifies that: "the vast majority of African people in the South of the Limpopo have come to be classified under two broad generic labels - Nguni or Sotho" (Maylan, 1968:20). These two divisions comprise further sub-divisions. Many writers have founded their further divisions upon linguistic similarities, rather than "common cultural traits" (Maylan, 1968:20). Consequently, the Zulus, Ndebeles, Swazis and Xhosas constitute the Nguni group, due to their languages' sharp similarities. The Batswanas, Bapedis and Basothos make up the Sotho group, due also to their languages' strong similarities. There is still controversy and speculation among historians in connection with the Nguni and Sotho designations. For the time being, however, scholars and anthropologists only consider these terms as fundamental to further anthropological investigations and analyses of the people beyond the Limpopo (Sipuka, 2000:106).

The designation 'Xhosa' applies to all Xhosa-speaking South African people dwelling in the Cape Province, which the 1994 political dispensation re-zoned into the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape Provinces. They are also disseminated in a small minority over the country, as well as in some of the neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Namibia and Botswana. Jackson alleges that a more precise name for the Xhosa-speaking African people would be "Cape Nguni" or "southern Nguni", as distinct from the northern Nguni such as Zulus, Ndebeles and Swazis. Jackson considers Cape Nguni, and not Xhosa, as being more precise, because the Xhosa people alone make up only a portion of the whole Nguni population of the Cape (Jackson, 1976:1). The same is true of the West where "Xhosa speaking people...are referred to broadly as Xhosa people, but are in fact a number of independent



chiefdoms of which the native Xhosa people constitute only one related group” (Jackson, 1976:12).

3.1.2 Xhosa people’s distinctiveness

A classification of the Cape Nguni tribes is not easy to resolve with precision, because of classification incongruities. Some writers classify some groups as tribes, while others classify the same groups as sub-tribes or clans. The Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondomise, Mpondo, Bomvana, Xesibe and Bhaca people constitute the strata, the accuracy of which many writers support (Jackson, 1976:2; West, 1976:2). Besides these peoples’ origins and arrival date discrepancies, many writers unanimously support the fact that the first five tribes are the longest “established inhabitants of the area” (West, 1976:12). The three others are termed “later arrivals” (Shaw, 1973:3). The Southern Nguni people need a bit of attention here. Even though the discussion of their relatedness falls outside the scope of this study, their common designation as Xhosa people necessitates some clarification.

Firstly, the Xhosa language is a popular language among the Cape Nguni people. Jackson confirms that Xhosa is “with minor dialectical variations the language spoken by all Cape Nguni” (Jackson, 1976:1). Secondly, Xhosa customs such as circumcision are ascribed to most of the Cape Nguni tribes. However, these customs are extending to tribes geographically distant from the Xhosa people’s tribe. This is due to the fact that the Xhosas enjoyed political strength and stability that enabled them to keep their language and customs, while converting other tribes to their language and customs at the same time (Soga, 1931: vi-vii). The Xhosa language was the only language that was put into writing, and the only one that was taught at school (Hammond-Tooke, 1975a: 9).

Therefore, the whole group came to be designated Xhosa because of the linguistic and cultural assimilation of other Cape Nguni tribes by the Xhosa tribe. Given the fact that other tribes have assimilated the Xhosa tribe’s customs, the sacrificial rituals being investigated by this study will sensibly focus only upon the actual Xhosa people. It is also obvious that, while looking into the Xhosa people’s performances and understanding of sacrificial rituals, this study will at the same time gain insights into the other Cape Nguni tribes’ sacrificial understanding, since they have assimilated Xhosa customs. However, one should understand that assimilation is not synonymous with the complete integration of other Cape Nguni tribes into the Xhosa tribe. “Their separate origin and identity...is never lost sight of. The following biblical statement applies to them: ‘though of Israel, they are not Israelites’” (Soga, 1931:18).

3.1.3 Xhosa people’s present composition: kinship and lineage system

The current Xhosa tribe’s composition contains the following subdivisions:

- Gcaleka tribes;
- Rarabe tribes;



- Pre-Gcaleka or Pre-Rarabe: those that are genealogically junior to the Gcaleka and Rarabe branches; and
- The Gqunukhwebe, difficult to link with Xhosa genealogy (Jackson, 1976:6).

Anthropologists utilise the word “kinship” to refer to a relationship between groups of people “either through consanguinity or established through marriage affinities” (Preston-Whyte, 1974:177). The concept of kinship also involves lineage in a broader sense, because it includes descendants of “a common grandfather or even great-grandfather or higher level” (Bigalke, 1969:47). This emphasises the fact that the two words may be at times used interchangeably. Thus, kinship also fuels a relationship not only among the living, but also extends “to the departed and those yet to be born” members of the lineage (Mbiti, 1969:105). Malina (1993) claims that social norms display the “oughts’ that are known as cultural hints that guide people to find out and gauge persons, things and events of their experience”. According to him, kinship “refers to patterns of such social norms that regulate human relationships which are directly based upon the experiences of birth and THE birth cycle, from the womb through developmental stages, to death” (Malina, 1993:117).

“...kinship norms symbolize human biological interactions and their outcome” (Malina, 1993:117). They are grounded in the social feeling that human beings’ relationships exist between persons issued from certain parents, or more specifically through births within marriage. One can distinguish four categories of these potential births:

- “The selection of marriage partner;
- The marriage bond;
- The immediate conjugal family of husband(s), wife (or wives), and children; and
- The extended family or kinship beyond the immediate conjugal family bond” (Malina, 1993: 117-118; see also Mhlangu, 1999:91-107 for a social description of the African family).

3.1.4 Kinship principles’ relevance to sacrificial rituals

Kinship principles have to do with specific kinship members’ division, as well as defined interaction and behaviour regulating rules. “Categories of kinship principles are recognized and behaviors towards individuals falling into them organized according to a blueprint of kinship expectation” (Preston-Whyte, 1974:177). The kinship structure determines individual roles in various spheres of life: that is, religious, economic and political spheres. Descending groups operate in social interaction areas: in the recruitment to, and organisation of, residential and local groups, in the organisation and distribution of certain scarce resources, in the dispute settlement between lineage members, and in ancestors’ cult rituals (Preston-Whyte, 1974:196).

This last function, namely the ancestors’ cult ritual organisation, qualifies the discussion of kinship structure as a relevant background to the Xhosa people’s understanding of sacrificial rituals. Given the fact that all the



Southern Africa Bantu-speaking people adhere to the patrimonial system of descent, only the consanguinous relationship from the father's side counts the most. This indeed holds a significant consequence for the performance and understanding of sacrificial rituals among Xhosa people. Common patrilineal descent determines blood relation bonds. As far as sacrificial rituals are concerned, common patrilineal descent constitutes the congregation or participants in sacrificial rituals, and this compels all lineage members' presence. "Lineage members, even distant ones, are specifically notified well in advance of impending rituals and ceremonials and are expected to attend unless prevented by work, great distance or quarrels..." (Bigalke, 1969:104). Among the lineage's various activities is the succession to office. It includes co-ordinating and presiding over kinship sacrificial rituals, as specified by the patrilineal genealogical hierarchy. Usually, the most senior lineage member heads the lineage and officiates at sacrificial rituals. "The three most important qualifications apart from birth order are:

- Sound bodily and mental health;
- Marriage; and
- Wisdom" (Bigalke, 1969:63).

The need to respect elderly people constitutes another significant principle of Xhosa people's sacrificial ritual understanding. This is emphasised when admonishing young men emerging from their initiation seclusion, whereby they are reminded to submit to orders and instructions given by the elders (Bigalke, 1969:42-43).

The importance of this principle for the understanding of Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals is that in many cases, as shall be seen, sacrificial rituals are performed in accordance with the wishes and demands of the ancestors. Ray compares this principle to the expression of the extension of filial obedience to the ancestors, among the Talleli people of North Africa. This allegiance to ancestors is compared to that which a child owes his parents. Similarly, an adult person owes his ancestors the same filial service:

- Obedience;
- Economic service; and
- Respect required by parents on a domestic level, are religiously translated into ritual service, sacrifices, and allegiance required by the ancestors (Ray, 1976:84).

Another relevant kinship principle in the study of Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals is the requirement that people who adhere to the kinship circle either through birth, adoption or marriage, be acknowledged through certain ritual performances. These rites quite often involve sacrificial rituals. The passage from one stage of life to another is sanctioned by sacrificial rituals: that is, from childhood to adulthood, and from adulthood to death. Seniors who expect obedience and submission from juniors are also expected to provide for their needs. This reciprocal relationship also extends to the world of the ancestors. In this regard, Bettison writes that: "Similarly with the ancestral spirits---the unseen fathers of the people---their authority was absolute, and provided the living conformed to their wishes, their welfare was assured" (Bettison, 1954:20). Therefore, the mutual obligation kinship principle



becomes applicable to the ancestors as well. This constituted the grounds for their plausible rebuke when they failed to reciprocate to a sacrificial act performed in their honour (Bettison, 1954:29).

3.1.5 Xhosa people's cosmology

From a scientific perspective, the term “cosmology” stands for the objective study of the universe, and all the interactions and dynamics of its component parts. Terrestrial considerations of the universe have to do with speculation about the origin and evolution of the world, while celestial consideration, also called astronomy, has to do with the composition, evolution and movement of planets and stars. This scientific speculation prompted Bettison to point out that the Southern Bantu people, under whom the Xhosa people fall, “were not given to speculating about...the origin of the universe, or even of man” (Bettison, 1954:2).

Xhosa people's knowledge of the celestial world is demonstrated by the fact that they named a few stars for the practical purpose of measuring time. For instance:

- Pleiades was known as *Isi-limela* (lit. the one that ploughs for), that is, the star which ushers in the ploughing season.
- Venus, as the morning star, was known as *-l-khwezi lokusa*, as the evening star it was *U-cel'izapolo* (lit. the one who asks for little milk from the teat), in other words, milking time (Soga, 1931:419).

The cosmology concept is also used in connection with beliefs, that is, explanations that can scarcely be conclusively demonstrated concerning the origins and forces of the world. Mostly, these clarifications use myths, tales and legends. Cosmology understood in this sense may sometimes be distinguished from cosmology proper as “cosmogony”. The latter refers to a “commonly accepted set of ideas concerning life and the world”, and the former “refers to more consciously entertained images, doctrines and scientific views concerning the universe” (Eliade, 1987:101)

These cosmogonies normally serve the purpose of clarifying and dealing with the world experientially, that is, the world experienced as awesome, threatening, diverse, unstable and overwhelming. It has the meaning of making sense of the world as it affects people on an existential level. Bolle argues that cosmologies are usually classified in accordance with geographical and cultural homogeneity. He remarks that, for this reason, “a grouping of cosmic view is given according to the continent of the earth, the various regions within them, and their ethnic and linguistic divisions” (Eliade, 1987:101). This is due to the fact that cosmologies of close geographical and cultural proximity present similarities in many ways.

Xhosa people's cosmology is not an exception to this rule. On a continental level, it has shared features with all African indigenous tribes, and with increasing intensity, it also bears similarities to those of the Southern Bantu people, the Nguni or the Cape Nguni. Because of this, most writers and anthropologists approach the Xhosa people's religious system in terms of



Bantu and Nguni classifications. However, the focus upon details reveals that they are some elements peculiar to the Xhosa people's religious system. This is why writers such as Soga, Hodgson and others have made it their task to investigate and expound on those elements (Sipuka, 2000:117).

3.1.6 The Supreme Being

In contrast to the Judeo-Christian and other religions' accounts of creation, which begin with nonthingness, the Xhosa people's account begins with an existing world, and proceeds by explaining the origin of humanity. The most ancient explanation of the origin of humanity is that humanity emerged "through an immense hole, the opening of which was either in a cavern or else in a marsh overgrown with reeds" (Hodgson, 1982:18), which Xhosa people's oral tradition refers to as a place called *Uhlanga*. It can be easily seen that Xhosa people's creation myth is not comprehensive, because it does not account for the universe's existence as a whole, but only for humanity's existence.

Even humanity's existence is not comprehensively described, because Bantu legends of the human origin "do not try to account for the origin of the human race as a whole, or rather their legends to seem to assume that particular tribe in question is actually the human race..."(Bettison, 1954:20). Hodgson supports this view, pointing out that some details were added to the original *Uhlanga* myth so as to account for the existence of other tribes that the Xhosa people came across later (Hodgson, 1982:20). There is a multiplicity of myths regarding God and creation among all indigenous groups of Africa. These present some similarities and differences between these groups themselves and the biblical account about God and creation in general.

The lack of clarification about the ultimate cause of things in Xhosa people's cosmology resulted in a controversy among writers as to whether or not Xhosa people believe in the Supreme Being, who can be associated with the God mentioned in the Bible. The argument in favour of this takes into account Xhosa traditional names for God: *uDali*, *uMdali* and *uMenzi*, which respectively convey the meaning of making, creating and bringing into existence (Hodgson, 1982:43). However, other writers are suspicious about these names, and speculate that they are not Xhosa people's names for God "but were introduced to the Xhosa people by missionaries" (Hodgson, 1982:44).

A counter-argument is that these names are also Zulu traditional names for God (Hodgson, 1982:44), and are to be presumed to have been in use long before the Xhosa and Zulu people separated. There are speculations that Zulu and Xhosa people migrated last from the north - they share a common expression of language that predates other influences that came later on (Maylan, 1968:22). Bettison observes that the point is not whether or not the Xhosa people believed that the world was created. Given the fact that it exists, means that it was made, but whatever made the world was not regarded as the creator of humanity. Evidently, "Southern Bantu people acknowledge that the universe was a given entity; created and controlled by



something...It is an important fact that the Bantu people to the North of the Xhosa /Pondo tribes where reliable evidence of a creator and Supreme Being are available, view such a character as the maker of the earth, the mountains, rivers, etc., but never of mankind” (Bettison, 1954:5).

The reference to rituals directed to God in times of national calamity and extended drought has been used to support Xhosa people’s belief in a Supreme Being. However, Hodgson remarks: “a prolonged drought was one of the few occasions when the God of the Xhosa was approached directly, ritual supplication being led by the chief at the top of the high hill or mountain” (Hodgson, 1984:24). The absence of research material regarding the details of this ritual, however, has generated diverse explanations of what exactly it involved, throwing people into confusion as to whether the supplication was addressed to God or to the ancestors. Taking into consideration the fact that this practice was observed once a decade, and that it was the last resort, it does not really provide a good example for demonstrating the belief in the Supreme Being among Xhosa people (Hodgson, 1984:78).

Some writers have accounted for short spontaneous calls on God such as ‘God help’, mostly made in moments of crisis, with an implicit suggestion that the Xhosa people did not only believe in God but also had frequent recourse to Him in their everyday lives (Olivier, 1976:7; Hodgson, 1982:71). The period during which these observations were made is quite recent, and one cannot rule out the possibility that these spontaneous calls on God are prompted by Christian influence. Even if Christian influence were to be ruled out as being responsible for these ejaculatory appeals to God, however, it still would not take away the fact that God is not the subject of formal worship or sacrificial rituals among the Xhosa people (Sipuka, 2000:119).

Based upon the above observations, one can say that the idea concerning the Supreme Being is referred to in Xhosa people’s cosmology, but it occupies a peripheral place in its religious system, meant to a large extent “to explain the phenomenon of creation” (Hammond-Tooke, 1975b: 15). God was not perceived as existentially relevant, and for this reason interaction between God and the people, as expressed through religious activities, was very minimal, if at all. God did “not constitute an important factor in the religious system of the Xhosa people” (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:319). Therefore, if this study’s conclusion is that the idea of God holds very little significance within Xhosa people’s religious system, the next step would be to investigate other forms of supernaturalism in Xhosa cosmology, and to evaluate their importance in their belief system.

3.2 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher has attempted to distinguish the Xhosa tribe proper from the South-East or Cape Nguni common designation of Xhosa-speaking people, who are not necessarily members of the Xhosa tribe proper, and make up a small percentage of the population found in the Willovale Kentani district. This has helped to clarify and correct the general assumption that everybody who comes from the Eastern Cape and speaks Xhosa belongs



to the Xhosa tribe proper. This information is valuable because it touches on the diversity of the African people in the Eastern Cape, and acknowledges the identity, history and culture of each tribe of the Cape Nguni (Sipuka, 2000:129).

The explanation provided by Soga that the Xhosa people enjoyed more political and cultural stability in comparison with other Cape Nguni tribes may be insubstantial and too sentimental, given the fact that Soga is a Xhosa tribesman himself. It is hoped that further research will explore the reasons for this common designation. Religion has sometimes been defined as reflecting its host society in such a way that the understanding of the latter would shed more light on the former. The dynamics of Xhosa kinship that have been described in this chapter have enabled us to permeate the social structure underlying the Xhosa people's sacrificial ritual performances.

Two itineraries have been specifically adopted: that is, common patrilineal descent and mutual obligation among kinship members. Patrilineal descent determines who the participants and officiating person in sacrificial rituals will be. It has also been observed that socialisation provides a context for various sacrificial rituals. Mutual obedience, obligation and rewards between junior and senior tribal members provides a social background for sacrificial ritual performances, operating under the same mutual obligation principle between the ancestors or living dead and their living descendants.

Xhosa cosmology implicitly calls for multiplicity and diversity of cosmologies in accordance with diverse groups and cultures. 'World religions' cosmologies have certainly achieved a coherent explanation and interpretation of the cosmos, in comparison with Xhosa cosmology, which still experiences some complexities. There is a need to understand that world religions' cosmological achievements resulted from many development stages. However, with new paradigm shifts in the area of knowledge, experience and interpretation of the universe, achieved levels of coherence can be subjected to further transformations, as substantiated by emerging new shifts in creation theology, for instance. As Mosala rightly observes, "Christianity, contrary to Western doctrinal ideology, is not a finished business, neither is African religion" (Mosala, 1983:23).

This observation can be made from the unconscious arrogance often shown towards other religious traditions by analysts from so-called established religious traditions. Their introductory points often have a disparaging connotation concerning the lack of a unified thought system in traditional belief systems, as illustrated by the following quotation: "One of the most striking features of traditional belief systems is the almost complete absence of what might be called a 'theology'. There is little speculation as to the nature of the spirit world or the life after death and, unlike some other people, a rather poorly developed corpus of myths" (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:319).

It can be inferred from the tone of the above quotation that traditional belief systems fail to theologise, speculate and integrate mythological explanations. However, when a person looks at this apparent absence of theology in a



positive way, the whole scenario does not point to inability – rather, it reveals that traditional religions are still undergoing an evolutionary process, just as established world religions did. In other words, Hammond-Tooke suggests that Xhosa people’s belief system, together with similar belief systems, is still at a complex stage, in which religious belief systems still struggle for a more coherent and systematic expression (Sipuka, 2000:131).

The claim that there has always been an explicit worship of God among the Xhosa people is due to some African Christian writers who want to demonstrate and force continuity between the Xhosa people’s belief system and Christianity, by overemphasising similarities between the two, even if it means forcing them. This may also stem from the tendency among some writers and researchers to apply religious concepts and practices observed in some parts of Africa to Africa as a whole. Most writings on African religion tend to convey the understanding that they are dealing with the whole of Africa, when in fact they are actually focusing on only two tribes, usually from Central and North-West Africa. They then proceed to make a general conclusion for the rest of Africa, based on the details of a particular tribe. This is intellectual dishonesty, and is sadly misleading. This study does not deny that there may be common regional or continental religious concepts. However, any work that claims continentality should deal with elements pertaining to all African tribes or groups, and indicate those elements that apply to each particular tribe or group.



CHAPTER FOUR: SACRIFICE IN XHOSA TRADITION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The idea and performance of blood sacrifices permeate the entire life of the Xhosa people. From birth to death, various recurrent sacrificial rituals mark a Xhosa person's life. This applies to Xhosa people both in traditional and urban contexts, as well as to those who have adhered to Christianity, which does not condone this type of belief and practice. It is not easy to clearly establish how Xhosa people's understanding of blood sacrifice developed over time. This can be explained by the fact that Xhosa people themselves were not prone to theories of religion. Therefore, the discussion of Xhosa people's understanding of blood sacrifice here will include the following aspects:

- Sacrifice as it was traditionally viewed
- Sacrifice as understood and practised since the contact of Xhosa people with, and influence of, Western culture and modernisation.

Even though the popular understanding of the term "Xhosa" has come to encompass all Xhosa-speaking people, the Xhosa proper people, as will be attempted to clarify later, consist of one group out of many groups of Xhosa-speaking people. As of now, this tribe comprises two sub-groups, the Gcaleka and Rarabe. However, this does not contradict the classification mentioned earlier, because the pre-Gcaleka and pre-Rarabe groups constitute junior tribes of either the Gcaleka or Rarabe sub-groups. According to Elliot, "customs and beliefs in the Xhosa tribe are basically the same" (Elliot, 1970:11), and there is no difference between the Gcaleka and Rarabe. Therefore, the material to be covered here with regard to Xhosa people's understanding of sacrifice accommodates these two sub-groups.

Bigalke (1969) and Olivier's (1976) writings on the Ndlambe (a sub-stratum of people who broke away from the Rarabe line) and the Gcaleka, which concentrate on sacrifice within the two groups of the Xhosa tribe, do not exhibit significant disparities in their facts and conclusions concerning Xhosa people's practices and understanding of sacrifice. Lamla's work (1971) entitled *Sacrifice among the Southern Nguni* provides a comprehensive classification of Xhosa sacrifice, and attempts to balance its conceptualisation and significance.

Other writers such as Bettison (1954), Hammond-Tooke (1974, 1978, 1981), Pauw (1975, 1994) etc have also shed some light on the Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals. Given the fact that much has already been done in terms of the understanding of Xhosa blood sacrifice, this study will borrow from past research, and highlight some aspects that will facilitate the objective of indicating how the communicative power of sacrifices is viewed. Therefore, this section will be purely based on a review of relevant literary works.



The description of this rubric will comprise two main sections, dealing firstly with sacrifice among the Xhosa people in their traditional environment, and then analysing the occasions and types of sacrifice. Chapter five will focus on some Zulu and Tsonga views with regard to sacrificial rituals, and the discussion in chapter six will focus on how sacrifice has come to be understood by the Xhosa people following their contact with Christianity and ongoing urbanisation. At this point, this study will take a look at the Xhosa people's sacrificial system.

4.2 SACRIFICE IN THE XHOSA TRADITIONAL SETTING

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the practice of sacrifice is a way of life for the Xhosa people. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Xhosa religiosity, within their traditional context, is demonstrated in various acts of sacrifice. There is therefore a need to understand that the centrality of sacrifice in the Xhosa people's belief system does not constitute any exception to similar practices among other tribes in South Africa, and indeed in Africa as a whole.

As fundamental as it appears, blood sacrifice in the Xhosa traditional setting has not been granted systematic exposure by insiders i.e. those who believed and practised it prior to Western and Christian influences. This can be attributed to the practical orientation of religion in Africa as a whole, which placed the emphasis on the role that religion plays, rather than on a speculative understanding of religious concepts. The analyses of occasions and sacrificial rituals reveal the fact that, not to exclude accompanying invocations, Xhosa people's sacrificial practices, although not defined, are nevertheless full of meaning.

By making use of previous research in this area, this study will try to determine the meaning of Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals by focusing on the fact of sacrifice in the Xhosa language, sacrifice and ritual, categorisation and classification of sacrifice as birth initiation, marriage and contingent, and the types of sacrifices, namely: propitiatory, diviner initiation, supplication, communion, thanksgiving and ostracism sacrifices, as well as important solemn sacrifices. The elements of Xhosa sacrifice will also be described and discussed, as well as the *ukunqula* ritual's meaning and purpose, and the nature of Xhosa sacrifices. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn.

4.3 THE FACT OF SACRIFICE IN THE XHOSA LANGUAGE

The fact of sacrifice is accounted for among Xhosa people in the first place because the Xhosa language has a generic term for sacrifice, *idini*. Xhosa-English dictionaries translate this word as 'animal sacrifice' (Kropf, 1915:77; McLaren, 1923:43). Kropf explains that animal sacrifice is meant to propitiate departed ancestors (Kropf, 1915:77). English-Xhosa dictionaries also utilise *umnikelo* and *umbingelelo* in the same sense as *idini* (McLaren, 1923:243; Fischer, 1985:550). These two words broaden the Xhosa understanding of sacrifice. *Umunikelo* also stands for a "gift offering" (Kropf, 1915:270; McLaren, 1923:103). Therefore, blood sacrifice in Xhosa serves more than



just the purpose of propitiation. *Umbingelelo* derives from the verb *binga* and signifies “to tender what is done to departed ancestors” (Kropf, 1915:36). It promotes the Xhosa understanding of the concept of sacrifice, by introducing other elements involved in it. *Binga* highlights sacrificial elements such as “*um-Bingi*, the host who offers, that is, who gives the animal for a sacrifice... *um-Bingeleli*, a person who offers for one; ...*isi-Bingelelo*: the place for offering (Kropf, 1915:36).

The above linguistic analysis of the term “sacrifice” can help one to answer the “what”, “where” and “why” of Xhosa sacrifice, and to tentatively attempt a definition of the Xhosa concept of sacrifice. “A sacrifice is an animal victim to be slaughtered by a designated person for the purpose of propitiating and offering a gift to ancestors”. While language dictionaries provide us with an idea of the Xhosa understanding of the concept of sacrifice, they are nevertheless inadequate, and more pertinent questions regarding Xhosa sacrifice remain to be answered. What creates the need for an act of sacrifice? What are we to understand by propitiating and offering a gift to ancestors? What variety of sacrifices do Xhosa people have and what significance can be attached to such variety? Thus, the answers which language dictionaries provide with regard to Xhosa sacrifice unveil a host of other questions that can be answered by probing the facts they suggest, a task that will be undertaken in the following sections.

4.3.1 Sacrifice and ritual

Any person acquainted with the Xhosa traditional and modern contexts can witness an act of sacrifice. Missionaries, anthropologists and African Christian theologians have visualised and recorded sacrificial practices among the Xhosa people. The fact that sacrifice and ritual are used interchangeably in this context might lead to confusion, because, although both terms are related, they do not mean exactly the same thing. A ritual is broader than a sacrifice. The former can refer to any religious ceremony, with or without a sacrifice. Sacrifice is one ritual among many, and thus an appropriate and precise reference to sacrifice as ritual would be “sacrificial ritual”, not merely “ritual”. Neyrey (2005:470) seems to implicitly illustrate this in terms of “balanced reciprocity in the benefactor-client relations”.

4.3.2 Sacrifice categorisation and classification

As already pointed out, Xhosa people practise a variety of sacrifices. A cursory glance at works of authors such as Bigalke (1969), Lamla (1972) and Olivier (1976), who previously conducted research on Xhosa sacrifice, reveals that Xhosa people identify at least two categories of sacrifices that comprise fourteen types. One finds that these sacrifices are categorised and classified in line with their object, or the “recipient to whom they are made” (Ikenga-Metuh, 1987:27). There is an absence of a pantheon among Xhosa people, since all sacrifices are offered to ancestors. Because of this, many authors classify Xhosa sacrifices with regard to their occasion and purpose, not in accordance with their recipient (Harmmond-Toke, 1974:352).



The only situation that would allow for this would be when a sacrifice is offered to either home or river ancestors. However, this all amounts to the same thing, since one always has to deal with them, even in this situation. Hammond-Tooke classifies Bantu (including Xhosa) sacrifices into:

- *Life cycle rituals*, referring to the sacralisation of the important stages of an individual's life; and
- *Piacular or contingent rituals*: those prompted by a specific stimulus such as illness, seen as being inflicted by ancestors for the neglect of customs (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:352).

Nevertheless, there are also some writers who argue strongly that God is also the object of sacrifice, as in the case of rain. The lack of research concerning the details of this type of sacrifice has led to various explanations of its nature, and uncertainty about the orientation of supplication (Soga, 1931; Hodgson, 1982). Bigalke puts them into two groups, *imigidi*, or public feast, without attendance restrictions, and *izizathu* (meaning reason), or ancestral, restricted rituals that are not open to all (Bigalke, 1969:106).

Lamla offers detailed occasions for sacrifices, which can be divided into four categories as follows:

- Sacrifices connected to God and ancestors, which he calls "sacrifices connected with religion";
- Initiation sacrifices;
- Sacrifices connected to economic activities; and
- Sacrifices connected to other events such as rain-making, war etc. War sacrifices are meant to strengthen the army, and serve as thanksgiving sacrifices in cases of victory, etc. Seemingly, the classification of Xhosa sacrifices denies unanimity (Lamla, 1971:24).

Therefore, this study would now like to attempt to synthesise these different types of sacrifices, in order to provide a coherent picture of Xhosa sacrificial types. After birth, a person goes through different stages of life, and ultimately he dies. A specific sacrifice corresponds to each of these stages. The gap between birth and death comprises various contingencies that need to be taken care of. Therefore, one can clearly state that Xhosa sacrifices may be logically categorised into birth, initiation, contingent and death sacrifices, each of them containing further sub-divisions.

4.3.3 Birth sacrifices

Xhosa birth sacrifices include *ukufuthwa* (to be steamed), *Imbeleko* or *umbingelelo* (a thing with which to carry on the back or sacrifice), and *ingqithi* (amputation of the first phalanx of one finger of the left hand). These will be dealt with separately and in sequence.

4.3.3.1 Ukufuthwa (to be steamed)

The first birth sacrificial ritual among Xhosa people is called *ukufuthwa*. It consists of the repetitive swinging of the baby over the smoke of a fire specially made by the mother, while chanting the following words: "*Wush*,



wush, wush khanyela into oyaziyo”, which means “deny what you know” (Olivier, 1976:29). People from other tribes in South Africa attribute the Xhosa people’s astuteness and cunning to this ritual. Of all the writers who deal with Xhosa sacrifices, only Lamla seems to attach some sacrificial meaning to this ritual (Lamla, 1971:24).

Monica Hunter conducted a survey on the abovementioned birth sacrifice among Xhosa people, and reported that her respondents gave her different explanations, most of which sounded like ad hoc opinions (Hunter, 1979:154). Lamla suggests that it is normally meant to “ensure mental vigor, wisdom, strategy and eloquence for the child” (Lamla, 1971:14). He also attaches sacrificial significance to it. He says that when this ritual “is being performed for the last time, a number of cattle is gathered outside the hut and prayer is made to ancestral spirits. The beast that urinates first is slaughtered as a sacrifice...and appeal is made to them for blessings” (Lamla, 1974:14).

4.3.3.2 Imbeleko or Umbingelelo (A thing with which to carry on the back or sacrifice)

This is the most remarkable of all the birth sacrifices. Its primary purpose is to express gratitude to the ancestors for the birth of a child (Paw, 1994:12), and to implore them for its good health (Olivier, 1976:30). Its secondary purpose is to provide a lising for carrying the baby on the mother’s back. The omission of this ritual performance may lead either to sickness later in the life of the child (Bigalke, 1969:148; Olivier, 1976:30), or to odd behaviours such as continuously urinating in bed and being disobedient (Paw, 1994:12), or even to death (Laubscher, 1937:69).

4.3.3.3 Inggithi (amputation of the first phalanx of one finger of the left hand)

Laubscher and Lamla are the only writers who provide information about the sacrificial features of this ritual. Lamla states that: “the ritual is known as *ingqithi* and is a sacrificial function meant to illustrate the principle of compensation or gift intended to the ancestors” (Lamla, 1971:14). Olivier observes the opposite. He remarks that “*Hieirdie rite staan nie direk in verband met die voorouer nie*” (meaning that this ritual does not have a direct link to ancestors) (Olivier, 1976:29). Bettison (1954:28) also wonders whether the ritual is in any way related to the ancestors, since it does not involve any ceremony. Other writers refrain from referring to this ritual as a sacrifice.

Laubscher points out that the *ingqithi* ritual can be viewed as a sacrifice to the ancestors from the child itself. “The child is required to give up a healthy part of himself or herself so that he or she may receive health for the whole of his or her being” (Laubscher, 1937:73). Although other writers express doubts about the sacrificial features of the *ingqithi* ritual, Laubscher’s argument in this regard is very interesting. What is different about it is that the child itself provides the sacrifice from its own body, not the father from his livestock. This links to the theory of substitutionary sacrifice, which allows the offering of one part of the body in the place of the whole body, “like the offering of fingers, hair, or blood drawn through self inflicted wounds” (Eliade, 1987:546).



However, there is no evidence among the Xhosa people that the above explanation constitutes the rationale behind the *ingqithi* ritual.

4.3.4 Initiation sacrifices

Xhosa people distinguish between two different types of initiation sacrifice: *ukwaluka*, or circumcision, refers to the passage of boys from youth to manhood, and the *intonjane*, the equivalent rite for girls, which does not carry the meaning of passage for girls from childhood to adulthood or womanhood, as in the case of boys. It merely involves the seclusion of girls for a certain period of time. Marriage (for girls) is equivalent to *ukwaluka* or circumcision (Wilson, 1981:140). Therefore, one can identify three types of initiation rites, namely, *ukwaluka* or circumcision, *intonjane* or girls' initiation, and marriage. The sacrificial features of these rituals will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.3.4.1 Ukwaluka

The *ukwaluka* ritual involves three ritual performances: Ngcamisa, Ojisa and Buyisa or Ukubuya.

- One day before a youth undergoes circumcision, the Ngcamisa ritual is performed. According to Raum, *Ngcamisa* is derived from *ukucamagusha*, or 'to implore for blessings from the ancestors' (Raum, 1972:181). The Ngcamisa ritual reflects a clear sacrificial ritual. A goat is slaughtered and offered to the ancestors for the protection of the boys during their initiation period (Lamla, 1971:16; Van der Vliet, 1974:229; Laubscher, 1975:100; Pauw, 1994:14).
- The *Ojisa* ritual takes place one week after circumcision (Bigalke, 1969:107; Lamla, 1971:17; Olivier, 1976:31). It is supposed to reintroduce the boys to a normal diet, that is, food that they abstained from in order to accelerate the healing of their wounds. The uttered words, as reported by Olivier, demonstrate that: "*Hayi ke, namshlanje ndiyanojisa. Ndinikhululela okokuba nitye yonke into*" (Olivier, 1976:31), meaning: "today I allow you to eat everything".

This reintroduction of the boys to normal food carries a sacrificial connotation because a piece of meat, *intsonyama*, given to the person for whom the sacrifice is offered in normal circumstances, is given to the boys (Olivier, 1976:31). However, this sacrificial significance is not clear, and it can be inferred from this that it lies in thanking the ancestors for the healing of the boys' wounds.

- *Ukubuya* (to return) marks the end of the initiation period. Its emphasis is on admonishing and advising "newly created men" on what it means to be a man, as well as celebrating their development into adulthood (Lamla, 1971:16; Van der Vliet, 1974:321).



4.3.4.2 Intonjane or Ukuthomba

The *intonjane* refers to the rite of passage of girls from childhood into marriageable women. It is concerned with the fattening and beautifying of the girls. This initiation period culminates in marriage (Hunter, 1979:173-174). Before such a ritual, the girl, “previously called *intombazana* or little girl” (Pauw, 1994:18), takes on the name *intombi*, or full girl, after the *intonjane* ritual, an experience that turns her into a “potential bride” (Wilson, 1981:30). Hunter points out that most girls marry without undergoing this ritual experience, due to their fathers’ inability to afford the required food and animals, and for some, the ritual is performed after marriage, when sickness and barrenness befall them due to the omission of this ritual, according to the diviner’s diagnosis. Its sacrificial features are shown by the slaughtering of animals at the beginning and end of the initiation period, the eating of a sacrificial portion of meat by the initiates, as well as its connection to ancestors, who cause sickness and barrenness when it is omitted (Hunter, 1979:173-174).

4.3.4.3 Marriage sacrifices

Xhosa marriage is a highly esteemed, solemn occasion involving a number of sacrificial rituals. This is indeed important because it “is an alliance between two lineages” (Lamla, 1971:20). Works on Xhosa marriage reveal that seven animals are immolated during the marriage ceremony:

- A goat known as *umngcama* is slaughtered at the bridal home before the marriage ceremony starts, in order to inform the ancestors of her departure to her new homestead. Laubscher suggests that this sacrifice is equivalent and similar to *ngcamisa*, the first sacrifice of the boys’ initiation. Hunter calls it *ukumncamisa*, and Olivier calls it only a sacrifice before the bride goes to her in-laws (Laubscher, 1937:171; Olivier, 1976:33; Hunter, 1979:193; Pauw, 1994:27).
- The second goat to be immolated during the Xhosa marriage ceremony is the *umthula-ntabeni*, or ‘to be brought down the mountain’. The goat is slaughtered as a sign of welcome when the bride and her entourage arrive at the bridegroom’s home (Soga, 1931:231; Pauw, 1994:28).
- The *impothulo* (ground, boiled mealies mixed with sour milk) cow, brought along with the bride as food for the journey, is slaughtered the day after her and her escort arrive at the bridegroom’s home. Satyo says that *inkomo yempothulo* or cow, slaughtered for the *impothulo* sacrifice, serves as a purification sacrifice for unintended incestual relationships (Satyo, 1981:46). If Satyo’s claim is true, as no other writer corroborates his explanation, it may be said that this sacrifice is performed as a precautionary measure, in case the bride is related to the bridegroom (Soga, 1931:231; Laubscher, 1937:175; Lamla, 1971:21; Olivier, 1976:33).
- One day after the immolation of *impothulo*, an ox by the name of *ukubonwa kwentombi* or ‘the viewing of the girl’, is slaughtered for the unveiling of the bride (Soga, 1931:232; Lamla, 1971:21; Pauw, 1994:28).



- Towards the end, the *ukutyiswa amasi* or ‘to be fed with sour milk’ goat is immolated, in order to seal the beginning of the end of the marriage ceremony (Soga, 1931:234; Laubscher, 1937:183; Bigalke, 1969:110; Lamla, 1971:21; Preston-Whyte, 1974:204; Olivier, 1976:33; Hunter, 1979:200-201; Pauw, 1994:29).
- The slaughtering of the *umdudo* ox for a dance feast proclaims the winding up of the marriage ceremony (Soga, 1931:236-238; Lamla, 1971:21; Olivier, 1976:33).
- The *umphako* (provision) is slaughtered shortly before the departure of the bride escort back home for a journey provision (Soga, 1931:238; Lamla, 1971:21). According to Olivier, four slaughterings of animals comprise the ritual tasting of *intsonyama* or sacrificial meat: *umngcamo*, *impothulo*, *ukutyiswa amasi* and *umdudo*, which he characterises as sacrificial killings. To these, Lamla adds *ukubonwa kwentombi*, which, according to him, is a sacrifice that takes place in the kraal. If a person considers the slaughtering of animals discussed by Lamla and Olivier, one realises that, although one can deduce from them some sacrificial significance, in essence some of them are only meant to sustain the feast and to keep the ceremonial celebrations going. This is made clear by their names, many of which betray festive motivations.

One can therefore postulate that, out of all these immolations of animals, only *umngcamo* and *ukutyiswa amasi* suggest quasi-explicit sacrificial grounds. These two sacrificial instances are purposed to respectively inform the ancestors on both sides that the bride is leaving her homestead, and to ask for their protection and good health. Part of the speech recorded by Olivier in connection with *umngcamo* proves this point: *Namhlanje ke, maTshawe, intombi yam ihamba; kenihambe nayo niyikhaphe iphile*, meaning: you of the Tshawe clan, my daughter is going away, please go with her so that she may be well (Olivier, 1976:33). Hunter claims that if this sacrifice is not performed on behalf of the girl, “she is liable to fall ill on account of the omission” (Hunter, 1979:194). This confirms the importance of the *umngcamo* sacrifice in the marriage ritual. The *ukutyiswa amasi* sacrifice is critical to the sealing of marriages among Xhosa people. The bride becomes a member of her in-laws’ family after its performance. Pauw says that “a woman is not regarded as married if the *ukutyiswa amasi* ritual has not been performed” (Pauw, 1994:29). With this sacrifice, the bride “is initiated as a member of her husband’s family” (Soga, 1931:134). Its omission can result in sickness (Hunter, 1979). It is understandable that these two sacrifices are critical, in that they respectively sanction the release of the bride from her native homestead, and introduce her to the bridegroom’s homestead. At this point, it is important to look at another type of sacrifice among the Xhosa people, namely the contingent sacrifice.

4.3.5 Contingent sacrifice

In order to be conversant with the discussion on contingent sacrifice, it is necessary to start by providing a proper understanding of the term “contingent”. The word ‘contingent’ means “dependent, subject to, controlled



by and conditioned” (Stein & Berg, 1984:165). These words refer to an act, decision or situation that is subject or subordinate to factors either in evidence or thought likely to arise. Provisionally, they may merely refer to something adopted for the moment out of a temporary necessity, or until something better can be arranged, ie a provisional plan. Even more relevant here, the word often suggests a situation that is allowed to exist, provided that some results are forthcoming - e.g. the student was given provisional status as a matriculant, until his examination results were available (Bogus et al, 1971:468).

The word ‘contingent’ usually suggests that the crucial factors determining t status are those that lie in the future. Something even less certain than provisional is ‘tentative’, which means experimental in nature. Provisional actions, methods etc. would have a greater chance of being adopted or succeeding than those that are tentative. ‘Dependent’, in contrast to provisional, may indicate something that is subject to past, present or future factors. ‘Conditional’ almost entirely stresses this sense of dependence, suggesting an agreement that will be honoured by one side if the other holds. The word, less specifically, may simply mean tentative. The word ‘contingent’, at its least complex, may refer to something liable to happen. It may also indicate something unforeseen or occurring by chance. It may also suggest something dependent upon an uncertain event or condition (Bogus et al, 1971:468-469).

Among Xhosa people, circumstances that require sacrifices include sickness, misfortunes of various kinds, and death. Contingent events are not necessarily negative, but on the positive side, they grant feelings of gratitude, communion and generosity. Negative contingent events raise awareness about impending disharmony between the living and the dead, and require appropriate sacrifices, that is, propitiatory and supplicatory sacrifices. Positive contingent events necessitate thanksgiving and communion sacrifices. Therefore, this study will discuss the following contingent sacrifices: propitiation sacrifice, diviner initiation sacrifice, supplication sacrifice, communion sacrifice, thanksgiving sacrifice and ostracism sacrifice (Bigalke, 1969:146).

4.3.5.1 Propitiatory sacrifice

According to Xhosa diviners’ diagnoses, sickness and misfortune are consequences of the anger of the ancestors, due to the omission of anticipated behaviours and offences against the community, kinship and ancestors themselves. Bigalke provides examples of diagnoses associated with the causes of various sicknesses and misfortunes, as well as their corresponding sacrificial prescriptions (Bigalke, 1969:146-148). Hammond-Tooke attempts to explain the process leading to propitiatory sacrifices, saying that: “The actual worship (sacrifice) is occasioned, usually by two things. Either a lineage member gets ill, and the diviner diagnoses that it [sickness] is sent by his ancestor, or a particular ancestor appears to a lineage member in a dream. This is always taken as proof that the ancestor is



annoyed or worried, and wishes a ritual [sacrifice] to be performed” (Hammond-Tooke, 1981:26).

Hammond-Tooke’s maxim is supported by the fact that the performance of the recommended sacrificial ritual often appears to yield the desired effect, which is viewed as further corroboration of the link between misfortune and the intervention of the ancestors. Some writers who have conducted field research among Xhosa people reported cases in which a full restoration of health followed a sacrifice ritual. For instance, a certain woman was “ill with pneumonia. A diviner diagnosed that she was being made ill by the old people of her *umzi* [marriage homestead], specifically the mother of her *umzi*]. They killed a beast and gave her the milk of the *umzi*, and she recovered” (Hunter, 1979:200). Another man was sick and could not be cured by a white doctor’s medicine. Then he consulted a diviner and this is what transpired: “*die beeinding was dat hy nagelaat het om vir sy vader die terugbringrite uit te voer. Nadat hy die rite by sy kraal afgehandel het, het hy gesond word*” (meaning: he omitted to perform the returning ritual for his father. After he completed the ritual at his kraal, he became well) (Olivier, 1976:20).

4.3.5.2 Diviner initiation sacrifice

The diviner initiation sacrifice constitutes a typical contingent sacrifice. Among the Xhosa people, becoming a diviner is quite unpredictable. Very few elites may claim the calling for the diviner office, yet even for them, it surprises them overwhelmingly. Given the fact that proceedings involve many inconveniences, it is both surprising and dreadful. Hence, anyone who exhibits signs for the calling as a diviner is referred to as having *inkathazo* or ‘a problem’ (Bettison, 1954:33; Olivier, 1976:51). Although the office of diviner comprises many women (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:348), the call does not discriminate between the sexes, and “could come at any age, even in childhood” (Bettison, 1954:30).

The calling and initiation process for becoming a diviner are marked by “a prolonged sickness” at their inception (Bettison, 1954:30). It is conveyed by dreams and diagnoses by the diviner, and it comprises the following sacrificial rituals:

- *Ibhokhwe yokuvuma ukufà* (Olivier, 1976:53), which normally stands for ‘a goat to accept sickness’. This serves the purpose of telling the ancestors that a specific individual is yielding to their calling to become a diviner. The whole thing is clarified by words that convey the sacrifice: “*Ewe ke, namhlanje maNgwevu, lo mntwana wenu uyakwamkela ukufa. Kufuneka nimqhube ke, nimvulele nimbonise*” (Olivier, 1976:53), that is, “Today you of the Ngwenu clan, this child of yours is yielding to the call; guide her, open for her and show her”.
- *Ibhokhwe yentambo*, that is, ‘a goat for string, for making string from the skin’ (Olivier, 1976:55).
- *Inkomo yokugodusà*, that is, ‘a cow with which to accompany the initiate home’. This marks the conclusion of the initiation, and the graduation of the initiate as a full diviner (Olivier, 1976:55).



4.3.5.3 Supplication sacrifice

Supplication sacrifices are featured as petitions whose purpose starts from "purely material goods to the highest spiritual blessings" (Eliade 1987:549). All Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals comport always a supplication element, which accounts for the absence of many explicit supplication sacrifices. The only notable cases of supplication sacrifices usually include national or tribal sacrifices for "rain-making, the securing of fertility of land and crops, protection of the country against lightening and hail...and the strengthening of the chief's army" (Hammond-Tooke 1974:549). Unfortunately detailed information about these sacrifices is very scarce, and whatever seems accessible appears insufficient and controversial; consequently we have to rely upon reports written about these sacrifices.

4.3.5.4 Communion sacrifice

Communion sacrifices are prompted by a deep need to have a good relationship and harmony with the ancestors. The following sacrifices are inherent to them:

- *Ukupha* (to give) - This ritual is adhered to on behalf of a named, communicating ancestor. The sacrificial ritual is performed either when the homestead head feels he ought to give him something, or when the ancestor requests it in a dream (Bigalke, 1969:80; Olivier, 1976:40). This sacrifice is motivated by a sheer filial intuition to offer a feast on behalf of the named ancestor. The ritual has a supplicating element, as Olivier's recorded statement shows: "*Naku ke mabandla kaPhalo, KaGcaleka, namhlanje kukanje, ndipha uHintsa. Ke ndicela impilo, inzala, umbona neenkomo. Ndimpha laa nkabi ilubhelu*" (Olivier, 1976:40).

This statement suggests that the host of the sacrifice says that he is offering it to his ancestor, and hints at requesting health, fertility, mealies and cattle. When it is performed on behalf of a maternal ancestor, mother or grandmother, the *ukupha* ritual takes the name *ibhokhwe yokupha uMama*, or 'a goat offered to the mother' (Bigalke, 1969:97). The alternative name provided by Bigalke is *ukukhapha unina*, which points to a mortuary ritual (see below). However, this does not appear to be applicable to women after death, since *ukukhapha* and *ukubuyisa* rituals are only performed for men (Olivier, 1976:39).

- *Izilo* (ancestor animal sacrifice). The totemic animal sacrifice contains two forms: low-key sacrificial rituals, during which a goat is slaughtered when the totemic or ancestral animal visits the homestead. It is meant to pacify the ancestor's animals (Olivier, 1976:40). There is also the more appropriate *izilo* sacrificial ritual, which usually takes place following the *ukubuyisa* or mortuary sacrificial ritual discussed below, and the *ukupha* sacrificial ritual (Bigalke, 1969:80; Olivier, 1976:40). A diviner could also recommend its performance (Bigalke, 1969:93).



The *ukubuyisa* and *ukupha* sacrificial rituals are reserved for idiosyncratic ancestors whose names are spelled out, whereas the *izilo* ritual is meant for all lineage ancestors. The *izilo* sacrificial ritual is also associated with the homestead's deceased women diviners (Bigalke, 1969:93). If these conflicting and controversial ascriptions are significant, it would appear as though the Gcaleka and Ndlambe, among whom Bigalke and Olivier conducted their research, present some differences in their understanding of the *izilo* sacrificial ritual. Both writers provide a detailed documentary account of the *izilo* sacrificial process:

- The *ukuvula umzi* (to open a home). This sacrificial ritual is observed when Xhosa people move from one location and establish themselves in a new area and new home. It informs the ancestors of their descendants' new residence, and invites them to join them (Bigalke, 1969:80).
- The *ukutshayela inkundla* (to sweep the area between the huts and the kraal), or to *camagusha*, that is, to propitiate the ancestors, depending either upon the homestead head's wishes or the diviner's recommendation. He slaughters a goat, a substitutionary sacrifice, and pledges to soon perform an adequate and relevant sacrifice (Bigalke, 1969:80). The Gcaleka call this sacrifice *Ukungxengxeza* (Olivier, 1976:38).

4.3.5.5 Thanksgiving sacrifice

Xhosa people's thanksgiving sacrifices are mostly associated with harvest celebrations, journey mercy acknowledgements upon a safe return, and salvation from danger. With regard to harvest celebrations, Pauw says: "After the crop has been harvested a feast is normally held during which a man will thank his ancestors for a good harvest". These "festivities are normally accompanied with beer drinking and every person has his own festival". He also points out that long ago, there was a national harvest festival presided over by the king (Pauw, 1994:108). In her field research among the Pondo people, Hunter accounts for the fact that a thanksgiving sacrifice is offered upon a man's safe return from the mine or from war (Hunter, 1979:251).

4.3.5.6 Ostracism sacrifice

The ostracism sacrificial ritual refers to the dispossession of a person, usually a son, who permanently disregarded and transgressed the kinship norms and expectations. This sacrifice expels him from the kinship group (Laubscher, 1937:84). This study's review of the relevant material reveals that Laubscher is the only writer who provides a considerable documentary account on the ostracism sacrificial ritual. The rationale behind the ostracism sacrifice is that it safeguards kinship cohesion, and reveals the great significance of kinship dynamics. The ex-communication of such an individual conveys to the ancestors, custodians of customs and traditions, the message that these are still being seriously observed by the community (Laubscher, 1937:85). Furthermore, the ostracism sacrifice informs the ancestors about the dissidence occasioned by the rebellious son in the lineage. The sacrificial



ritual consists of the slaughtering of a goat and the cutting of a dog's ear that is "eaten with the goat's meat" (Laubscher, 1937:85). The rationale behind the cutting of a dog's ear and mixing it with the goat's sacrificial meat is not clearly explained. However, the researcher believes that this might be a way of bewitching or placing a curse on the rebellious son.

4.3.5.7 Death sacrifice

Death sacrifices are also known as mortuary rituals (Bigalke, 1969:7; Lamla, 1971:24; Hammond-Tooke, 1974:328). They indicate a transformation "in the individual's status; he or she is transferred from the mundane world to the super mundane" (Lamla, 1974:24). Mortuary sacrifices with which Xhosa people are mostly acquainted include *ukukhapha* (send off), also referred to as *izilo*, and *ukubuyisa* (to bring back) or *ukuguqula* sacrifices (Bigalke, 1969:80; Pauw, 1994:120; Lamla, 1971:23; Olivier, 1976:36-37; Hammond-Tooke, 1974:328). The *ukukhapha* and *ukubuyisa* rituals are performed respectively a few weeks and about a year after funerals.

These rituals simultaneously accompany the deceased to the ancestral world and reintegrate him with his living kinship folk and ancestors (Bigalke, 1969:80; Pauw, 1994:120). These sacrificial rituals are only made for men, except in the case of a woman who dies at a very old age, and for women diviners (Bigalke, 1969:86-87). In both situations, an ox is slaughtered, the only difference being that the first sacrificial situation does not sanction the tasting of the sacrificial portion of meat (*intsonyama*), while it is part of the latter. Both ritual processes are accounted for in a detailed fashion (Bigalke, 1969:81-86; Olivier, 1976:36-39).

4.3.5.8 Important solemn sacrifice

Olivier suggests that of all the sacrificial rituals described above, *ukubuyisa*, *ukupha*, and *izilo* constitute the most significant ones among the Gcaleka people (Olivier, 1976:26). Their distinctive features are listed as follows:

- Their attendance is compulsory for all lineage members, without exceptions. Other sacrificial rituals, however, offer some attendance alternatives.
- The ritual official is the lineage head, unlike in other rituals, where he is the segment or househead.
- The officiating lineage head and daughters-in-law wear ceremonial garments.
- The sacrificial rituals involve ceremonial dancing, as well as the *izinqulo* or invocation of clan ancestors. An ox is always the sacrificial victim.
- The *utywala bokushwama* or beer for ritual tasting. The participants enjoy it, unlike in other sacrificial rituals, whereby only the sacrificial meat *intsonyama* is ritually tasted. This ritual's duration is longer than that of other sacrificial rituals (Olivier, 1976:26-27, 37-43).

The abovementioned sacrificial rituals are the ones that are specifically referred to as *idini* or 'sacrifice' in Xhosa religious terminology. Olivier reports that his respondents made a clear distinction between sacrifice proper and



other ritual killings. “Die volgende rites is offers (*amadini*): die terugbringte, die offer vir ‘n vader en die offer vir die vooroudiere” (meaning: the following rituals are sacrifices: the bringing back, the sacrifice for a father and the sacrifice for ancestors) (Olivier, 1976:26). Hammond-Tooke singles out other slaughterings from *idini* slaughtering as *amasiko* (custom), but he remarks that *amasiko*, as well as ritual killings, implicitly involves the ancestors. This is proved by the fact that “at all *amasiko* killings there are always some form of words, addressed ostensibly to the subject of the ritual, or to those present, but intended for the ears of *izinyanya* or ancestors” (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:146).

Bigalke holds that *ukubuyisa* is “the most important of all” sacrifices. His documentary account concerning *ukupha* and *izilo* sacrificial rituals among the Ndlambe people bears strong similarities with *ukubuyisa* sacrificial rituals. From this, it can be inferred that the abovementioned sacrificial rituals are equally important, since they present overlapping features with other sacrificial rituals (Bigalke, 1969:114-123).

4.4 ELEMENTS OF XHOSA SACRIFICE

The discussion of the elements of Xhosa sacrifice can be dealt with under two separate headings: the material and the ritual elements.

4.4.1 Material elements

The material elements of Xhosa people’s sacrifices include the lineage head and lineage members, the sacrificial victim, beer and *ubulavu* (home medicine), the spear, and the kraal as sacrificial altar. “A lineage is a group of people who can trace their descent from a common ancestor” (Hammond-Tooke, 1981:25). Deceased lineage members up to the fifth generation become the ancestors of all living lineage members. The reason is that as the lineage expands, the lineage members beyond five generations are obliterated. Therefore, lineage members must congregate for compulsory sacrificial rituals, as well as for optional ones, because they subsume the most significant elements of sacrifice (Hammond-Tooke, 1981:25). Sacrificial ritual officials, as integrated sacrificial elements, officiate for the entire lineage constituency and for the lineage segmentary constituency respectively.

Oxen and goats constitute the next crucial material elements in the Xhosa sacrificial system, and the type of sacrifice will always dictate the corresponding type of sacrificial victim, either an ox or a goat. The sheep is excluded because “it does not cry out when it is killed and the ancestors will not then be called” (Hammond-Tooke, 1981:26). However, the Nguni and Fingo people in Xhosa Mfengu utilise sheep as a sacrificial victim, instead of goats. Diviner and rain-making initiation sacrifices require a black cow (Lamla, 1971:7; Olivier, 1976:55). Amazingly enough, even when the sacrificial victim is not a cow, it is spoken of as one (Bigalke, 1969:129).

The belief that Xhosa people’s preference for the cow as an appropriate sacrificial victim would be very remote from its deification, as the Indian



people do, but is rather associated with the fact that a cow serves as a material bond between the living and those who have gone before, or the living dead. The fact that cows are objects of inheritance from one generation to the next, symbolically assures continuity between the living and the living dead. Consequently, even acquired cows are considered as gifts bestowed by the ancestors, which emphasises the many requests for cows during Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals. This highlights why Xhosa people reserve special treatment and great affection for cows - they can never be separate from them because they view them as precious and adequate material offerings for the ancestors (Shaw, 1974:94).

The special sacrificial killing spear initiates the process of slaughtering the sacrificial victim by prodding it. Afterwards, other appropriate equipment completes the task. Each Xhosa homestead owns this type of spear for use in appropriate sacrifices. Other secondary, but also inexorable physical elements include beer, *ubulavu* or *iyeza* and *lasekhaya* (herbal mixture type of home medicine). These two are also instrumental in fostering a communion with ancestors outside the sacrificial setting (Olivier, 1976:21-22).

Some writers' investigations suggest that beer "*is 'n noodsaaklike element by sommige slagrites*" (meaning: it is an essential element of some sacrifices) (Olivier, 1976:121). Nevertheless, beer is often used in sacrificial rituals where it had been previously omitted, such as in *ukukhapha* and *ukubingelela* sacrificial rituals (Bigalke, 1969:112; Olivier, 1976:121). With regard to *ubulawu* (mixed herbal medicine), Olivier observes that the Gcaleka and Ndlambe Xhosa sub-groups use it in the *izilo* and diviner initiation sacrificial rituals, but Bigalke suggests that it is rather used in *ukuguqula*, *ukupha*, *izilo*, *ukuvula umzi*, *intambo* and *ukuttshayelesa* sacrificial rituals (Olivier, 1976:50; Bigalke, 1969:127).

The last material element in the Xhosa sacrificial system is the kraal, which is the usual place for the ancestors' abode. The above elements therefore make up the physical dimension of the Xhosa sacrificial system. There is also the fire on which the sacrificial portion of meat is roasted, special tree branches, that is, *umuthathi* and *indwaba* (kinds of trees), used for putting the meat on the fire. These merely have utility purposes, and do not have any sacrificial significance (Bigalke, 1969:134; Olivier, 1976:23).

4.4.2 Ritual elements

The most remarkable ritual elements in Xhosa sacrificial rituals can be listed as the following: dancing, *ubulawu* application, clarification of sacrificial purpose, *ukunqula* or invocation of the ancestors, prodding of the sacrificial victim with the official sacrificial spear (*umkhonto wekhaya*), and the roasting of the suet (*intlukuhla*), roasting and tasting of the sacrificial portion of meat (*ukushwama intsonyama*), ritual tasting of beer (*utywala bokushwama*), and the burning of bones symbolising the conclusion of a sacrificial ritual (Olivier, 1976:42).



4.4.3 Dancing

The dancing performed by the entire lineage during rhythmical and orthodox sacrificial rituals goes hand in hand with emotional singing and clapping of hands, while the lineage membership moves in the direction of the kraal. Though the writers' documentary account of dancing does not provide one with any clue as to its sacrificial significance (Olivier 1976: 42), it is the researcher's view that one could compare it to the High Mass orthodox procession.

4.4.3.1 Ubulawu application

The *ubulawu* medicine's application during Xhosa people's orthodox sacrificial rituals functions in the following manner: during *the izilo* sacrificial ritual, the Gcaleka lineage members use it to wash the whole body: "*Hierna gaan hulle die beeskraal binne en was die hele liggaam met –ubulawu-medisyne, mans aan die linkerkant en die vrouens aan die regterkant*" (meaning: after this, they go into the kraal and wash the entire body with ubulawu medicine, men on the left side and women on the right) (Olivier, 1976:42). During the diviner initiation sacrificial ritual, the *ubulawu* is used to wash the body of the *ignoramus* diviner (Olivier, 1976:45). Its serviceability among the Ndlambe remains uncertain, although it is acknowledged to be more inherent to them. Bigalke observes that the *ubulawu* is usually borne by the processing people, who deposit it in some place near the kraal. Then, at the *ukupha* sacrificial ritual, it is found "thrown out the billycan onto the manure" (Bigalke, 1969:120).

4.4.3.2 The ukunqula ritual's meaning and purpose

The ukunqula involves some invocatory petitions. During Xhosa people's propitiatory sacrifices, it refers to a request that the supplicants address to the ancestors, petitioning for deliverance from misfortune. It also contains health, well-being and fertility supplications respectively, in connection with initiation and communion sacrificial rituals. The *ukunqula* or invocation of the ancestors happens in all types of sacrificial rituals, because people believe that they can not miss the boat, even with certain sacrificial rituals that are not intended for them (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:329).

In this regard, Bigalke observes that the purpose of sacrificial rituals is reflected in all types of sacrifices. Therefore, because of their anticipated participation in and presence at all sacrificial rituals, clan names have been invented, by which all lineage ancestors and beyond are generally addressed. For instance, the names *Matshawe*, *Mabamba*, *Mangwevu* etc are meant to accomplish that same objective (Bigalke, 1969:130). Ancestors' invocations through clan names are found in all sacrificial rituals that Bigalke has studied (Bigalke, 1969: 81-98). This also applies to some of the Gcaleka sacrificial rituals that Olivier analyses (Olivier, 1976:30, 33, 37-38, 41, 43, 45).

With orthodox sacrificial rituals such as *ukubuyisa*, *ukupha* and *izilo*, invocations are more focused on specific lineage ancestors for whom the



sacrificial rituals have been performed, and on other ancestors, because these types of sacrifices are intended for 'lineage solidarity' (Bigalke, 1969:130). While these invocations are being made, certain ancestors are called out and briefed about the purpose of the sacrificial ritual. There are no special formulae for communicating with the ancestors during these invocations: "the language is that of everyday speech" (Hunter, 1979:247).

Invocations are characterised by spontaneous naming of the ancestors. However, Bigalke remarks that, among the Ndlambe people, "the constitution of the congregation determined the ancestors to be named" (Bigalke, 1969:131). The petitioning worshipper looks at the number of lineage members present, and then the ancestors who would "combine them all" (Bigalke, 1969: 131). His genealogical knowledge and eloquence constitute another determining factor of the lineage ancestors in the invocation (Bigalke, 1969:131). This does not matter "*omdat die name wat aangeroop word al die ander name insluit*" (meaning: because the names that are called already include the other names) (Olivier, 1976:48).

For instance, the invocation hereafter recorded from a Pondo sacrificial ritual is also true for the Xhosa people: "Here is your beast, here is the thing you wish (people) of Klwo, Ntsikanyane, Nogemane, and Gwadiso" (Hunter, 1976:247). Olivier gives a lengthier account in connection with the invocation of ancestors through naming, which he recorded from the Gcaleka people: "*Nali ke, mabandla kaZulu, kaCikolo, KaTshangisa, kaSimuka, kaKwethane, nawo kaTywayi, nawo kaRengqo, nanku esitsho ke umzukulwana wakho looingubomoi utsho*" ,which means "Listen hoisted of Zulu, Cikolo, etc. Here is your grandchild as he sits with that red ox called *Bomoyi*" (Olivier, 1976:41).

So far, this study has attempted to account for the *ukunqula* as being analogous to an invocation, with the significance of calling on higher powers for succour and all kinds of intervention. This has been motivated by the fact that most writers, mainly African theologians, as well as a few anthropologists, associate this meaning with *ukunqula*. However, there is also a belief that *ukunqula* is not equivalent to invocation, but rather to worship in the sense of contemplation, adoration and total commitment and devotion to a higher being or symbol (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:134-135).

Given the fact that Hammond–Tooke stands out as the modern proponent of the abovementioned view, this study will confront him with the opposite view, but before that, it is essential to concentrate on his argument. Hammond-Tooke contends that it is appropriate to consider ancestors as being worshipped, because they meet all the criteria that qualify them as a being or entity, and as an object of worship. However, he agrees that ancestors lack numinousness, a quality that conveys a sense of awe and infinity, as Rudolf Otto suggests. However, Hammond-Tooke doubts the validity of such an allegation in terms of the concept of worship. Then, he concludes that: "It would seem unlikely, on the face of it, for the idea of the ineffably holy, with all its implications of power and majesty, to be necessarily part of all religious concepts, especially in egalitarian societies. It is undoubtedly part of the so-



called world religions, on which Otto founds his analysis” (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:137).

Furthermore, Hammond-Tooke contends that the dignity with which rituals are conducted and the choice of words reveal that they are “pregnant with reverence (and numinous?)” in ministrations to the ancestors who are objects of worship (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:141). He stresses Xhosa sacrificial rituals’ descriptive words such as *ukunqula* and *camagusha*, which have a worshipping connotation. In concluding his argument, Hammond-Tooke asks the following question: “Can the South African Bantu, especially Zulu and Cape Nguni, be said to worship their ancestors?”, to which he replies: “I conclude that they can” (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:147). The reasonable motivations involve: “Examination of the invocations and their accompanying ritual acts has brought out important aspects of the worship. In all, there is a formal distancing of the shades from the living” (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:147).

In agreeing with those who hold a positive view, this study would like to refer to what was pointed out earlier in this dissertation in connection with the nature of invocation among Xhosa people, namely the fact that their language is that of everyday speech. Noticeably, the dignity of invocation suggested by Hammond-Tooke, and from which he draws his conclusion that ancestors are worshipped, is taken from the Zulu context. However, he fails to provide even one example from the Xhosa people, with which a similar conclusion could be reached. It goes without saying that the lack of similar instances among the Xhosa would only sanction a different type of conclusion. One can say that even the conclusion he draws in relation to the invocation of their ancestors is far from being definite, because he himself admits that the one example he quoted referred “to a ritual performed at a time of serious illness and thus invested with a highly-charged emotional element”. He also admits that perhaps “not all ‘ritual’ is performed with such a concentrated attention of piety” (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:142).

One can attempt to recall the observation made earlier concerning ancestors’ ontology, which deals with the authentication of their nature as similar to that of human beings. In this regard, Bettison remarks that ancestral spirits have the same characteristics as the living, essentially human, without any attribute that would prompt or propel man to worship or adore them. Ancestors did not derive their abilities from ethical or moral perfection, but simply through consanguinity and death. Bettison emphasises the fact, that among the Southern Bantu people, ancestors are not “worthy of man’s worship and adoration” (Bettison, 1954:21).

His conclusion is similar to that of a host of African Christian writers such as Mbiti (1969:8-9), Oladimeji (1980:19-20) and Lungu (1982:10-12). It is the researcher’s view that the above argument rules out the allegation that Xhosa people worship their ancestors. Rather, while the invocations indicate allegiance, they do not propound such a great metaphysical difference between ancestors and the living. However, the Bible does not share this conviction. O’ Donovan says that “ancestors are a subterfuge by the devil; elaborated relationships expressed through various sacrificial rituals are anti



biblical” (O’ Donovan, 1996:218-228). This will be looked at in more detail later in this dissertation.

4.4.3.3 Prodding with the sacrificial spear

Prior to the prodding of the sacrificial victim with the *umkhonto wekhaya*, a sacrificial spear, the sacrificial animal is made to lie down on its left side in order to facilitate the cutting of *intsonyama* from its right side (Olivier, 1976:23). Afterwards, the sacrificial spear is transposed “in the form of an eight figure through the legs of the animal” (Pauw, 1994:120). Studies conducted in Gcaleka on sacrificial performances by the Gcaleka Xhosa, affirm that the purpose of prodding the ritual animal is to “bless” (*sikelela*) it (McAllister, 1997:291). Kuckertz, who conducted his research among the Pondo, argues that the act has to do with the “consecration of the animal” meant to be offered to the ancestors (Kuckertz, 1990:238). No explanation is provided as to why this sacrificial animal is consecrated in this fashion. McAllister’s respondents suggested that the practice was a custom inherited from the astronomical, distant past, without any explanation (McAllister, 1997:291).

The prodding of the animal victim comes next. It is prodded in the stomach with the tip of the sacrificial spear, prompting its bellowing. Xhosa people do not attribute this bellowing to plausible pain that the sacrificial victim might be experiencing, as the Society of Prevention of Cruelty against Animals (SPCA) would, but as a demonstration that the sacrifice has been acquiesced, and is “jubilantly greeted by the onlookers”, with the cry “*Camagu*” (Bigalke, 1969:130). It is thus “not the killing but the bellowing of the animal that is an essential element, because the cry is the medium through which the praises spoken by the ritual elders” are transmitted and approved by the ancestors (Kuckertz, 1990:239).

Camagu means to “be propitiated” (Bigalke, 1969:23); “*Wees gepaa*” (be appeased) (Olivier, 1976:23); “blessings” (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:144); and “Give us your good will” (Pauw, 1994:21). Some writers provide the meaning of the word, instead of its literal translation. Laubscher considers it as “an appeal to *Izinyanya* (ancestors) for blessing and protection” (Laubscher, 1937:67), while Olivier understands it as a calling associated with intense thankfulness (Olivier, 1976:23).

4.4.3.4 Cutting of the suet (Intlukuhla)

This ritual consists of cutting a piece from the stomach-protruding fat to be consumed by fire. The ritual is intended to create an attracting smell for the ancestors (Pauw, 1994:120). In other words, this might be understood as an offering to the ancestors. Interestingly enough, of all the writers, only two, namely Soga (1931:146-147) and Pauw (1994:120) have accounted for this ritual. Soga accounts for it, and associates a sacrificial significance with it. While referring to the sacrificial tasting of *intsonyama*, which most writers consider as step number one in a sacrificial ritual, next to the prodding of the



sacrificial animal, he ranks it as “the second ceremonial step in the sacrificial ritual, the first having already been performed” (Soga, 1931:147).

4.4.3.5 Sacrificial tasting: intsonyama and beer

The tasting of sacrificial meat (*ukushwama*), as well as the tasting of beer (*utywala bokushwama*) by all lineage members, occurs during solemn sacrificial rituals. The sacrificial portion of meat (*intsonyama*) is taken from the sacrificial victim’s right shoulder, roasted without salt and ritually tasted by all the lineage members and by the beneficiary of the sacrifice, in the case of birth, initiation and contingent sacrificial rituals (Bigalke, 1969:133; Olivier, 1976:23). Tasting rituals are not part of *ukukhapha* and *inkobe* sacrificial rituals, as mentioned earlier on (Bigalke, 1969:133).

It is unfortunate that the literature consulted did not clarify the idea behind *ukushwama*. Firstly, the purpose of cutting the sacrificial portion from the sacrificial victim’s right shoulder remains a mystery. The only plausible response that Olivier obtained from his informants was that the shoulder was selected because it was considered to be the best part of the carcass. However, this allegation appears to be more an ad hoc opinion than a matter of fact (Olivier, 1976:24). Laubscher only sheds a shadowy light on this matter. He only refers to the birth sacrificial ritual. He observes that meat from the sacrificial victim is given to the mother at the *umbingelero* sacrificial ritual, which “indicates that the child is born from the seed of the right-hand hut facing the rising sun, and is hence not illegitimate since the right-hand hut is the hut of the head of the kraal. It further impresses this fact upon the ancestors to show that tribal morality and customs have not been violated and that therefore the child, being on the right line of descent, is entitled to their protection and blessings” (Laubscher, 1937:74).

Secondly, the rationale behind *ukushwama* can only be wagered by associating it with the sacrificial meal shared between the offerer and the sacrificial recipient. Hence, we speak of the communion meal (Eliade, 1987:551). By relating the *ukushwama* tasting sacrificial ritual to the general principles of sacrificial rituals, it can be viewed as a communion meal between the living lineage members and their ancestors. In fact, when one accounts for this among the Nguni people, “In all sacrifices it is commensalism which has been expressed: a communion meal which symbolically unites the living and the dead” (Hammond-Tooke, 1978:353). It is this study’s view that such speculation is far from getting to the point.

4.4.3.6 Burning of the bones

The gathering and burning of bones when the sacrificial ritual has been completed points to the significance of preventing the removal of any part of the sacrifice from the homestead where the sacrificial ritual was performed. The rationale behind this was to discourage anyone from taking parts of the sacrifice for sorcery purposes. It is unclear how sorcery would harness an already made, and probably accepted, sacrifice. The utilisation of the sacrificial remains by witches would create a reversal in the sacrificial effects,



such that a person healed through sacrificial rituals might relapse back into sickness and ancestors' blessings turn into curses, epidemics or other natural calamities. Before approaching the theme of sacrifice among a few other tribes of South Africa, as well as sacrifice among modern Xhosa people, a quick glance at the nature of Xhosa sacrifice is imperative (Sipuka, 2000:161).

4.5 THE NATURE OF XHOSA SACRIFICE

After surveying the Xhosa people's sacrificial elements, there is now a need to draw a few conclusions concerning its nature. This will specifically describe their sacrificial rituals' purpose, essence, objectives and mood.

4.5.1 Purpose

The purpose of Xhosa sacrificial rituals is to maintain solidarity and to cement the undisturbed bond of unity, as well as to enforce behavioural norms among lineage members. This explains why the introduction of new members is done through initiation rituals, dead members remembered through death rituals, and detected disharmony among lineage members dealt with through contingent rituals. Xhosa sacrificial rituals' emphasis on lineage solidarity is ostentatiously interpreted by the fact that, while some sacrificial rituals' attendance remains open to all, others are restricted to, and compulsory for, lineage members (Bigalke, 1969:104).

Among the Ndlambe people "there is a tacit understanding that rituals, unlike *imigidi* (initiation rituals) are not absolute public occasions". For rituals that are open to the public, non-lineage attendants are integrated into the lineage. The proof of this is that all outsiders attending open sacrificial rituals are called by the hosting house's clan name, irrespective of the fact that they do not share that particular clan name. Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals therefore constitute a clan and lineage affair (Bigalke, 1969:104).

4.5.2 Essence

Concerning sacrificial ritual performance itself, two elements constitute the very essence of sacrifice, invocation (*ukunqula*) and the sacrificial victim's bellowing. The *ukunqula* constitutes a punctilious address to the ancestors about the purpose of the sacrifice to be offered. The bellowing typifies the ancestors' voice in accepting the sacrifice, and the assurance that the effect for which the sacrifice was offered was granted. For this reason, the bellowing is greeted with jubilation: "*Camag*". While conducting his field research, Bigalke observed that participants in a certain sacrifice were greatly disappointed when the sacrificial victim failed to bellow (Bigalke, 1969:104). After four desperate attempts to cause the animal to bellow, Bigalke remarks: "He went back to the ox. He tried hitting it on the stomach with the spear and stabbed again with no result. Bystanders said "*Ayivumi*" (it does not agree). Hala, looking tense, tried again. "Speak, speak", shouted the man...." Hala's brother instructed the abafana to catch the beast again...Bystanders called to him to speak from between the gateposts. He went and stood there and said,



'what is it *Bamba*'? We know the ritual we are performing...“(Bigalke, 1969:104).

This ritual example stresses once more the fact that the sacrificial animal's bellowing is the most crucial, not being slaughtered, because only its bellowing symbolically represents the ancestors' response to the lineage head's invocation. Generally, in sacrificial considerations, blood has also been essentially upheld as crucial to sacrificial processes (Eliade, 1987:546). However, the information at hand does not indicate an intense sacrificial use of blood in Xhosa sacrificial rituals. There is nothing such as pouring it out or sprinkling it. Soga observes that it is put in the sack's hut overnight, then the next day it is cooked for the dogs (Soga, 1931:147). Pauw advances that it is cooked the same day “for male relatives and old men” (Pauw, 1994:111).

4.5.3 Objectives and Moods

This lack of significance of blood renders invocations (*inziqulo*) and the sacrificial animal's bellowing as the essence of Xhosa sacrificial rituals. In normal circumstances, the general objectives of sacrifice include consumption, exchange and substitution (Chidester, 1992:12). Of these three, a Xhosa sacrificial ritual is mainly characterised by the first two objectives: that is, the sacrificial focus is on consumption, since this is indicated in the sacrificial introductory speeches, particularly the “*ukupha*” sacrificial ritual, in which hints of offering ancestors something to eat are given. This is also clarified when the lineage members participate in the “*intsonyama*” living, and when the remainder of the meat is “left in the house overnight so that the ancestor spirits may take their share”. It also becomes clearer when the meat is boiled and distributed among all the participants (Pauw, 1994:121).

Exchange as a sacrificial ritual objective conveys the meaning that something valuable is granted to the sacrificial recipient in anticipation of some favours in return (Chidester, 1992:12). When this element is dominant in the sacrificial ritual, the sacrifice is categorised as a bribe sacrifice (Henninger, 1987:550). The element of exchange is very obvious in Xhosa sacrificial rituals. When a sacrificial offering is intended for the ancestors, it is simultaneously accompanied by a request or supplication. Olivier's documentary account reveals this: “*Naku ke mabandla kaPhalo, kaGcaleka, namhlanje kungakanje, ndipha uHintsa Ke ndicela impilo, inzala, umbona nenkomo Ndimpha laa nkabi ilubhelu*” (Olivier, 1976:40).

In the above case, the worshipper offers a cow to his ancestors, asking for health, fertility, mealies and cows. Apparently, though this statement sounds like an exchange, it naturally emphasises the mutual obligation between the living and the living dead. The living people show their allegiance towards the ancestors, who in turn are expected to support them with living supplies and material security. In the case of sacrificial objectives, substitution refers to the transference of the offerer's sin and punishment to the sacrificial victim. However, this might not be evident among Xhosa people's understanding of the sacrifice. The idea of personal sin denies any probable legitimacy of substitution here, because personal offences are dealt with by other



disciplinary measures. In Xhosa sacrificial practices, sacrificial rituals exclusively deal with the “sins” of omission regarding obligations towards the lineage (Olivier, 1976:40).

All Xhosa sacrificial rituals are relaxed and festive, except for the *ukupha*. The relaxed and festive nature of Xhosa sacrificial rituals is particularly true of initiation sacrifices. After elementary performances are completed, people sit according to gender and age, and share tobacco and conversation. This time is normally interrupted by sporadic announcements with regard to the distribution of meat and beer. Thus, Xhosa sacrificial rituals continue with chatting, teasing, sharing of meat, beer and tobacco, until the end of the ceremony (Olivier, 1976:40).

4.6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to undertake an analysis of sacrificial rituals as understood and performed in the Xhosa traditional cultural context. This timid attempt has not fully achieved this task, due to the scarcity of early scholarly records on Xhosa sacrificial rituals. Therefore, this study has relied on current documented reports that, to a large extent, account for Xhosa sacrificial rituals after the Xhosa people had come into contact with Christianity and colonialism. Thus, the integrity of these records cannot be guaranteed. However, this study has attempted to focus on elements that have been considered to be traditional by most writers.

While investigating this topic, the researcher came across Rev. Sipuka’s allegation that most research on Xhosa traditional practices and understanding of sacrificial rituals has been undertaken by white anthropologists and people who are entrenched in the Western culture. He states: “while this might be prolific on the side of objectivity considering the fact that they were investigating from an outsider’s point of view, this presents also some disadvantages we are not allowed to overlook; namely prejudices and biases as well as the lack of insight into the issues they described and analysed”. Although terms such as “natives, kaffirs, pagans and savages are becoming obsolete in connection with referring to African people in current publications, you still discover some disparaging and prejudicial reports concerning certain elements of indigenous African culture” (Sipuka, 2000:165). Therefore, being cognisant of the fact that this only constitutes an observation and not an integrated part of this dissertation, Rev. Sipuka endeavoured to illustrate his views using only two examples, which will shortly be responded to.

In attempting to explain kinship/lineage dynamics among Bantu people, for instance, Hammond-Tooke says: “safeguarding kin group interest is greater than the value of truth-telling as an absolute”, and he concludes: “This has led to the widespread Bantu mandicity” (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:360). The researcher truly finds this comment a bit strange, since the need to safeguard kin group interests, sometimes at the expense of truth, is a universal sociological fact applicable to all groups. Tischeler, a sociologist, reports



about a group behaviour study conducted in America, which revealed that individuals were “willing to give incorrect answers in order not to appear out of step with the judgement of the other group” (Tischeler, 1990:167).

Obviously, this is common to both small and large groups, that is, governments, institutions and churches. If this is true, why should the mendacious effect of kin groups be thought to be widespread only among the Bantu people? The logical reply to this question would be that kin group interests have perhaps different effects for different groups. For the Bantu, as it is alleged, it has the effect of mendacity, while for Europeans it has perhaps the effect of veracity. With such a conclusion, therefore, one still needs to clarify why the same thing has a different effect on different groups, if people are basically the same. Could this be attributed to the fact that Bantu people are maybe not the same as other groups? Could it be associated with the fact that one group is primitive and the other modern and Westernised? Or that one is savage or barbaric and the other civilised? Or that one is black and the other is white? Or that one is pagan and the other Christian? This is important to know.

The second instance refers to a writer who attempted to explain the utilisation of cattle among the traditional Bantu people. In this regard, she says: “Cattle are also the means of obtaining sexual satisfaction, since a legal marriage cannot take place without the passage of cattle” (Shaw, 1974:94). If Lamla’s description of traditional marriage as an alliance between two lineages (Lamla, 1971:20) is significant here, then Shaw’s interpretation of the passage of cattle as a licence to sexual satisfaction would be a fragrant distortion of the Bantu understanding of marriage. It is equivalent to saying that the dowry brought by the bride to her husband in Western culture constitutes her licence to have sex with him.

It is the researcher’s view that, unlike what Sipuka says and the types of questions he asks, there is a reversible cultural shock from both external and internal agents, and only the perceptions of either side trigger the detonation. Furthermore, all criticism is not bad, if only people could be more reflective about this and consider it as an opportunity for self-introspection and learning, and ultimately for correction. For example, the researcher recently visited one black preacher from the Free State. In his 1 metre high and 2 x 1.5 metre lodge, he enjoyed a shocking way of life. Everything was dirty and mixed up. Without a spare cup, he washed the one and only cup that he had, without soap - to cut it short, it was repulsive because of his legendary dirtiness.

It is possible that he may have interpreted this profound shock as boastfulness and disparaging behaviour, because the researcher truly did experience repugnance and great unease in partaking of whatever he laid before him. This inferiority complex and mother-to-African reactionism between African people is greatly magnified when it comes to outsiders, and blinded self-defensive reactionists can only see bias, disparagement and dehumanization, even if there might be something positive and advantageous. After having said this, Rev. Sipuka, however, can rejoice in the fact that not all white anthropologists have the same kind of prejudice. For instance,



Willoughby (1928) was one of the Western anthropologists who described Bantu culture with sympathy and insight. This reveals the need for insider anthropologists who are steeped in Bantu culture. The inquiry concerning sacrificial rituals among Xhosa people has established that these rituals were both practised and conceptualised. The linguistic analysis of Xhosa words for sacrifice revealed that the traditional Xhosa did not only perform sacrificial rituals, but also knew what they were doing. Anthropologists and researchers from various disciplines and interests have enlightened the facts and meanings of Xhosa sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:166-167).

However, people still differ. Consequently, this study has dared to give some suggestions as to what might help towards an intelligible picture of the existence of the Xhosa sacrificial system. For instance, the researcher has suggested that Xhosa sacrifices may be categorised into birth, initiation, contingent, death and solemn sacrifices. The investigation into Xhosa sacrificial rituals in this chapter has revealed the fact that there are numerous rituals that include the slaughtering of animals, some serving as provisions for the feast, as in the case of boys and girls' initiation rites, as well as marriage. Therefore, contrary to what some writers would choose to believe, not every killing should be regarded as a sacrifice.

This investigation has further revealed the fact that while ancestors are involved in their descendants' everyday lives and are consequently part of every ritual, not all rituals involving the slaughtering of animals are intended for them. This makes it easy for us to distinguish between ritual slaughtering that can truly be termed as sacrifice (*idini*), and those that can be called customs (*amasiko*). The conclusion that can be drawn concerning the analysis of the types of Xhosa sacrificial rituals discussed here is that *ukubuyisa*, *ukupha* and *izilo* constitute rituals that could be properly considered to be sacrifices, while the rest can only be viewed as customs (Sipuka, 2000:167). This distinction is critical for the purposes of this study, which focuses on showing how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is viewed in the Old Testament, African traditional religion (South Africa and elsewhere in Africa), the New Testament (Epistle to the Hebrews), as well as in the Christian Church and African traditional religion (South Africa, Xhosas Zulus, Tsongas etc.) today. The analysis of Xhosa sacrificial elements has revealed that it is quite difficult to be conclusive about what Xhosa sacrifices are composed of. Among various reasons in support of this, are the following:

- People themselves, among whom research has been conducted. They have no tangible explanation for some of the rituals and elements associated with sacrifices.
- When Bigalke, for instance, inquired among the Ndlambe people about the utilisation of *ubulawu* in sacrificial rituals, the response he got from them was: "*Savela kunjalo*" (Bigalke, 1969:128), meaning: "when we were born it was like that". Others' explanations were just ad hoc opinions without any objective grounds for verification.

Furthermore, the utilisation of elements associated with sacrifices differs from one lineage group to the other, from one settlement to the other, from one Xhosa house to the other, and from one Nguni group to the other. For



instance, it has been pointed out in this chapter that the utilisation of *ubulawu* is more widespread among the Ndlambe than the Gcaleka people.

- The third reason lies with researchers. Some of them overlook sacrificial elements noted by their fellow researchers. A respectable number of them keep silent on the burning of the suet (*Intlukuhla*), including Bigalke and Olivier, who specifically conducted research on the two Xhosa subgroups. Only two offered their documented accounts in this regard. Moreover, some emphasise elements that others consider to be insignificant. As an example, Pauw is the only writer who attaches sacrificial significance to the sprinkling of the animal's stomach contents in the kraal. The others only mention it (Sipika, 2000:168).

In some instances, where clarity with regard to the meaning of particular rituals, as well as elements associated with sacrifice, is absent, the researcher has allowed himself to speculate as to possible meanings. Those speculations have been deduced from either the general understanding of sacrifice, or from a similar ritual explanation from another context. For instance, Hunter and Kuckertz were consulted for insight into similar Xhosa sacrificial rituals that they explained in the Pondo context (Sipika, 2000:168). Undoubtedly, such speculation would contribute to an intelligible representation of Xhosa sacrifice if it is correct. Otherwise, the researcher would be happy to be informed as to the relevant results.

The *ukunqula* element created a controversy as to whether ancestors are invoked or worshipped. The presentation of the arguments on both sides led to the conclusion that the argument that *ukunqula* is different to an act of worship proved to carry more weight than the opposing argument. Although ancestors are considered to be superior in power, and fill the living with allegiance, they basically share their spiritual essence with the living. At death, their spirit undergoes a certain metamorphosis from *umphfumlo* to *umoya*. The basis of their authoritative superiority does not come from their metaphysical status, which distinguishes them from the living, as is the case with the Judeo-Christian God. It is rather obtained from the customary respect for elders, and the elders' obligation to assume the well-being of their offspring. This respect due to the ancestors constitutes in no way an act of worship. It is only intended to preserve the tribal traditions, of which the ancestors are custodians (Sipika, 2000:169). However, this study is of the view that there are divided opinions in this regard, as will be elucidated later on in this dissertation.

The conclusion concerning the nature of Xhosa sacrificial rituals can be drawn with reference to its purpose, essence, objective and mood. Xhosa sacrificial rituals strengthen lineage solidarity - otherwise, without this lineage, Xhosa sacrificial rituals become non-existent and meaningless. In other words, Xhosa sacrificial rituals have value for a person who values lineage. They essentially consist of communicating with the ancestors through invocation and the bellowing of the sacrificial animal, which is perceived as the ancestors' positive response to the sacrifice (Sipika, 2000:169).



Given the fact that Xhosa sacrificial rituals are intended to sustain lineage solidarity, their major objectives cannot be other than consumption and exchange. Consumption refers to the communion sharing between the living and the living dead. Expectation emphasises the obtaining of favours in exchange for a sacrifice offered, which instills a sense of mutual obligation between the partakers. A feeling of being in communion, and a sense of mutual support, feature in Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals, as evidenced by the festive and joyous mood that permeates them (Spika, 2000:169).

The discussion on Xhosa sacrificial rituals in this chapter has revealed the fact that the understanding and practice of sacrificial rituals among Xhosa people has been widely, if not entirely, moulded by their cosmological views, as well as their social structures. A logical expectation would sanction change in the concept and practice of sacrifice, as the above elements change and develop. Before approaching the chapter on how Christianity and modernity might have influenced Xhosa people's traditional sacrificial rituals' performance and their understanding of sacrifice, a quick glance at one or two other South African tribal sacrificial rituals, namely the Zulu and Tsonga people's traditional thoughts on sacrificial rituals, seems to be imperative, just for the sake of comparison and generalisation of the research findings. One can now ask oneself: what is communicative power of blood sacrifices among the Zulus and Tsongas, and what activities and objects are involved in them?



CHAPTER FIVE: ZULU AND TSONGA PEOPLES' SACRIFICIAL IDEAS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Before approaching the chapter on Xhosa sacrificial rituals in the modern context, this study has decided to very briefly look at the Zulu and Tsonga peoples' sacrificial ideas, in order to show how the communicative power of sacrifices is viewed among these two tribes, and to facilitate the generalisation of this investigation to other Bantu tribes in South Africa, especially with regard to the effects of blood sacrifices. In this section, the researcher is not interested in going into too much detail regarding Zulu and Tsonga sacrificial ideas, but only wants to mention them for the sake of comparison. Therefore, this study will first look at sacrificial rituals with regard to the Zulu people.

5.1.1 Sacrificial rituals among the Zulu People

Zulu customs suggest that this group sacrifices the hornbill through the breaking of its neck or through suffocation, without spilling blood. Afterwards, they attach a stone to its feet and throw it into deep water, in order to bring rain (Berglund, 1975:57). In the case of a very severe drought, Zulu people sacrifice a domestic animal (a goat or a sheep) in order to end the drought (Berglund, 1975:55). Zulu people believe that during sacrificial rituals, some freshness is transferred to the ritual object. The entire metaphor involved shows that the sacrificial animal is a link between the sacrificer and the god that delights in its fat (Strauss, 1971:600-603). The exploration of complementary concerns engendered by the selection of the black sheep reveals the following: the black sheep's fat is an ingredient in the manufacturing of magic medicines. Female horns contain ewe fat, which is equated with women's fat (Berglund, 1975:54).

5.1.2 The Ox: sacrifice to the ancestors

According to Zulu thought, an ox is a prestigious animal with primarily a socio-economic value. Cattle play a big role in regulating matrimonial exchanges. They share the settlement with men at night (Berglund, 1975:110). Since the ancestors (*indlozi*) are intimately associated with their offspring, they dwell in their bodies and in the cattle. Ancestors take another human form in dreams that make the "*amathongo*" invisible during the day (Berglund, 1975:89-91). Ancestors are also capable of living underground. In this case, they are called *abaphansi*. They can also live at the back of a hut on a type of altar, where they are offered meat, beer and tobacco. Ancestors also like to stay at the arch over the entrance (Berglund, 1975:102-105).

Ancestors "have seats in the gall bladder of animals; they forester women fertility, conception and pregnancy. The birth of a child is like the ancestors' reincarnation or rebirth for, during sexual intercourse, an ancestor leaves the water and enters a sperm in the form of water, then goes into the woman's



womb, mixes with her blood to form a child. This childbearing perpetuates the ancestors and ensures their immortality. Slough from an ancestor serves as medicine for women suffering from menstrual problems or those with premature babies. Ancestors cannot stand the cooking smell; meat sacrifice that is given to them is eaten in a very strange way. After the victim has been immolated, the ancestor licks pieces of raw meat kept for them on the *msamo* altar. They also lick the victim's bile" (Ngubane, 1977:59-61).

5.1.3 The sacrificial sequence

Zulu people agree with the fact that both an ox and a goat are equally sacrificed to the ancestors (Berglund, 1975:225). The invocation of the ancestors is done in the presence of the animal to be sacrificed. The circumstances and reasons for sacrificing must be well expressed, and in the case of an offence that might have disrupted the relationship between the ancestors and the living, a *bona fide* confession is a pre-requisite, since sacrifice essentially seeks the establishment of a dialogue with the ancestors. In these instances, the beauty and health conditions of the sacrifice are upheld. The sacrificial ritual is performed in a dignified and self-conscious manner. Before immolating the victim, the officiator rubs the animal's back with a "carbonized magical plant" or with beer (Berglund, 1975:228).

Imphepho (*Helichxysum miconiae folium*) is a plant that is always fresh. It is gathered early in the morning, and the exercise is similar to a sacrifice. The ancestors are believed to live closer to this plant in metaphorical and metonymical ways. According to tradition, an ox is stabbed in the flank with the ancestors' ritual spear. In the case of a goat, its throat is cut and it is obliged to bleat in order to call the ancestors (Berglund, 1975:209). Meat and fat reserved for the ancestors are burnt in a place of fire in the house believed to belong to the ancestors (De Heusch, 1985:51).

Ancestors' meat that is exposed to fire is reduced to ashes. In the Zulus' land, sacrificial cookery has to do with sex and death (De Heusch, 1985:53). Among Zulus, beer and meat are always associated with sacrificial rituals for ancestors. These two substances are connected with heat and fertility. Wanting beer is likened to desiring a woman, and the religious nature of drinking beer is equated with a sacrifice. A man longing for ancestors' blessings drinks first (De Heusch, 1985:53).

5.1.4 Ancestor spirit veneration

African spirituality and the cult of the ancestors reveal that in African society, each newborn baby carries an ancestor in him or her. Libations precede the blood sacrifice, which generally involves victims who are white in colour. For an African with a sense of traditional values, the reason behind this is clear. Libations constitute the introduction to trade with the ancestor, and the sacrifice its high point, engaging the living in a radical fashion in their quest and wait, and the dead their obligation to reply favourably (Olupona, 2000:42). During ancestral rites, human victims were killed on the occasion of a royal funeral and on their anniversaries (Parrinder, 1976:62).



Ancestor cult is equivalent to religious worship. “The gods of the Bantu people (Zulus and others...) are their ancestors”. Some African writers deny the fact that Africans worship their ancestors. They allege that Africans speak to them in the same way they speak to their fathers. They say that the African attitude towards distinct classes of spiritual beings could be understood through the terminology used by the Catholic Church. *Latria* denotes the worship due to God alone, and *Duha* the reverence and homage paid to the saints and angels. *Hyperdulia* refers to special homage to the Virgin Mary. Some Europeans have portrayed Africans as “pre-logical”, meaning that their religion is “danced rather than thought out” (Parrinder, 1976:66).

5.1.5 Interaction between the dead and the living

The belief that dead people continue to be part of the community seems to be universal for some authors (Gumede, 1990). Though they are feared, rituals promote interaction between the living and the dead. In South Africa, for most black communities, funeral rituals constitute acts of “reincorporation, readmission of the deceased in the community in their newly achieved status”. They surrender some rights and duties, and they assume others. The type of belief system develops into ancestor cults, which call the deceased peoples’ spirits back into the community, reaffirming or reinforcing the connection between the deceased and the survivors (Gumede, 1990). This is true of Xhosas, Zulus and other Bantu groups of South Africa.

The death of a family head is commemorated through the *ukubuyisa* ceremonial rite (to bring back). Beer brewing and the slaughtering of a beast (animal) assure the people that the deceased person’s spirit has been brought back. It is believed that failure to do so results in misfortune and sickness, which bears upon the family as a reminder by the neglected spirits. Interaction variations become realisable according to places, cultures and societies. Some people even hold that a marriage plan must be presented to ancestors for approval (McKitshoff, 1996:186-187). It may appear that the above paragraphs have focused on the ancestors and not on sacrifices as such. This is due to the permanent interaction between the ancestors and the living through sacrificial rituals. The communion between them and the living remains significant.

The role of the Zulu sacrifice is to reinforce the vital liaison with ancestors who circulate freely among them, even in the most intimate areas. When there is a conflict and a family group decides to end it, the members gather around their head and avoid looking each other in the eye, because of the heat in their hearts. The officiator mixes ashes with water, people wash their hands, and then a live animal is offered to the ancestors (De Heusch, 1985:55). The *inkomo yamandlozi* is an animal of exceptional ritual status, namely a bull or a cow with proven fertility, fat, and docile with long horns, but never a castrated ox. It is set aside for the ancestor and cannot therefore work. It cannot be sacrificed or sold to anyone: the owner offers it to the ancestors by rubbing its back with *imphepho* medicine. In the case of offences, the owner appeases the ancestors’ anger by rubbing the back of the victim with *inkomo*

yamandlozi. Through this, Zulu people establish another kind of communication with the ancestors. As Figure 5 indicates, the bull soothed by the refreshing ashes reveals an inverse, symbolic relationship between the sacrificial victim and the animal dedicated to the ancestors (De Heusch, 1985:56).

Fig.5 Symbolic link between the sacrificial victim and the animal dedicated to ancestors

Live animals dedicated to the ancestors	Sacrificial victim
Intact bull or fertile cow	Either bovine or caprine
Communication with the ancestors established through ashes	Communication with the ancestors established through fire and cooking

The superb creature representing the ancestors sometimes chooses its companion for sacrifice. Together with its female offspring, they were used exclusively for religious communication (De Heusch, 1985:57).

Fig.6 Domestic sacrificial animal companion: distinctive characteristics

Preferred animal	Sacrifice to the ancestors. Any ox	Sacrifice to the python genie: Black sheep
Substitute animal	Any goat	Muzzle black goat
Mode of communication	Loud sacrifice	Silent sacrifice
Place of offering	Domestic fire	Midstream

5.1.6 Death, cries, prayer and silence

Silence is strictly observed during Zulu sacrificial rituals and ancestor worship, especially when the offering is being placed on the fire. This silence is necessary to the establishment of mediation relationships (Strauss, 1964:300). The sacrifice to the ancestors takes an intermediary position. The cries of the dying animals and prayer summon the spirit-snakes. There is no sacrificial ritual, except the offering of beer and seed, followed by a speech (Vincent, 1976:190).

Because of the presence of ancestors, participants must also be numerous in order to communicate with them. The first seance started with “long introductory speeches” after the victim was immolated, its blood was put into a receptacle found on the altar. It was left for coagulation, and then part of it was mixed with millet flour and eaten silently by the congregants (Vincent, 1976:197). The raw blood and silence show the absence of communication with ancestors when the victim is being put on the altar. Only elders closely related to the ancestors have the right to eat the raw and coagulated blood. The sacrifice underway necessitates a “correlation of distinct beings and places.” During the offering of the fire, Zulus exhibit such like behaviour at the beginning of the cooking ritual: no “sacralization” of the victim while solemn contact is being held (De Heusch, 1985:58).



The silence involved in spite of the artifice of prayer indicates a notable difference between mortal men and immortal ancestors. The notion of “communion” in the Christian language implies the existence of a true theophany. The eating of cooked, fermented vegetable substances (bread and wine) simulates the true body of the divinity sacrificed long ago. “Now how could people eat an ancestor or a ram genie”? The religious silence of a Christian group during the mystery of transubstantiation also has a topological role - at that time, God comes down, and the silence confirms that heaven approaches earth. The sacrifice of Christ, man and God, and the ritual eating of His body brings a precise meditation. A dizzying void that prayer can never overcome separated these “two terms” (De Heusch, 1985:58-59).

5.1.6 Bile and chyme

When meat has been offered to the ancestors in the hut, the father of the sacrificer sprinkles the bile upon the body of his son outside. The gall bladder is tied to the arm of the latter. Then both wash their hands with chyme, some of which falls into the fire. Afterwards, the chyme is scattered in the cattle enclosure and the shed blood is covered. The symbolic role of the chyme is the following: after bile, it is the most important element in a sacrifice, it is a purifying substance used for washing hands, and is required most of all at burials. Chyme makes the hands white like the ancestors when it is scattered on the roof after a sacrifice. This means that “everything is clean and that there is neither bad thought nor ill feeling with any body” (Ngubane, 1977:124-126). The purifying power of chyme falls into the category of coolness and calming of social tension.

The bile is extracted from an organ that is the exact image of the womb. Sacrifice is like a “hot impulse” between the cool times. One could ask why the entire process is centered on the digestive system of the animal. Ngubane, a Zulu writer, replies that the chyme has life-giving properties, and that it plays an important role in the purification of sacrifices requiring no ritual cooking. Ngubane goes on to say that a goat’s chyme has the function of restoring “the spiritual well being of an entire female age set, threatened by an offense committed by one member (loss of virginity)”. The man responsible for their fertility offers them a live goat that they slaughter, and whose chyme they rub themselves with, and then they leave it near the river. After this, they wash themselves in running water (Ngubane, 1977:126-130). This is in fact a perversion of a family sacrifice. The carrying out of this rite by women is an exceptional occurrence. The bile is left aside, and only the chyme has a symbolic function. Only old women eat the animal’s meat. The purification rite performed by means of a goat’s chyme has a marginal place in the Zulu sacrificial system. It is performed with a lot of excitement, young girls throwing themselves on the animal. Here, the difference between chyme and bile becomes more apparent. The chyme alone is employed in certain purification rituals, where the sacrificer must recover the state of “whiteness” formerly lost because of a broken prohibition (Ngubane, 1977:18-25).

The bile is the true inscription of the sacrificial victim upon the sanctifier’s body, a sign that brings down the blessings of the ancestors. According to

Ngubane, the white colour, a compendium of all light colours, symbolises life, whereas the “black color symbolizes death and sorcery”. The red colour mediates between the two (Ngubane, 1977:25-26). Green and blue (*luhlaza*) fall into the category of whiteness, which is associated with life. The ultimate purpose of the digestive process is to transform *luhlaza* into black waste or excrements, an unclean substance denoting death and sorcery (Ngubane, 1977: 120). The *caecum* that is believed to be “saturated by the ancestral presence” is only eaten by old women - it normally “interferes with the reproductive power of younger women” (Ngubane, 1977:123-125).

5.1.8 The Mystery of the black sheep

Zulu people use the black sheep as another type of sacrifice, and it falls into the scapegoat category. It is treated like a man. The sacrificial ritual is held at night, and no blood is shed. The victim is suffocated and buried far away from people’s settlements (Ngubane, 1977:119). Figure 7 below summarises all the sacrificial options involving animal sacrifices.

Fig. 7 Animal sacrifices: sacrificial options summary

Recipient	Ancestors	Python genie	Sacrifice without recipient	
Animal	Ox or goat	Black sheep	Black sheep	Goat
Procedure	Ritual cooking	Licking of fat	Buried in the earth	Abandoned
Agent	Bile and chyme			Chyme
Final result	Mediation between lineage members and ancestors	Mediation between sky and earth	Getting rid of sorcery	Purification after the breach of a prohibition

It is important to understand that cattle have two main characteristics: They are the sole species sacrificed to the ancestors and to go through complete organ processing. Rituals with no recipient only have a magical, but not a religious role: to repair a snag in the social fabric, and to compensate for the “unveiling of its stitches”. The sacrifice intended for the ancestors promotes a “positive conjunction on a social cosmogonic level”. The sheep’s black sub-species play the role of ending the drought and warding off the malefic effects of sorcery (De Heusch, 1985:62-63).

5.1.9 Goat sacrifice and matrimonial alliance

There is normally a fight that takes place at the marriage ceremony between the fiancé’s group and the bride’s brother. This tension also involves verbal abuse from both sides. After the bride price (wealth) has been assessed, the goat brought by the fiancé is slaughtered before the hut where the bride is hiding, and they throw chyme on each other chyme (*psanyi*). When the



tension decreases, the bride and her fiancé “squat” on a mat laid down where the sacrifice was made. The girl’s father invites the ancestors, then he cuts a small piece along the length of the offered animal’s belly, and ties the protective goatskin belt to his daughter’s waist, then the following day she rejoins her husband. Here, the new role of sacrifice is that the chyme “stigmatizes” simultaneous rivalry and brutal separation in matrimonial alliances (Junod, 1927:257).

Specific rituals in the case of two related people wishing to marry include the case of cousins, in which the goat brought by the suitor opens the hut. The chyme is extracted from its stomach, then the bridegroom and the bride are seated on a mat outside, the man’s legs passing the girl’s (this is done to kill shame: *ku dlaya tingana*), then they pour the chyme over them in a sign of anointment. Afterwards, they cut the goat skin and make a hole in it, and then place it over their heads. Finally, they take a raw liver that they give to the prospective couple, asking them to tear it on both sides and to eat it *shibindji*. The liver eaten publicly shows patience and determination, and is a *mhamba* (offering to the gods). The priest concludes with a prayer warding off misfortune, and wishing the couple to bear children. When he finishes, all the participants take the available solid chyme and place it upon the head of the girl, saying: “go and bear children” (Janod, 1927:258).

5.1.10 Mourning chyme

The mourning sacrifice is held two or three months after the death of a family member. The deceased man’s maternal nephew sacrifices a young male goat, together with two hens and one cock. After the extraction of the chyme, old women start an obscene dance. A man addresses prayers to the deceased person. They open with a confession of the misunderstanding that had ravaged the family. After that, the maternal nephew interrupts the prayer by offering a drink to the officiator. Suddenly, nephews’ wives take pieces of kidney kept for the ancestors, steal sacrificial meat, while the rest chase after them, laughing, shouting and pelting them with the chyme (Junod, 1927:167). This disorderly ritual that starts with an erotic demonstration symbolises a disturbance of the social order (De Heusch, 1985:9; 603-619).

Another sacrifice is made one year after the mourning sacrifice, while sharing the deceased’s belongings and the widows. The day is marked by several surprises, dangers and aggression. The maternal nephew starts acting aggressively when beer is being offered on the tomb. After libation is over, maternal nephews claim the widows. Then, a goat is sacrificed in front of the deceased’s hut, and a prayer to the ancestors begins. One of the maternal nephews starts recriminating the ancestors, and then the rest join in. They finish by picking the meat kept for the ancestors, while the crowd pursues them, laughing and throwing chyme bombs on them (Junod, 1927:208). The Tsonga people tie the gall bladder to the sanctifier’s hair as a symbol of “happiness and luck”. Figure 8 below shows the asymmetrical exchange between the uncle and nephew:

Fig.8 Asymmetrical exchange between uncle and nephew

Uncle as sacrificer	Nephew as sacrifice
Personal service	Collective service
One uncle, one nephew	The lineage of the uncles and all the nephews plus their wives
Reinforcement of the alliance	Simulated destruction of kinship
Animal or object according to the oracle's instructions	Must be a goat (role of chyme)

5.1.11 Goat sacrifice and exorcism

The strongest religious form of blood sacrifice is linked to the ritual of exorcism of the possessed. The sacrifice in this case serves to expel the pathogenic spirit, a spirit from outside the maternal or paternal lineage. Spirit possessions resulting from the ancestors' anger require a therapeutic ritual based on offering and prayer. Tsonga people consider mental illness as exogenous, whereas sicknesses that originate with ancestors are endogenous. In all these cases, divining bones diagnose the nature of the illness, and also determine the specialised cure, where to find it and the therapeutic procedures. Musicians and strong choruses chanting introduce trance in the body of the patient, forcing the spirit to say who it is and to disclose its name. Violent dancing follows, which normally lasts for several days. The second phase consists of plunging the sick person's head into a basin, in order to open his eyes. The third phase is the appeasement by blood, consisting of blood and violent sacrifice, so as to ensure the expulsion of the pathogenic spirit from the body, and to transfer it to an altar (De Heusch, 1985:83).

The remains of the sacrificial animal are used as follows: the gall bladder is tied to the exorcised patient's hair, strings from the root of a tree with a pleasant odour are then attached to the strips cut from the victim, and ritual cooking takes place after the sacrifice (De Heusch, 1985:83). During the sacrifice, the patient is actually beside himself and, fully identifying with the spirit, drinks the raw blood of the animal. In order to expel the spirit, the possessed person must be made to vomit, and then he must wear the animal skin and begin ritual running, in order to positively communicate with all spirits. He carries the strips for one full convalescent year before the purification rituals are undertaken (De Heusch, 1985:84). Fig.9 below illustrates the two phases of sacrifice.

Fig.9 Two sacrificial phases

Exorcism: raw blood spurting from one leg	Alliance with spirits - cooked meat coming from the four legs of the sacrificed animal
Vomiting	Digesting
End of identification with the pathogenic spirit	Return to the human state through the mediation of the animal

Fig.9 shows that the shift from abusive “divination” to the normal human state calls for “animalization”. The sacrificial victim must face violent aggression. The patient is a cannibalistic monster. The animal helps the patient to construct a new personality. The therapy necessitates attention from psychoanalysts. Trance is meant to develop the act of identification with one sole god. Therefore, transference to the sacrificial animal is done, in order to enable exorcism and the restructuring of the social person (Junod, 1927: 209).

5.2 GENERAL SYMBOLIC CODE

Fig. 10 General chyme: cooking and sacrificial sharing

	God’s digestive system	Ritual	Cooking
Chyme	Bladder	Roasted meat	Boiled meat
A change of status (sickness, death, marriage)	Luck, prosperity	Outside the village	Inside the village
Opposition between in-laws and relatives, maternal uncles and nephews, men and ancestors	Familial harmony	Ancestors and outsiders share	Alimentary communion of relatives

Harmony, luck and prosperity, signified by social cohesion, are also symbolised by boiled food (De Heusch, 1985: 86). In the ritual of exorcism, the bones of the goat are burnt to ashes in order to appease the spirits (Junod, 1927b: 493).

Fig. 11 Symbolic role of blood in private family offerings

Ancestors		Foreign spirits
Normal situation, roasted meat	Abnormal situation, raw meat	Raw blood

Blood plays an insignificant symbolic role in private family sacrifices. Only a little blood is mingled with the officiator’s saliva during the presentation of the victim (Junod, 1927:416). During the exorcism, the bones of the goat are

burnt to ashes under the shade of a tree, as a means of refreshing the spirits, appeasing them, and making them less wild (Junod, 1927:493). Blood is placed before cooking, and burnt bones are placed after cooking. Fig. 12 below illustrates the basic lexicon of the ritual.

Fig. 12 Lexicon of private family offerings

Raw	Cooked	Burnt to ashes
Blood	Ritually cooked meat	Bones

The exorcism rituals are part and parcel of the Tsonga general system of sacrifice, from which it takes two traditional protective elements: the sacrifice wears the animal's gall-bladder upon his head and the ankle bone over his sternum. The horns and hooves are kept on the spirit-possessed person's roof. The sacrificial ritual transforms his personality completely, and once healed, he becomes an exorcist himself (Junod, 1927:499).

5.2.1 Black ram for the sky: cooked chyme, quarrel and beer

During a severe dry season, Tsonga people sacrifice a ram selected because of the blackness of its wool (Junod, 1927:405). It is offered to the chief ancestor by the maternal niece (Junod, 1927:269). The sacrifice of the black ram is addressed to the chief ancestor. The exceptional killing of the black sheep is equivalent to that of a human sacrifice. It is said that long ago, due to a severe drought, a young man was left alive in a sacred forest. Among the Lovedu, the sacrifice of a man was a means for the revitalisation of the rain medicines (Krige, 1954:65). The above practices are still seen in Southern Africa, especially among the Tswana, where the chief's main ritual role is to bring rainfall (Schapera, 1971:70-72).

Tsonga warriors do not rejoin the village before the after-war purification rituals. One sacrificial part used is the goat's chyme, which is roasted and consumed through the nostrils. The sacrifice of an ox is a requirement during a family group meeting for the big millet offering, which typifies a happy event. Its role is the reinforcement of the marriage bond. During this thanksgiving offering, the chyme of the sacrificed animal is poured on the altar, along with the millet beer (De Heusch, 1985:93). Tsonga people call the reconciliation ceremony *byalwa bya huwa* (the beer of noise). Sacrifices and offerings are made to the ancestors when there is a quarrel between brothers (De Heusch, 1985:92).

5.2.2 Children's blood: brain and weaning

This constitutes the last aspect of the Tsonga sacrificial system. The children play a particular role in the weaning rites (Junod, 1927:58-59). The victim's blood serves as a purifying substance. In connection with Hubert and Mauss's statement that "the destruction of the victim is the essence of sacrifice", Herrenschmidt says that this is the only way of making it pass from the visible to the invisible (Hamarryon, 1987:151). The sacrificed animals ascend from



men towards the spirits. The consecrated animals represent the descent of the spirits to men (Hamaryon, 1978:151-179).

Human life is more valuable than animal life. It would be monstrously inconceivable to eat the meat of the former. This would also be murder. However, animal sacrifice is less than a murder, and according to Zulu beliefs, the black sheep constitutes man's substitute in rain rituals. Therefore, it may be clearly seen from the marginal and unsettled sacrificial zone. Religions build the foundation myth of their ritual practice - the death of a man-god assures the creation of the world or the salvation of men. In Christian iconography, the man-god is sometimes called the Lamb of God. Van Eyck's painting reflects the familiar anthropological image of a peaceful animal transformed into a celestial agent (De Heusch, 1985:97).

5.2.3 The Tsonga people's goat

In the Southern African context, the ox's value is seen in economic, political and ritual terms. Zulu and Swazi people determine "ranks and aristocratic status" by the procession of herds. The *lobola* requires the transfer of several heads of cattle to the bride's family. The *Mpondo* substitutes heads of cattle with a goat, as the most valuable animal (Hunter, 1979:71). The Tsonga people, actually neighbours to the Zulus, did not appreciate a goat as currency for matrimonial exchange (*lobola*) (Junod, 1927:275-276).

All Tsonga people keep goats that are true sacrificial animals for important ritual acts. Members of the founding lineage give all kinds of offering on the ancestral altar (*gandjelo*). Like the Zulu people, ancestor worship is at the centre of their religious life. The category of offering (*mhamba*) is made up of the following: the officiator is the elder brother of the family group concerned. However, no one is allowed to present an offering "prior to the death of his parents". The verb *hahla* means "to consecrate". The concept of *mhamba* refers to any object or act of a person used to establish a link between the ancestor-gods and their worshippers. *Mhamba* is applied to the entire magico-religious field (De Heusch, 1985:66).

The analysis of Tsonga religious offerings shows that the share reserved for the ancestors is very minimal, and the offering involves no pomp and ceremony at all. When they sacrifice a goat, they consume the meat and reserve a small portion taken from each leg for the ancestors (Junod, 1927:414). The contexts in which the *mhamba* offering occur include the following: a distressed village chief offers his saliva known as an "offering of bitterness", which serves as a preventive measure. In the case of misfortune, he also offers charcoal (Junod, 1927:346). Since heat symbolises sickness or dangerous excitement in Tsonga and Zulu beliefs, the above ritual is a means of appeasing the lion's burning mouth, which typifies the destructive power of angry ancestors. In the same way, a chief can offer a thorn that he sucks while salivating, in order to avert the extinction of a village. The thorn is also used in a magical conjuring procedure to stab the enemy and render him weak (Junod, 1927:418).



The negative cases looked at in the above section show that the idea of an offering is inappropriate, since the *mhamba* object is a metaphorical sign. In the offering of bitterness, the object is absent from the ritual scene - only communication remains by means of saliva and the word (De Heusch, 1985:67). In positive offerings, *mhamba* may represent a chicken, goat, field produce, tobacco, beer or ancestors. However, the very idea of a bloody sacrifice is not clarified in the Tsonga culture. Animals taken to the sacrificial site have socio-economic significance. They are part of what they have - the contact with saliva and the offering in the *hahla* ritual take place in the offerer's being. This shows the ancestors that the officiator offers a part of himself, and in this sense the offered object becomes a metonymic sign of the offerer (De Heusch, 1985:68).

In order to understand the practices involved in Tsonga sacrificial rituals, three networks of communication must be distinguished: the *lobola* system, allowing for the conversion of rare valuables - socio-economic circulation is not seen in the offering system. The divining bones reduce losses at all costs. The diviner's prescriptions are very variable, and can sometimes be restrictive (Junod, 1927:413). The above sections show that the characteristics attributed to polytheism, pantheism and panentheism are lodged in African traditional religion (Geisler, 1998:173-193).

However, the harmonisation of signs and sacrificial symbols, as well as the way African traditionalists intertwine the animal realm and the sky, including specific plants and birds to serve mankind's welfare, remain intriguing. They are constantly involved in communication with spirits and the worship of ancestors. The offering is always kept alive - even a live chicken and goat offered to ancestors must not be killed. All this shows that *mhamba* offerings are far from being called sacrifices, even though animals have an important role to play. The Tsonga people establish their sacrificial system around the goat, namely in marriage and mourning rituals.

5.2.4 The locus of the ancestor

Ancestors, beneficiaries of *mhamba* offerings, stay in underground villages. They also appear in human society in the form of inoffensive blue snakes (*dendrophis subcarinatus*). Most prestigious ancestors are believed to inhabit sacred woods that can only be entered by priests. According to Tsonga beliefs, man's universe is diametrically opposed to that of the ancestors. There is also an asymmetrical nature to offerings and sacrifices. The offerings ward off the state of tension, and prayers appease the ancestors' anger, and conjure away misfortune or sickness. Two words stand for the prayer of the ancestors: *khongota* (to please) and *bula-bulela* (to reprimand). In the case of calamities, "the petition is either preceded or followed by insults hurled at gods" (Junod, 1927:421-423).



5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to briefly describe both Zulu and Tsonga sacrificial ritual ideas. As members of extended Bantu groups, their sacrificial ritual performances, as well as sacrificial victims, present sharp similarities. However, they also display significant differences. The sacrifice of the hornbill caters for rain in times of severe drought. It is either killed by suffocation or by breaking its neck, and it is thrown deep into the river's water. Like Xhosa people, communication with the ancestors is through various sacrificial rituals and offerings. Parrinder says: "ancestors' cult is equivalent to religious worship and the gods of the Bantu people (Zulu and others...) are their ancestors". As mentioned earlier on in this dissertation, the whole idea concerning the worship of African ancestors constitutes a point of controversy that this study will attempt to clarify in light of biblical teaching later in this dissertation. It is difficult to understand whether the "true Spirit" referred to in Zulu sacrificial thoughts is the same as the Holy Spirit, or equal to the personal God.

Silence is strictly observed in Zulu sacrificial rituals during ancestor worship. Ancestors have the right to eat raw meat and coagulated blood. Meat reserved for them must be burnt to ashes. When it is put on the fire, this action triggers communication with the ancestors. Sacrificial victims' entrails such as bile, chyme and gall bladder are used for ceremonial washing, cleansing, healing and purification (Ngubane, 1977:124-126). Ngubane, a Zulu writer, alleges that the chyme has life-giving properties and plays an extremely significant role in sacrificial purification.

A goat's chime, among the Zulu people, serves to restore "the spiritual well being of an entire female age set, threatened by an offense by one member (loss of virginity)". A sacrificial victim's colour is very important among the Zulu people: the white colour symbolises life, and the black colour is the symbol of death. The black sheep falls into the category of scapegoats, and is treated like a man. Cattle constitute the sole species sacrificed to the ancestors, and their digestive organs go through complete processing. Sacrifices made to the ancestors promote positive conjuncture on a social, cosmogenic level. The black sheep ends the drought and wards off the malefic effects of sorcery.

The features of Tsonga people's sacrificial rituals include the fact that mental illness constitutes the strongest religious form of a blood sacrificial ritual - it is exogenous (exterior to the group), while sicknesses inflicted by the ancestors are endogenous (internal to the group). In these cases, the divining bone diagnoses the nature of the sickness and prescribes the cure. The sacrificial blood ensures the expulsion of the pathogenic spirit. In order to curb a severe drought, Tsonga people sacrifice a black ram. Tsonga warriors sometimes spend time in purification camps where they consume a goat's roasted chyme through their nostrils, before they can go home. During a big millet ceremony, an ox is slaughtered for consolidation of the marriage bond.



The last aspect of Tsonga sacrificial thought that has been approached in this chapter is the sacrificial victim's blood during the weaning ritual. The blood serves as a purifying substance. The Tsonga people's goat is a true sacrificial animal, and not a currency for matrimonial exchange (lobola). They give a minimal share to the ancestors, and their offerings are not characterized by pomp and ceremony. Three networks of communication are involved in Tsonga people's sacrificial rituals: lobola, divining bones and the diviner's prescriptions. Lobola brings different lineages together in a matrimonial bond, including various powerful communications with the ancestors. The divining bones are detectors of various illnesses, and help to prescribe an appropriate cure.

Tsonga people believe that ancestors live in underground villages, and that they can appear in the human community in the form of blue snakes, inhabit secret woods etc. As has been pointed out in several instances in this dissertation, there are sharp similarities between Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga people's sacrificial rituals, as well as some unique features pertaining to each of the groups.

As was specified in chapter three of this dissertation, these groups all belong to the extended Cape Nguni Bantu tribe. Similarities may also be explained by the fact that, for instance, Xhosa people have influenced other groups within the Cape Nguni tribe. However, as already mentioned, the questions of how and why have not been satisfactorily answered, because interviewed respondents gave ad hoc opinions that are very difficult to substantiate. On the other hand, the researcher is of the opinion that there is this element of a lack of inquisitiveness among traditional African worshippers associated with allegiance to elderly people. Traditional worshippers do things the way they have seen them done. They say things the way they have been told them.

Chapters 3 to 5 of this dissertation tie in with the heuristic framework in Chapter two, because they all have to do with the lineage bond and sacrificial rituals characterised by a lot of bloodshed, and viewed as violent killings in terms of the theoretical framework (Burkert, 1983; Burkert, 1985; Girard, 1987; Girard, 1977 etc.). The questions that continue to haunt one are: Why the perpetuation of bloodshed and violent killing? Is there something inherent to blood that captivates and even coerces not only heaven, but also African traditional religion worshippers, to cling to the practice of sacrifice?

In the last chapter of this dissertation, the researcher will attempt to answer these questions. The following chapter will deal with Xhosa sacrificial rituals in the modern context, and the effects of urbanisation and modernity on the Xhosa sacrificial system will be generalised to the rest of the Bantu groups that have evolved within the same socio-political, economic and religious contexts in modern South Africa.



CHAPTER SIX: SACRIFICE AMONG MODERN XHOSAS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Even though the practice of sacrifice among modern Xhosas is not as common as it used to be in the traditional context of the past, it still continues to be part of their lives. Press reports about sacrifices being performed by some leading Xhosa figures and celebrities indicate a host of similar unreported cases among ordinary Xhosa people. By modern Xhosas, one is referring to people of the Xhosa culture and who speak the Xhosa language, living between Mbashe and the Sunday River on the coastal side, including those who are distributed all over South Africa and in neighbouring countries, from the 19th century up to this day (Switzer 1993:34; Jackson, 1975:6). Reverend Sipuka, a Xhosa priest living among Xhosa people, testifies that the practice of sacrifice “among the Xhosa people is alive and kicking” (Sipuka, 2000:170). Reported cases of sacrifices performed in upmarket environments further highlight the fact that the belief in sacrifice is deeply entrenched among the Xhosas.

The public practice of Xhosa sacrifice in modern times has enabled anthropologists and researchers from various disciplines and interests to study and analyse it objectively. Among those who have made the study of such sacrifice their task, the following may be mentioned: Manona (1981); Staples (1981); Pauw (1975); Raum (1972); Oosthuizen (1971) and Mayer (1961).

A quick scan of these sources immediately reveals that, while sacrificial rituals continue to be performed among modern Xhosa people, the manner of practising them and the meaning attached to them have changed, or is changing, in comparison with the traditional practice and understanding of blood sacrifices. There are some factors that have contributed to a shift in the understanding and practice of sacrifice among modern Xhosa. Thus, after providing evidence of the practice of sacrifice from press reports and other sources, this study will proceed to mention the factors involved, and will briefly discuss their respective impacts. Afterwards, an attempt to postulate a modern Xhosa understanding and practice of sacrifice will be made.

6.2 RECENT OCCURENCES OF SACRIFICE

As recently as April 1999, Brenda Fassie, the Xhosa-speaking queen of pop music, thanked her ancestors for her big comeback into the music world. This, according to *Bona* magazine, was after a “rough-and-tumble life threatened to wipe her completely from the music arena” (Mtshali, 1999:62). For this occasion, Mabbrrr, as she was affectionately known, slaughtered “two cows, two goats, and a sheep at her Langa, Cape Town home” (Mtshali, 1999:15). For the most part, the report focuses on the sensational aspects of the event, referring to Brenda’s BMW 325i, the money she spent on the event, and the neighbourhood dancing to her latest album at the time, *vulindlela*.



However, there were few comments and pictures that characterised the event as sacrificial. There was reference to the occasion being “graced by the presence of *amaDlomo* clan, to which [former] president Mandela also belongs” (Mtshali, 1999:62). There was also reference to the gathering of the *amaDlomo* clan “in the bedroom to drink home-brew from the same container—a pledge of family oneness” (Mtshali, 1999:63). There was a picture of men apparently on the driveway, skinning the sacrificial victim, as well as pictures of men drinking traditional beer. For the purpose of this study, one would here wish for a more detailed account of the sacrificial ritual itself, but one can presume that this report is a fair expectation from a magazine such as *Bona*.

A more explicit example of a sacrificial ritual in the Xhosa modern setting is the event of Thabo Mbeki’s official return to his home village after decades of exile, a visit that took place in December 1998. In describing this event, the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper stated: “He (Thabo) and the members of his *Amazizi* clan performed a traditional cleansing ceremony in the kraal. Elderly family members spoke to the ancestors, thanking them for guiding Mr. Mbeki through the long years of struggle” (*Daily Dispatch*, Dec. 28, 1998). Hadland, in his unofficial biography of Thabo Mbeki, entitled: *The life and times of Thabo Mbeki*, also covers this event. While the writer obviously had other motives for narrating this event, he also offers a succinct account of the sacrificial features of this occasion, as provided in the following passage:

“Two bulls bought for the party bolted just before they were slaughtered. The local old folks smiled and the women ululated. It was a good omen, they assured everyone. The grins and singing returned when the beasts had finally rounded up and bellowed loudly before surrendering to their fate”... Hours later, in a vacant lot behind the Good will store, a makeshift kraal of grass huts had been erected. Undoubtedly here Thabo took his rightful place among the *Mazizi* clan. For his tribesmen and those who gathered to be with him and his family, there was nothing enigmatic about Thabo. He was their kin and their son. For him they danced the traditional dance (*Ukuxhentsa*), they shared a special piece of meat for clan members only (*Ukushwama*) and they washed it all down with the African beer, brewed meticulously and proudly by the women of Ncingwana” (Hadland, 1999:133).

Although the practices of blood sacrifice ritual performances “are still alive and kicking” among Xhosa people, they are not free of tension. Some of the tensions result from the environment in which sacrificial rituals are performed, and from diverse perceptions of sacrificial killings, as illustrated in two recent articles from the *Herald* newspaper and *Drum* magazine, entitled, respectively, *Traditional offerings in suburbs must be accepted* (*Herald*, 3 Feb 1999:7) and *Bibles replace beer* (*Drum*, Iss 174, Oct 1993:12-13) demonstrate this tension. The *Herald* daily newspaper reported on the slaughtering of an ox, possibly for the *ukubuyisa* (to bring back) sacrificial ritual to mark the end of the year-long period of mourning, in an upmarket Port Elizabeth suburb. The editorial of this newspaper goes on to assert that this event proceeded peacefully, without any protest from neighbours (*Herald*, 3



Feb. 1999:4), implying that in the past, similar occasions were followed by tension.

It seems as though sacrificial killings in urban settings go against the municipal hygiene laws and the “traditions” of former white areas. In view of such tensions, the editor goes on to make the following suggestions: “Not all traditions that have developed in the rural environment can survive unaltered in the built-up urban area...Perhaps, for the sake of those whom the bellow of the dying slaughtered ox is upsetting, specially designed conveniently accessible public venues will eventually develop in cities for traditional sacrificial performances” (*Herald*, 3 Feb. 1999:4).

Mbengo’s article in the *Drum* magazine on boys’ initiation also reflects a tension that arises out of a competition of beliefs, that is, between Xhosa tradition and Christianity. In this article, the writer reports that “the young men are given Bibles as gifts instead of the usual kieres and sticks”, and that the traditional slaughtering and drinking of beer are replaced by “cakes, biscuits and soft drinks” (*Drum*, Iss. 174, Oct, 1993:12). However, Xhosa traditionalists saw this as “the churches’ interference in their culture”, while a leader of the Church, bishop Dapula, viewed it as a natural development of this ritual (*Drum*, Iss. 174, Oct. 1993:12, 13).

6.3 MODERN XHOSA SACRIFICIAL RITUALS IN LITERATURE

Modern Xhosa people are those who belong to the tribe of Xhosa people, as specified in chapter three of this dissertation. In other words, Xhosa-speaking South Africans, members of the Nguni group, and dwelling in the Cape Province, including small groups distributed all over South Africa, as well as in neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Namibia and Botswana, and who are living in this era (Maylan, 1968:20; Sipuka, 2000:106). If any recent study is of significance, then all blood sacrifices discussed in the previous chapter, that is, birth, initiation, contingent and death sacrifices, are still practised by modern Xhosas. Within these categories, however, there are some sacrificial rituals that have been done away with, and others that have been modified.

6.3.1 Birth sacrificial rituals

The most remarkable is the *Imbeleko* or *umbingelelo* (A thing with which to carry on the back) sacrificial ritual. There is no indication that the purpose of this sacrifice, that is, to ensure the good health of a child, has changed from its traditional purpose. The skin of the sacrificial victim traditionally used to carry the child on the back is nowadays, according to Raum, used as a sleeping mat for the child, and when it is sold, the money is used for the needs of the child (Raum, 1972:181). Both non-Christian and Xhosa Christian people perform this sacrificial ritual, with the latter renaming it *idinala yomntwana* (child’s dinner), although in essence, it is still the same as *imbeleko*. Writers whose works have been consulted are silent about other sacrifices falling into the birth category, that is, *Ukufuthwa* (to be steamed) and *Inqithi* (amputation of the first phalanx of the finger of the left hand). One



can therefore conclude that these two birth-related sacrificial rituals have faded away, while the *imbeleko* sacrificial ritual has survived.

6.3.2 Initiation sacrificial rituals

As observed in chapter four of this dissertation, initiation sacrificial rituals consist of *ukwaluka* (boys' circumcision rite), *intonjane* (girls' initiation rite) and marriage. All these sacrificial rituals are still being performed, with *intonjane*, as Lamla remarks, gradually being phased out. Raum's research revealed that very few people perform the *intonjane* sacrificial ritual. In comparison with other sacrificial rituals, the *intonjane* rite and its accompanying sacrifices are not mentioned in any other writers' research results. With a few exceptions, as demonstrated by the replacing of the boys' initiation sacrifice with the reading of the Bible, the *ukwakula* sacrifice is still widely practised among modern Xhosa (Lamla, 1971:34).

Two sacrificial killings related to *ukwaluka*, that is, *Gcamisa*, a word derived from the verb *ukucamagusha*, meaning: 'to announce the ceremony to the ancestors and request their blessings' and *Ojisa* (to make one roast) are still performed. With regard to marriage, the *ukutyiswa amasi* (to be fed with sour milk) sacrificial ritual, which is a sacrifice to initiate the bride into her husband's family, is the most remarkable. The least remarkable is the *umngcamo* sacrificial ritual, which informs the ancestors of the bride of her departure from her parents' homestead, and requests them to protect her and give her good health. It may thus be concluded that the *umngcamo* sacrificial ritual is also being phased out (Raum, 1972:181).

6.3.3 Contingent sacrificial rituals

Contemporary Xhosa people perform most of the contingent sacrificial rituals mentioned in chapter four of this dissertation, with the exception of supplication sacrificial rituals such as rain-making and seasonal sacrificial rituals, which are merely reported as being archaic, and some of the communion sacrificial rituals such as *ukupha*, *izilo* and *ukutshayelela*. As the press reports concerning Brenda Fassie's and Thabo Mbeki's sacrificial rituals suggest, the most commonly performed sacrificial ritual is the thanksgiving one because, according to Pauw, modern Xhosas ascribe more benevolence to ancestors than they do for misfortunes (Pauw, 1975:147).

"Altogether it seems that the negative role of the ancestors, their sending of misfortune to punish or complain, has moved far into the background in the stable rural Christian communities, although it is still fully recognized in popular dogma". Pauw ascribes this tendency to Christian influence, but it may also be due to other factors such as the modern economy and medicine. People are economically better off, and modern medicine cures illnesses effectively. It is suggested here that the less efficient traditional economy and less effective medicines made people depend on the ancestors in these areas. Consequently, any lack in these areas was perceived as resulting from ancestral wrath (Pauw, 1975:147).



6.3.4 Death sacrificial rituals

Many writers mention that *ukukhapha* (to send off) and *ukubuyisa* (to bring back) sacrificial rituals are now quite common. Modern Xhosa people perform the above sacrificial rituals with some variations. In some cases, they are performed in a traditional manner, as was explained in the fourth chapter of this dissertation (Raum, 1972:183-184), while in other cases, they have been modified, presumably on account of the Christian influence. Manona, for example, reports that *ukukhapha* among Christians has been stripped of its sacrificial significance and now serves as a “funeral meal” (Manona, 1981:35). Pauw, in his own research, comes to the same conclusion - that it is performed “ostensibly to provide food for the guests” (Pauw, 1975:177).

6.3.5 Modern Xhosa sacrifices: observations on reports and research

The four press reports concerning sacrificial rituals cited above demonstrate that the practice of sacrifice among modern Xhosa people is a common phenomenon. They also demonstrate continuity between traditional and modern practice and understanding of sacrificial rituals. Some of the sacrificial elements mentioned are recognisable from the discussion of Xhosa people’s traditional sacrificial rituals, presented in chapter four of this dissertation. One can note, for example, the following sacrificial elements: the sacrificial victim used for solemn sacrificial rituals, namely bulls and goats, dancing, invocation of the ancestors, traditional cleansing ceremony, bellowing of sacrificial animals, ritual tasting of beer and the sacrificial portion of meat, and the joyous mood of the occasion.

The research cited simply states that traditional sacrificial rituals continue to be performed in modern times, without giving details with regard to the procedure and elements of sacrifice. One may therefore presume that the procedure and elements are still the same because, as shall be seen in the pages that follow, writers indicate the respective points of departure between these two settings. One example of a modern, national sacrificial ritual has been the occasional national gathering at *Ntaba kaNdoda* (Mountain of Man), a national shrine created by Mr.L.L.Sebe, the late president of the former independent Ciskei (Hodgson, 1987:28). According to Hodgson, this shrine served mainly to artificially create Ciskei nationalism, which in turn was viewed as giving credence to Ciskei independence (Hodgson, 1987:29-30).

There are also some noticeable discontinuities. In the case of Brenda Fassie, the slaughtering took place in the driveway, not in the kraal. In the case of Thabo Mbeki, it took place not in the real kraal, but in a makeshift kraal. Brenda’s clan people ritually tasted beer in the bedroom and not in the kraal. In the future, one could expect more drastic changes, as the editor of *Herald* magazine suggests. For example, that sacrificial slaughterings may have to take place in a commonly designated area, which would be safer and less controversial than homes are (Lamla, 1971:32).

One could also expect a total elimination of the sacrificial significance traditionally attached to some sacrificial rituals, as Mbengo’s article, *Bibles*



replace beer, suggests. Worse still, it may happen that some sacrificial rituals are completely abandoned. In fact, some sacrifices such as traditional national sacrifices, rainmaking sacrificial rituals, and seasonal sacrificial rituals are on the verge of being phased out (Lamla, 1971:32-34). The press reports cited above are quite revealing with regard to Xhosa sacrificial rituals in modern times. However, for a complete picture, one needs to take into account the research conducted in this area.

The research cited above concerning modern Xhosa sacrificial rituals shows that there is general continuity between the modern and traditional understanding and practice of sacrifice. Some types of sacrificial rituals performed today continue to be the same as those performed in the traditional setting, and for many of them the intention also continues to be the same. However, information obtained also reveals discontinuity between the two. Research shows that the performance of modern sacrificial rituals in terms of procedure and elements of the sacrifice is quite erratic. In some cases, elements of sacrifice such as beer, serving meat on branches, burning the sacrificial victim's bones etc. are observed, while in others they are omitted (Raum, 1972:176-186). However, the reasons for omitting some sacrificial elements while retaining others are not clear.

Pauw observes that objectives of sacrificial rituals today are sometimes confused or merged. One sacrifice, for example, can be designated as a propitiatory sacrifice, while at the same time it is viewed as a thanksgiving sacrifice (Pauw, 1975:175). Unfortunately, Pauw does not offer a clear interpretation of this practice, but it could be explained as resulting from the growing ignorance of various traditional sacrificial rituals and the meanings attached to them (Manona, 1981:36, 38).

It may also be due to various factors that influence one's understanding and interpretation of sacrifice. Pauw, for example, states that some modern Xhosas "interpret the ritual slaughtering for a new baby as a thanksgiving to the ancestors, more than as an invocation" (Pauw, 1975:175). In fact, a close look at most of the recorded interviews conducted by Pauw with regard to the meaning of sacrificial rituals shows that even among modern Xhosa people themselves, there is no common understanding regarding the meaning and value of various sacrifices. Interpretations seem to be more personal and ad hoc, rather than being based on a general understanding. In examining these interviews and the erratic manner in which sacrifices are performed, it is difficult to state with precision exactly what a modern Xhosa sacrificial ritual stands for (Sipuka, 2000:177).

Among Christians, there is a conscious effort, at best, to minimise and, at worst, to eliminate the significance of killings traditionally considered as sacrifices. As has been noted above, for example, the *imbeleko* (sacrifice at a child's birth) and other sacrifices are called "dinners" instead of sacrifices. It can also be noted how Christians have stripped the *ukukhapha* (to accompany the deceased) sacrificial ritual of its sacrificial significance. Furthermore, traditional ritual elements such as invocations to the ancestors,



prodding of the sacrificial victim with the sacrificial spear, ritual tasting of sacrificial meat etc. have been omitted (Sipuka, 2000:177).

However, the intention of Xhosa Christians to keep Xhosa people's traditional rituals, while stripping them of their essential elements, is not clear. Worse still, as will be shown later, a majority of Christians continue to perform pure Xhosa sacrificial rituals while remaining committed to the beliefs regarding Christ's absolute sacrifice. Thus, similar to modern Xhosas in general, the beliefs and practices of sacrifice among Xhosa Christians are equally unclear. It is the intention of the remainder of this chapter to enumerate and discuss the issues that have contributed to this lack of clarity, with the hope of pointing the way towards clarity (Sipuka, 2000:178). The researcher will begin by looking at some of the factors that have influenced and moulded the modern Xhosa practice and understanding of sacrifices. The factors below, which have had a strong influence on Xhosa traditional blood sacrifices without discontinuing them, obviously stress the idea that blood sacrifices seem to communicate power, which has enabled people, even in the modern Xhosa cultural setting, to continue the performance of blood sacrificial rituals.

6.4 FACTORS DETERMINING MODERN XHOSAS' PRACTICE AND UNDERSTANDING OF BLOOD SACRIFICES

The various factors that will be described in the following paragraphs further enhance the idea concerning "the communicative power of sacrifices", in that, despite their hindering effects, people still cling to blood sacrificial rituals, even today. The earlier discussion of sacrifice among the Xhosa people in their traditional context revealed that, even in their "days of independence", an expression used by Peires to denote the period in which the Xhosa were relatively free politically, which he places at around 1650 to 1850 (Peires, 1981: viii), the practice of sacrificial rituals was not totally free of foreign influence. It can be noted that, even in the early 19th century, the notion of "prophecy" that came to the Xhosa people through Christian influences (Willoughby, 1928:116; Peires, 1989:10) played a role in the practice of sacrifice among them.

For example, Mlanjeni, a self-proclaimed Xhosa prophet born in 1832, inspired people to offer sacrifices to him (Peires, 1989:10). In chapter four, it was also noted that if the Xhosa people, in their traditional context, are said to have had God as the object of their sacrificial acts, this could only be due to Christian influence, because their cosmology and belief system do not support such a claim. Since the loss of Xhosa people's independence due to colonialism, the Christian influence on Xhosa people's practice and understanding of sacrifice has become even more pronounced. In addition to this, there have been a host of other factors that have made their mark and continue to do so with regard to the Xhosa people's practice and understanding of sacrifice. These factors may be classified as political, economic, social, environmental, ideological and religious (Lamla, 1971:132).

The first four factors affect Xhosa sacrifices on a practical level, and can thus be broadly categorised as social factors, while the last two affect them on a



level of understanding and belief, and can thus be categorised as mental factors. This study hopes to show in the pages that follow, at worst, that these factors have had an eliminatory effect, and at best, a modifying effect on the practice and understanding of sacrifice among modern Xhosa people. In other words, as a result of these factors, some sacrifices have been completely abandoned, while others have been modified or adapted to conditions created by them (Lamla, 1971:32).

6.4.1 Political factors

Political factors may seem to be less connected to religion, particularly with regard to the performance of rites, but in actual fact there is a definite connection. Sacrificial rituals among the Xhosa people were not only a family or lineage affair - they were also a tribal affair, or better still a national affair, since the Xhosa people considered themselves to be a nation. National sacrificial rituals such as rainmaking and harvest sacrifices were presided over by the king (Lamla, 1971:32).

When the Cape Colony government and the succeeding governments gradually withdrew the king's powers, the sacrifices he used to perform as a unifying figure and guardian of his nation also faded away. Hammond-Tooke cites a letter written by the king of the Xhosa people to the Willovale magistrate in 1945, asking for permission to perform a tribal sacrifice. This sacrifice had apparently been stopped because the place in which it was normally performed belonged to a white farmer, who would not allow it to take place. In this letter, he writes the following: "...Kindly letter to Magistrate of Komgha; know that sometimes at the end of November, I and amaTshawe people of my clan shall be performing a sacrifice at a certain place called Ngxingxolo stream where the sacrifice was formerly performed by my forefathers as this must be done according to our customs " (Hammond-Tooke, 1956:66).

Hammond-Tooke informs us that "this request was not acceded ...", and although he continued to state that there was a possibility that the government would buy the farm in order to allow this ritual to take place, there is no record that it eventually did. One may thus presume that the refusal of the king's request marked the death of that type of sacrifice. Political factors have since then continued to negatively affect the practice of sacrifice among the Xhosas. Mayer reports on the condition in the early sixties under which the migrant workers in East London (a sizeable town in the Eastern Cape) had to perform their sacrifices (Hammond-Tooke, 1956:66):

"Whether the sacrifice is done in a yard or a bush, whether it involves a goat or an ox, the man sacrificing in town cannot afford to relax his guard for a moment. 'You are skinning the beast when you see an unfamiliar figure coming down the hill towards you. Immediately you stop skinning and watch the figure closely to see if you can identify it as a policeman'...the makeshift conditions, the absence of relatives, the atmosphere of secrecy and fear", are all negative factors (Mayer, 1961:153). Mayer explains that regulations



against sacrificial killings were “primarily” hygienic in their intention (Mayer, 1961:152).

One could say here that the primary intention was political, for if the Xhosa people were considered as permanent residents of East London and accepted as such, provisions would have to be made for sacrificial activities to take place in a free and dignified manner. Even today, political factors continue to affect the practice of sacrifice. Many black South African people, who were forcibly removed from their places of birth, are no longer able to perform sacrificial rituals in the vicinity of the graves of their lineage folk, as was traditionally done. The forced removal of black people was a result of a political policy aimed at re-zoning the country along racial lines (Mayer, 1961:153).

It is a common thing to hear middle-aged people, while pointing at places that have now been “developed” and turned into formerly “whites only” suburbs, stating that such places stand on the graves of their forefathers. Even with the new, independent South Africa, the legacy of apartheid continues to affect the practice of sacrifice. One often hears of people who are evicted from a farm they have lived on for decades, and thus have had to leave the area of the graves of their lineage members, which is the usual place for sacrifices. Farm evictions also have the effect of scattering the living lineage members who normally form the congregation of sacrificial rituals. This strains the performance of sacrifices, as members must now travel long distances to attend sacrificial rituals of fellow lineage members (Mayer, 1961:153).

6.4.2 Economic factors

Economic factors affect the practice of sacrifice in the same way as political factors do. Out of pressure to adapt to the modern economy, people are compelled to leave their places of residence in order to find work in distant places. Some of them return periodically and are able to offer and participate in sacrifices in a manner that is traditionally meaningful, that is, in the vicinity of the graves of their ancestors and in the presence of their lineage members. For this reason, Rev. Sipuka says that the performance of sacrifices is timed according to the work schedules of lineage members, in order to allow them all to be present. In the writer’s experience, it is usually the month of December that is targeted for sacrificial rituals, and for this reason, December is also called *inyanga yemicimbi* (month of issues). The preference for this month is due to the fact that lineage members who are working in distant places are usually back home then for the Christmas holidays. The choice of this month ensures that all lineage members, or at least most of them, are present when a sacrifice is performed (Sipuka, 2000:181).

This does not always work out well, because some members of the lineage may be working for the month of December, or others are too far away to come. The concentration of sacrifices in one month sometimes creates a situation of a clash of sacrifices within one lineage. It is not unusual in some sacrificial rituals to hear an announcement to the effect that significant lineage members could not attend because they had to attend a similar occasion for



one of the lineage members somewhere else. The traditional intention of Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals, that is, lineage solidarity, is thus not fully realized, as some members of the lineage may be absent for certain important sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:182).

The absence of lineage members is even worse for those who have settled in their places of work, because in the places where they stay, they are usually the only lineage unit. This has necessitated some adaptation in terms of participants or congregations of sacrificial rituals. Sacrificial rituals in which normal lineage members would form the congregation have clan members as the congregation. This is because clan membership is broader than lineage membership, and therefore clan members are likely to be spread across a wider area than lineage members would (Sipuka, 2000:182).

Bigalke, who conducted research among the rural Xhosa people, reports on some cases in which on account of the absence or shortage of lineage members, clan members took the place of the former (Bigalke, 1969:50). If the shortage of lineage members is sometimes a problem in rural areas, it is obvious that, in an urban situation, it would be more likely to be a problem. Wilson and Mafeje, in their study of the social life of migrant workers in Cape Town, only make reference to clansmen and not lineage members as the normal congregation of sacrificial rituals, as well as of other rituals (Wilson & Mafeje, 1963:78).

Another obvious economic factor that affects the practice of sacrifice is whether or not one has the means to provide the sacrificial victim and other expenses that go with it. Even in the traditional context, this was sometimes a problem, hence there were interim sacrificial rituals, that is, *ukutshayela inkundla* (to prepare the ground) or *ukungxengxeza* (to plead), that served to appease the ancestors, while still finding means to provide for the required sacrifice. In the modern era, in which, on top of inflation, sacrificial rituals have become lavish, it can be expected that financial considerations will seriously affect the performance of sacrificial rituals. For example the huge expenses for the unveiling of the tombstone, which coincides with the *ukubuyisa* sacrificial ritual, are probably the reason why it usually takes a very long time before it is done (Pauw, 1975:114).

Raum confirms this in his research on the performance of sacrificial rituals among Xhosa Christians and non-Christian people from Ciskei. He concludes that "Christians, who are better off economically than the non-Christians, can afford a more elaborate ritual, that is, more frequent sacrificial rituals" (Raum, 1972:195).

6.4.3 Social factors

Sacrifices, especially Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals, are not an individual but a communal exercise. Among those who take part in them, there is a presupposed common belief about what is being done when they are performed. Thus, "social", meaning the ability to live, interact and co-operate with others in activities of common interest, with a common purpose, is very



important for sacrifices. The performance of sacrificial rituals in the traditional context has a clear social function, that is, to instill a sense of belonging among the lineage members, and to perpetuate a traditional way of life (Sipuka, 2000:183).

In modern times, individuals find themselves in the company of people who are neither lineage members nor share a way of life with them, which traditional sacrificial rituals serve to perpetuate. Instead, they find themselves being drawn into other social values that are not enhanced by the performance of sacrificial rituals. Wilson and Mafeje (1963), in their study of the Xhosa people in Cape Town, show that the practice of sacrificial rituals was more prevalent among those who insulated themselves from the city influence than those who embraced city life. This shows that social factors do influence the practice of sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:183).

6.4.4 Environmental Factors

The modern environment is not always conducive to the performance of sacrificial rituals. It also discourages them, even among those who still find meaning in sacrifices. A man interviewed during research among Xhosa people in East London (a town known in Xhosa as *Monti*,) clearly expressed the negative effect that the urban environment has on the performance of sacrificial rituals. "Sacrifices we perform in town are like a watered down liquid [*umngxengo*] they are tasteless. Town is not a place where Africans can sacrifice freely. Where is the kraal? If there is such a thing it is away in the bushes, so that nobody would know it is yours. Sacrifice needs to be done openly and without fear. There must be no disturbances of any kind, there must be perfect peace and calm. Can you get that in town? Definitely not...the absence of the relatives makes the sacrificial ritual in town incomplete. Real relatives matter the most in a sacrifice, because they are the ones living the life the spirits have lived" (Wilson & Mafeje, 1963:153).

Those people living in upmarket suburbs must surely think twice before they go ahead with a sacrifice. First of all, they must obtain permission from various departments of the municipality, that is, the health, sanitation and possibly traffic departments. Having obtained this permission, they must inform the neighbours - for "whom the bellow of a slaughtered dying ox is upsetting" (*Herald*, 3 Feb. 1999:7) - in time about the event. After this, they must transport the beast to the suburb, keep it "for up to 12 hours to help calm it down" (*Herald*, 3 Feb 1999:7) and slaughter it in the driveway, as Brenda Fassie did.

6.4.5 Ideological factors

Xhosa people have been assimilated into Western culture and the capitalist economic system in varying degrees. There are those who, if they had a choice, would not be part of these, and so they participate in them as little as possible. While, for example, they will be part of the capitalist economy, which involves migratory labour and settling in urban areas, they still retain most of their traditional way of life (McAllister, 1981:16-17), including sacrifices and



other rituals. Other people, on the other hand, have embraced the Christian religion and Western culture as their way of life, and have thus dissociated themselves to a certain degree from Xhosa people's traditional way of life. They have "adopted new values and many disregard tribalism and its ramifications, of which sacrifice is but one" (Lamla, 1971:33).

During the sixties, anthropologists categorised Xhosa people who rejected most of the Western and Christian influences as *Abantu ababomvu* (red people), while those who fully adopted it were referred to as *Abantu basesikolweni* (school people). Mayer gives a succinct explanation of how these two groups differ in their approach to Western and Christian influence: "The people known as *abantu ababomvu*, "Red people", or less politely as *amaqaba*, "smeared one" (from the smearing of their clothes and bodies with red ochre), are the traditionalist Xhosa people, that is, "the conservatives who still stand by the indigenous way of life, including pagan Xhosa religion...The antithetical type, *abantu basesikolweni*, "School people" are products of the mission and the school, holding up Christianity, literacy and other Western ways as ideals" (Mayer, 1971:4).

The *abantu basesikolweni* (school people) saw themselves as "civilized" compared to the *abantu ababomvu* (red people) or *amaqaba* (smeared people) group, whose way of life (which includes performance of sacrifices) they saw as primitive (Lamla, 1971:33; Mafeje, 1975:168). As far as the disdain for sacrifice results from this attitude, it may be regarded as motivated by ideology. This, however, does not mean that the *abantu basesikolweni* (school people) do not perform sacrifices - they do, but "in their performance of Xhosa people's custom (sacrifice) they do not observe the minor tribal variations that are displayed by "red people" (Pauw, 1975:4). One such variation, for example, that is not observed by "school people" is the prodding of the sacrificial victim with the spear, because they consider it to be barbaric. Thus, ideological factors do not have an eliminatory effect on the understanding and performance of sacrifice (Sipuka, 2000:185).

6.4.6 Religious factors

Christianity is about the only foreign religion with which the Xhosas have come into contact. This section has to do with those elements of Christian belief that have impacted, and continue to do so, on the Xhosa people's understanding and practice of sacrifice. Most writers note that in general, the attitude of missionaries towards the Xhosa people's practice of sacrifice was negative (Hodgson, 1984:21; Pauw, 1974:425; Wilson et al, 1952:130). Most of the material on the interaction between the missionaries and the Xhosas is political, meaning that it concerns itself with the political and cultural implications of this contact. There is very little, if any, material by the early missionaries that objectively explored the divergence and convergence between Christian and Xhosa practices and understanding of sacrifice (Sipuka, 2000:185).

This is mainly due to the fact that, in their evangelical endeavours among the Xhosa people, missionaries did not only concern themselves with religious



matters, but with the lives of the Xhosa people as a whole, which they felt were barbaric and needed to be changed. Converting to Christianity, for a Xhosa, meant that one did not only have to stop sacrificing to the ancestors, but also everything that goes with his culture (Sipuka, 2000:186). Thus, in theory, the missionaries regarded all humankind as potentially equal, but did not differentiate between Christianity and the accepted norms of people's cultures. Plows and wagons, cotton clothes, Western medicine, square, upright furniture, square houses built along straight lines, and above all, formal literacy, were all regarded as fruits of the Gospel. Traditional doctors and diviners, beer drinking, and expression of what the missionaries regarded as nudity and open sexual behaviours were condemned. Male and female initiation rites, male polygamy and the exchange of women for cattle (now referred to as the *lobola* system) and the role of ancestors in worship, were rejected as anti-Christian (Switzer, 1993:116).

It is therefore not surprising that there is no clear, detailed theological discourse in connection with Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals by the missionaries, because its rejection was included in the blanket banishment of everything that pertained to Xhosa culture. Their certainty that they were right, since they considered themselves to be religiously and culturally superior to the Xhosa people, made it unnecessary for them to explain and justify the grounds for discriminate rejection of Xhosa sacrifice and customs. Fast (1994) illustrates the missionaries' superiority complex among the Xhosa people in the 19th century. Switzer's report about the attitude of the missionaries towards the Xhosa and their customs seems to be true of the other early missionaries in the rest of Africa as well. African continental theologians have also noted this attitudinal problem of missionaries, with almost the same words used by Switzer (Mbiti, 1969:237; Hastings, 1976:37-38; Hastings, 1989:23-34 and Boudillon, 1990:268).

Theron observes the following: "there were many individual missionaries who had more understanding of the traditional culture, and who were more positive towards it" (Theron, 1996:25). Among the Xhosa people, one of the early missionaries who could be considered to have been more positive towards Xhosa people's traditions was Van der Kemp. Concerning this missionary, Hodgson says that he ate African food, lived in Xhosa people's huts and travelled on "foot without a hat, shoes or stocking". At the same time, Van der Kemp's spartan existence was undoubtedly part of a conscious decision to live out his equality philosophy among men. He was the kind of missionary who wanted to adapt Christianity to the everyday life of the indigenous community. His successors were only out to change Xhosa people's ways of life, and to conform to the standard of "Christianity and civilization" as imported from Europe, and who set an example by establishing separate communities at their mission stations (Hodgson, 1984:10).

Although Van der Kemp was positive about Xhosa people's way of life in general, he disapproved of Xhosa sacrificial rituals. Hodgson tells us that he was "highly critical of the 'doctor's' role in ordering the slaughtering of cattle by way of expiation" (Hodgson, 1984:21), but unfortunately he does not tell us about Van der Kemp's theological reasons for the rejection of Xhosa people's



sacrificial rituals, although other missionaries do. Therefore, one is left with no resource but the missionaries, who are likely to point out at least two factors in their faith that are likely to have led them to prohibit converts from practising sacrifice. These factors are:

- Belief in one God or monotheism; and
- Salvation through Christ or soteriology (Sipuka, 2000:187).

6.4.6.1 Monotheism

Monotheism is characterised first of all by the belief in one God who is considered to be the source of everything there is, “the absolute sovereign and the only rightful God” (Kraemer, 1963; Theron, 1996:118). To God alone, praise and honour is due. Among “world religions”, it is Judaism, out of which Christianity developed, that has always been monotheistic in the sense of regarding the God the Jews believe in as the God of everyone. The God they initially believed in “was originally worshipped as a tribal God, Jahweh of Israel, over and against such foreign deities as Dagon of the Philistines and Chemosh of the Moabites” (Hick, 1990:6). It was monotheistic in the sense that the Jews worshipped only one God. Therefore, it is perhaps better to speak of the early Jewish religion as “henotheism rather than monotheism”. Monotheism stands for the existence of only one God, whereas henotheism stands for the worship of only one God (Deist, 1982:15; see also Kärkkäinen, 2004:35-36, 132, 134-138, 145, 148).

What added a universal dimension to Jewish monotheism was the perceived military victory of their God over other gods. In retrospect, they concluded that such a powerful God must in fact be the only God there is, who is the foundation of everything. “By His victories over the enemy YWH proved to be the only God” (Deist, 1982:34). With the era of the prophets, a new way of establishing the universality of God was introduced. This was instead of taking military conquests as the proof of God’s universal salvific will or His will to save all people, in order to demonstrate that God is God not only of Israel but also of all people. They “taught that although God had indeed summoned their own nation to a special mission as the living medium of his revelation to the world, he was not only their God but also the Lord of the Gentiles or foreigners” (Hick, 1990:6).

Even though in theory the Jews believed that their God was the God of all people, in their practice of religion they were still nationalistic. One only needs to read the Gospels to see how they still considered salvation as their own privileged right. Hartman reveals that there was a prevailing mentality among the Jews of Jesus’ time that the “Gentiles” could be sharers in the salvation that by right belonged to the Jews (Hartman, 1963:869). Many of Jesus’ parables, especially in Luke, who wrote for non-Jewish readers, confront this attitude. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-27), the narrative of the foreign leper coming back after healing to express his gratitude to God (Lk 17:11-19), the prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18:9-14), as well as the parable of the transference of the vineyard from the Jews to the Gentiles (Lk 20:9-19), all emphasise this belief. It is really with this advent of Christianity that the universal salvific will of God finds clear expression, and



that there is a clear instruction from Jesus to act towards its realization: “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). Monotheism proper is the foundation of this instruction (Sipuka, 2000:189).

In trying to be faithful to this instruction, missionaries found themselves eager to introduce the Xhosa people to the “one true God”. Some of them sincerely believed that the Xhosa people had no knowledge about this God. Hastings tells us, for example, that Moffat, the first missionary among the Tswana people, “called the Xhosa people a nation of atheists and he quoted Van der Kemp (the first missionary among the Xhosa) in support” (Hastings, 1994:325). However, as the work of Hodgson entitled: *The God of the Xhosas* (1982) tried to show, when the missionaries arrived among the Xhosa people, the latter already knew about God. In looking at Hodgson’s work, it is clear that Moffat’s statement that the Xhosa people were a nation of atheists is true.

What is true, as this study has already attempted to illustrate in chapter three, is that the Xhosa people had no personal relationship with God, and therefore had no formal worship or supplication directed to Him. As the missionaries soon found out, the Xhosa people had some sacrificial rituals which were not directed to God, but to the ancestors. The missionaries perceived these sacrificial rituals as worship of the ancestors. Naturally, they opposed them with all their might because, as they perceived, these rituals offended the supremacy of God. In fact, missionaries saw sacrifices directed to ancestors as idolatrous, because ancestors were not only human beings but also “unsaved pagans”, as the Institute for Contextual Theology (ITC) suggests (ITC, 1985:23). They thus viewed them as misguided and false practices which had to be rejected in their totality. This was, and still is, particularly true of the Protestant and evangelical churches (Theron, 1996:25), which readily quote the Bible to support their position concerning sacrifices to the ancestors.

At best, Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals were seen as something that could be purified, reinterpreted and incorporated into the Christian faith. This is particularly true of the Catholic Church, at least in principle (Theron, 1996:23-24). This approach, for example, would suggest that ancestors and sacrifices directed to them might be viewed in a similar way to that in which saints are viewed and related to. As can be seen, the first approach proposes total elimination of Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals, while the second suggests their modification. The theological presupposition of the first approach is the idea that revelation has taken place exclusively in Christ, so that prior to contact with Christianity, there is nothing in other beliefs that can be taken as leading to God. There can thus be no “point of contact” between Christianity and “pagan” beliefs, and the only way to be saved is to completely abandon the latter in favour of the former (Knitter, 1985:80-87). The basis of the second approach is the belief that the grace of God is present among all people, and is perfected through the preaching and acceptance of Christian faith (Vat. II *Nostra Aetate*, Number 2).



6.4.6.2 Soteriology

Even if Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals in their traditional context had been directed to God and not the ancestors, they would still not be accepted because, according to Christian views, Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the only acceptable sacrifice to God. Thus, the missionaries would have seen Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals as competing with Christ's sacrifice. The letter to the Hebrews, which clearly states that the blood of "Bulls and the blood of goats are incapable of taking away sin" (Heb 10:5), and that Christ on the cross offered one single sacrifice for sins (Heb 10:12), would have been used as biblical proof against Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals. On a theological level, the concept of justification by faith alone and not works would have been used against Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals, as the Reformers did against the Eucharistic sacrificial system in the Middle Ages (Sipuka, 2000:190).

Since the missionary understanding of salvation placed emphasis "on individual conversion" (Staples, 1981:213), the salvation wrought by Christ through His sacrifice would have been seen by missionaries as being related to forgiveness of personal sins and unity with God after death. Such a view of sacrifice would require a total adjustment for a Xhosa person, because Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals are concerned with the relationship among members of the lineage, and not the relationship between an individual and God. As we have seen, it is also not concerned with life after death, but with "prosperity and happiness in this life" (Fast, 1994:19), in which even those who are dead continue to participate. Consequently, one could boldly say that for the Xhosa people, life is all about the here and now, because death is not viewed as "a distinct cessation of life but a continuation in another form, namely as an ancestor" (Fast, 1994:10).

For the Xhosa people, "salvation meant help in time of trouble, healing, fertility, protection from sorcery, witchcraft and evil spirits, and success in life's venture. It did not have to do with the salvation of the soul, but rather with prosperity and happiness in this life" (Staples, 1981:212). In spite of the influence of the Christian factors already mentioned, Xhosa sacrificial rituals have survived. As Lamla suggests, "the practice of sacrifice has to a certain extent withstood all these onslaughts" (Lamla, 1971:33). Therefore, it is necessary to now examine modern Xhosa people's understanding and practice of sacrifice, which stresses the effect of the communicative power of blood sacrifices.

6.4.7 Modern Xhosa people's understanding and practice of sacrifice

The current sacrificial ritual practice among the Xhosa people has been shaped by the factors mentioned above (Staples, 1981:241; Deist, 1982:15; Hodgson, 1984:21 etc). Social and environmental factors have had an effect on the physical performance of sacrificial rituals, while religious factors have had an effect on the understanding of sacrifice (Sipuka, 2000:18; Wilson & Mafeje, 1963:153). These two are not mutually exclusive because changes in the physical elements of sacrifice, namely the congregation, the officiator and



the sacrificial site, which are due to political, economical, social and environmental factors, cannot take place without somehow altering or changing the understanding as well (Staples, 1981:214). There is, therefore, an account of the conditions imposed by social factors. There is also an understanding of sacrificial rituals, which results from the beliefs about them (Raum, 1972:195). In the next few pages, this study will attempt to investigate what Xhosa sacrificial rituals have come to signify, as a result of their being performed in the modern context and influenced by Christianity.

6.4.8 Social factors and sacrificial ritual understanding

One of the limiting social factors imposed on today's sacrificial ritual performance is the scarcity of lineage members who traditionally formed the congregation of sacrificial rituals. As noted earlier, lineage members are substituted by clan members and Staple, speaking for the Bantu speaking people of South Africa as a whole, states that the congregation of a sacrificial ritual may even "be friends rather than kinsmen" (Staples, 1981:241).

Pauw confirmed this phenomenon among the East London urban Xhosa people in 1973. "Clan and lineage are not highly significant categories in the urban structure compared to neighbours and friends, churches, associations, and relationships at work" (Pauw, 1973:169). This practice could mean that the congregational dimension of sacrificial rituals is no longer determined by lineage membership, but by relationships that are significant to the one offering the sacrifice. This interpretation, however, has a problem in explaining how non-lineage members can participate meaningfully in an ancestor's sacrificial ritual with which they have no relationship (Sipuka, 2000:192).

The second possible interpretation could be that sacrificial rituals no longer include lineage solidarity, but are exclusively concerned with one's nuclear family and ancestor in whose honour the sacrificial ritual is performed. The presence of other people in this case would merely be to grace the occasion, otherwise there is no sacrificial significance attached to their presence. This possibility is confirmed by Staples, who states that the ancestor's "cult now functions as a homestead, or heart cult. In extreme cases, it has become a personalized cult of the individual and his/her ancestors" (Staples, 1981:240). This is a "minimal lineage segment" (Staples, 1981:40), the furthest ancestors being the grandparents. Otherwise, one's normal ancestors are one's dead parents (Mayer, 1961:151). Brenda Fassie, for example, visited the grave of her parents when she offered sacrifices in thanksgiving to her ancestors (Mtshali, 1999:63).

Social and environmental factors have also had the effect of displacing people from their places of origin, and thus removing them from the environment of their ancestors, which is the normal environment for the performance of sacrificial rituals. This has heightened the notion of the ubiquity of ancestors, which is witnessed during the *Ukuvula umzi* (open a house) sacrificial ritual, traditionally performed to inform the ancestors of one's new place of abode, and implying the ubiquitous nature of the ancestors. However, with more



people relocating as a result of political and economical factors, it has come to be taken for granted (Mayer, 1961:154-158).

This enables people to regard their present places of residence as suitable for sacrificial rituals. Mayer's informants tell us that ancestors "will follow a man whether he goes to Johannesburg or Ghana or England" (Mayer, 1961:151). This explains the increase of sacrificial performances in urban areas. For those who have not totally severed ties with their places of origin, even though "the city has already started to take on the shape of a permanent home" (Pauw, 1994:133), the original home is still the preferred place for sacrificial rituals. This is because while ancestors are ubiquitous, they "are thought of as hovering about graves near the cattle byre, and around the village of their descendants" (Staples, 1981:494).

Modernisation has heightened the role of ancestors as protectors, thus reducing their role as custodians of tradition and lineage solidarity. As a person finds himself or herself "alone" in the city, the lineage dimension of ancestors is overshadowed by the need for personal protection. "If previously they (ancestors) were clothed with stern authority and armed with severe sanctions to keep the young in place and steady for the future responsibility, they would become now the ubiquitous guardian angels of a mobile society protecting persons in their precarious ventures in the city" (Staples, 1981:242). With regard to sacrificial rituals, this has had the effect of focusing the intention of sacrificial rituals more on personal protection and success than on lineage solidarity (Sipuka, 2000:193).

As a result of this change of focus, one perceives a proliferation of thanksgiving sacrificial rituals that have to do with personal successes in one's engagement with the modern world. McAllister argues that protection and thanksgiving rituals for the economic success of individuals serve to instill an understanding that one's economic success does not result from individual effort, but from the corporate effort of kinship members. Consequently, the fruits of one's success must be used to promote kinship solidarity and the traditional way of life (McAllister, 1981:41-49). While this may be true for migrant workers who maintain regular contact with their kinsmen, for those who have settled in cities, the focus would be on their thanksgiving sacrifice as individuals and on their ancestors (Sipuka, 2000:193). Among the thanksgiving sacrifices that have emerged, Raum lists the following: return from a journey, return from the mines, return from a court case and jail, and passing examinations (Raum, 1972:196-197). Wilson and Mafeje (1963) also mention winning a horse bet as a reason for a thanksgiving ritual. A big personal success is another reason for offering a thanksgiving sacrifice, as in the case of Brenda Fassie, who thanked her ancestors for her success in the music business. As Staples rightly observes, "ancestors" worship (sacrifice) is undergoing a process of individualization" (Staples, 1981:241).

In the traditional context, communication with ancestors took place through the channels built into the kinship system. Individuals had access to the ancestors through the lineage head, whose duty it was to address the ancestors on behalf of lineage members. The absence of these channels in



the city and urban environment has led to a situation in which individuals communicate directly with their ancestors. Many migrants said that, in town, if one cannot sacrifice to the spirits in order to have a person's affliction removed, one can pray to them instead. "In suffering of any kind of all you need to do is to speak to your spirits in the dead of the night, when no body sees or hears. You get up from your sleeping place and go outside, and talk to them silently, saying, "Why have you forsaken me, spirits of my father and grandfather?" (Mayer, 1961:155). The implications of this practice for sacrifice are that "the intermediary function of the regular officiator seems to fall away" (Staples, 1981:489), and personal prayer to the ancestors may at times be a substitute for the performance of sacrificial rituals. This is a new development in the understanding and practice of Xhosa sacrificial rituals, and which is due to social and environmental factors (Sipuka, 2000:194).

6.4.9 Understanding and practice of sacrifice as shaped by religious factors

This study now turns to a discussion of how religious factors have moulded Xhosa people's understanding and practice of sacrificial rituals. As already mentioned, since their contact with Christianity, the Xhosa people have continued to perform sacrificial rituals. It has been observed that there is unanimity among all writers that ancestral sacrificial vestiges can be detected, even among those Xhosa Christian people who claim to have completely abandoned their traditional belief system in favour of the Christian faith. Raum observes that most Xhosa Christians, for example, among whom he conducted his research, call the marriage sacrificial ritual *ukudlis'amas*i (to feed with sour milk), which traditionally served to introduce the bride to the ancestors of her groom, *idinala yomtshakazi* (bride's dinner). He then goes on to conclude: "there is very little doubt that the *idinala yomtshakazi* is a synthesis between Christian elements and the traditional *ukudlis' amasi*" (Raum, 1972:59).

It seems as though the word "*idinala*" (dinner) has become a euphemism for sacrificial rituals. "Dinner which involves ritual killings, often conducted secretly and with less supporting rituals than in customary ways, and which appears to serve rather traditional functions that are performed at weddings, the outdoor of babies and in connection with burial and post-burial ceremonies" (Staples, 1981:504-505). It is clear therefore that Christian influence has not eliminated sacrificial ritual performances among the Xhosa people, at least not completely. What is also clear, as Raum and Staples observe, is that, on account of the influence of the Christian faith, the understanding and practice of sacrificial rituals has changed: however, what exactly this understanding has changed into is not clear (Sipuka, 2000:195).

Research conducted by many writers has shown that some Christians do not camouflage Xhosa sacrificial rituals, but openly perform them for what they are. A survey by Oosthuizen among the Xhosa Christian people of "Victoria East, Middledrift districts, and in urban areas of Zwelitsha" (Oosthuizen, 1971:109), shows that this is true for all areas of the former independent homeland of Ciskei. The result of the survey showed that "Ancestor worship...is still practiced openly by 44% of the respondents" (Oosthuizen,



1971:113). In her research among the Xhosa people of the Keiskammahoek, Wilson also discovered that “Church members... sometimes undertake ritual killings in case of illness, in addition to wearing necklaces made from a beast’s tail hair” (Wilson, 1952:198).

In his research in an unspecified area among the Xhosa people, Pauw also concludes that “Christians perform sacrifices of propitiation, thanksgiving, sacrifices for children, and sacrificial rituals of accompanying and bringing back the dead, in which Xhosa people’s tradition predominates even in the formal aspects of the rituals” (Pauw, 1975:225). These Xhosa Christian people simultaneously embrace both the Xhosa and Christian sacrificial ritual traditions. The task that remains is to explain how people who have embraced Christianity can continue to openly perform Xhosa sacrificial rituals, considering the fact that these two are apparently opposed to one another (Sipuka, 2000:195).

It is also true that some Xhosa Christian people completely dissociate themselves from traditional sacrificial ritual performances, as demonstrated by the *Drum* magazine article on the initiation of boys, in which the sacrificial ritual was replaced by the reading of the Bible (*Drum*, Oct. 1999:12). In accordance with Oosthuizen’s survey, however, these constitute “a small percentage” (Oosthuizen, 1971:113). Some researchers also report that the first generation of Xhosa Christian people who settled in missions were expected to abandon their traditional beliefs (Wilson, 1952:129; Pauw, 1975:21). One wonders if they did so freely, or out of fear of being evicted from the mission. According to Manona, it may be inferred from this that it was more for the latter reason that they abandoned them (Manona, 1981:136), and Pauw explicitly observes that “some (missionaries) favoured the policy of expelling from mission those who failed to live a Christian life” (Pauw, 1975:207). First, the sacrificial rituals known as *idinala* (dinner) will be explained.

The *idinala* occasions include “baptismal dinner, bride’s dinner and sometimes mourning dinner (*idinala yokuzila*) after an elderly man or woman in the family has died. Also, a son who has returned safely from the towns may provide money to purchase food for a “thanksgiving dinner” [and] on all these occasions a goat, a sheep, or even an ox may be slaughtered” (Wilson, 1952:198). The grounds for suspicion are that these dinners are disguised. They are performed in similar circumstances to those in which traditional sacrificial rituals are performed. For instance, traditionally, when a child is born, the *imbeleko* sacrificial ritual is performed, whereas among Xhosa Christian people, when a child is born, a baptismal dinner is held. Traditionally, when a person dies, the *ukukhapha* sacrificial ritual is performed, while Xhosa Christian people observe a mourning dinner and the like (Sipuka, 2000:196).

It is for this reason that Raum explains them as a combination of Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals with some elements of the Christian faith. Pauw clarifies them as “an adaptation” of Xhosa people’s tradition to Christian tradition through modification, which takes the form of the elimination of certain details or the simplification, change of name, substitution or



replacement of Western Christian forms by Xhosa people's forms (Pauw, 1975:225). When one looks at the intentions of some Xhosa people's traditional sacrificial rituals, and the intentions of some Xhosa Christian people's dinners, the explanation of the latter as being a synthesis makes sense (Sipuka, 2000:196).

There is, between the two, some complementarity in some of their intentions. One of the intentions of the *imbeleko* sacrificial ritual, for instance, is to make the child a full member of the lineage group. From a Catholic point of view, one could argue that the baptism dinner is a feast to celebrate the welcoming of the child through baptism into the Christian community. Raum observed that the *ukukhapha* (accompanying of a deceased person) sacrificial ritual, allegedly substituted by Xhosa Christian people with the *idinala yokuzila* (mourning dinner), was "even attended by European ministers" (Raum, 1972:179). According to Raum, this is because the *ukukhapha* sacrificial ritual includes the intention of ritual purification that "is a universal concern and not characteristic of pagan attitude" (Raum, 1971:88), and which is also shared by Christian tradition. There is thus a commonality of intention between the two.

The problem with understanding "dinners" as a synthesis of Christian faith and Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals is that not all Xhosa Christian people who hold "dinners" consider themselves to be synthesising their faith with the Xhosa people's tradition. Wilson's research in Keiskammahoek revealed the following: "Christians strenuously deny any connection between their feasts and occasions of pagan ritual..." (Wilson, 1952:198). The second problem is that even if Xhosa Christian people explain *idinala* as a synthesis of Xhosa tradition and Christian faith, it does not meet the requirements of a synthesis, which would normally involve a merging of two meanings. Pauw convincingly points out that *idinala* is not a synthesis but a superficial modification of traditional sacrificial rituals, which involves naming traditional sacrificial rituals and the altering of some of the ritual elements involved (Pauw, 1975:176).

A Methodist preacher interviewed by Pauw about *idinala* replied: "We no longer make *amadini* (sacrifices) for illness because the minister taught us that Jesus is *idini* for all our illness. When there is ill misfortune...it is said (by unbelievers) that the kinsmen of this house [ancestors] are complaining... A beast is slaughtered and they say *kuyanqulwa* (worship takes place). "School people" make *idinala* (dinner)...for misfortune...you make a dinner for your ancestors (*izinyanya*), you pray to God and to the ancestors" (Pauw, 1975:176).

The following response by an Anglican sub-deacon interviewed by Pauw reveals that *idinala* is a Xhosa people's sacrificial ritual trimmed of its ritual elements: "*Idini*" (sacrifice) is wrong because of the belief that it restores the patient's health. We have one *idini*, the one made by Christ a dinner is different and there is no objection to it, because it will be preceded by prayers, and the patient's health will be restored through prayer...When the "school people" slaughter they just have a sort of dinner without the small ritual details" (Pauw, 1975:176).



Xhosa Christian people should perhaps be taken seriously when they say that, in holding “dinners”, they are not camouflaging a “pagan” ritual, but are instead doing something new. What they are doing can perhaps be compared to what Christianity did when it took over some Jewish and “pagan” rituals and feasts, and used them to explain and ritualise its own beliefs. However, until Xhosa Christians, or should we say Xhosa Christian theologians, clarify what is being done when a “dinner” is held, the suspicion that “dinner” is a camouflaged Xhosa people’s sacrificial ritual will continue to persist. Here, after Pauw provides a succinct observation concerning the superficiality of the *idinala* concept “...Many Xhosa Christian people reveal that their objections to the traditional *idini* are of a supernatural nature. If the name *idini* is avoided, no Xhosa medicines are used, and the ritual meal takes the form of a dinner, served in a “civilized manner”...Missionary opposition to this traditional ritual caused it to be disguised or camouflaged, without fostering strong convictions about its incompatibility with Christian belief” (Pauw, 1975:177).

6.4.10 The dichotomous understanding of Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals

Xhosa Christian people who openly perform Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals while accepting the Christian understanding of sacrifice would be better described as “heterodox”, which when literally translated, conveys the meaning of simultaneously holding different opinions or beliefs. According to the dictionary, however, “heterodox” has the meaning of “holding unorthodox opinion” (New Webster’s Dictionary, 1971:709), with the emphasis being on “wrong” instead of “different”.

The word “dual” does not come close enough to explain this phenomenon, because “dual” means understanding the same reality in two different ways. For example, when being human is understood as being physical and spiritual. For lack of a better expression, one can use “dichotomous understanding” to explain the fact that Xhosa Christian people who openly perform Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals understand them and Christ’s sacrifice as both being valid beliefs in their own way. There is thus no attempt to synthesise the two, because they are understood and explained separately (Sipuka, 2000:198).

The dichotomous understanding of sacrificial rituals is largely due to the difference between Christianity and Xhosa people’s belief system, in terms of their understanding of salvation. The Christian understanding of salvation, as introduced by missionaries, is largely concerned with being saved from one’s sins and given the grace to overcome sin in one’s pilgrim journey on earth, as well as being assured of a union with God after death (Hasting, 1994:270-271). Xhosa people’s understanding of salvation, on the other hand, as Hammond-Tooke crudely describes it, “is unashamedly this world” (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:318). The following description (already given) of Bantu speaking people’s view of salvation is also true of the Xhosa people, because they belong to this group: “For the Bantu, salvation means help in time of trouble, healing, fertility, protection from witchcraft and evil spirits, and success in life ventures. It doesn’t have to do with the salvation of the soul, but rather with prosperity and happiness in this life” (Staples, 1981:212).



The fact that as early as 1960, between forty and sixty percent of Xhosa people were already Christians, means that the Christian message of salvation had proved attractive to them. Obviously, there are other factors that contributed to the conversion of Xhosa people to Christianity. The eschatological dimension of salvation can be counted as one of the important contributing factors to Xhosa people's conversion because, although they saw death as a transition to the world of the ancestors, they nevertheless viewed it with fear and negativity. The efforts to establish the cause of death, when it occurs, through divining and taboos related to coming into contact with death's surroundings, suggests a fear and negative view of death by them. It is not surprising, therefore, that the missionary message of Christian salvation, which consisted of destroying death by ensuring everlasting life with God after death, struck a chord among the Xhosa people (Sipuka, 2000:199).

The political and economic factors that, as noted above, had and continue to have the effect of replacing traditional communality with individualism, also have their share in rendering eschatological personal salvation meaningful. This, however, did not wipe away the traditional Xhosa people's understanding of salvation. While the Xhosa Christian people embrace the Christian view of salvation, they simultaneously also hold onto their traditional views (Sipuka, 2000:200). Lungu ascribes the simultaneous holding of two opposing beliefs as being due to Xhosa people's logic [which] is weak and without defined boundaries. This is the reason why Xhosa people hold opposing views "with neither position nor experiencing any conflict" (Lunga, 1982:92-93). It is the researcher's opinion that simultaneously upholding opposing views cannot be attributed to Xhosa people's weak logic, when consideration is given to other writers' statements.

In the minds of Xhosa Christian people, these two views of salvation are not contradictory or mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. The Christian view of salvation deals with life after death, while the Xhosa view of salvation deals with daily needs and life crises. In this regard, Daneel deplores the one-sidedness of missionaries, who failed to address people's daily needs and problems as crucial factors that fuelled the formation of independent churches. Missionaries failed to preach the salvation of the entire man (Daneel, 1987:78).

Thus, the Christian view, as presented by missionaries, and the Xhosa people's view of salvation exist side by side, and each view is adopted according to the need at hand. If the concern is about daily practical needs, for example, the need for healing and material well-being, Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals are performed, while for eschatological needs, the Christian view of salvation is adopted. This is clear from the following response given by a Xhosa respondent when asked why he prays to God and to the ancestors: "For the thing of the spirit I pray to God, for the things of the flesh there are *amasiko* (customs) in connection with ancestors or *amawetu*" (Pauw, 1975:220).

This dichotomous understanding of sacrifice is also due to the pluralistic character of society, which, though constituted of different groups, nevertheless allows co-operation among them. What Staples says about



religion not being the “cause of sharp cleavage between groups” (Staples, 1981:234) among the Southern Bantu, is very true for the Xhosa people. Grounds for co-operation among the Xhosa people are not determined by religious convictions, as they are for the Jews and Gentiles, for example, but by neighbourliness and lineage membership (Pauw, 1975:42; Manona, 1981:37).

For example, a Christian who would not normally perform a sacrificial ritual might find himself or herself taking part in a sacrifice because of their neighbour or a kinship relationship with the person hosting the sacrifice. On the other hand, a non-Christian may be involved in a Christian service or a modified type of Xhosa people’s sacrificial ritual for the same reasons. As Staples observes, “there is a great deal of mobility between the groups on the spectrum accompanied by considerable religious interdependence. Christians are expected to participate in many traditional sacrificial rituals...” (Staples, 1981:253-255). Social co-operation, therefore, has a role to play in the way the modern Xhosa people perform and understand sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:201).

It would, however, be too simplistic to conclude this section on Xhosa Christian people’s understanding of Christian salvation as being exclusively concerned with the soul, and as unrelated to physical needs and daily life struggles. Pauw observes that a typical response from Xhosa respondents to the question about the content or intention of their prayer is: “I pray about my sins and troubles” (Pauw, 1975:80). This is a brief response, but it points to a comprehensive view of salvation. Pauw further states that, with regard to the question about prayers that have been answered, the following responses were given: “health and life sustenance; having a family and maintaining good fairly relations; and immediate economic necessities” (Pauw, 1981:80).

With regard to specific material needs, fulfilled prayers included the granting of the following: “Good crops, having stock, obtaining a mechanical planter, finding a job, success in applying for pension, and a gift of clothes...” (Pauw, 1975:80). It shows that some Xhosa people perceive Christian salvation as, after all, also relevant to this life. Pauw, however, hastens to clarify that “this is due to recent prayer movements... and were it not for their influence, prayer would be more predominantly concerned with finding strength and courage to endure hardships of life”. These prayer movements, known as *Abatandazeli*, focus upon a gift to pray for other people’s physical and material needs (Pauw, 1975:81).

The performance of Xhosa people’s traditional sacrificial rituals by modern Xhosa Christian people can also be ascribed to the general quest of indigenous people of South Africa to reclaim their African identity, which includes regaining customs that were labelled as pagan and savage by the missionaries. These customs, which include communication with the ancestors through manifold sacrificial rituals, are seen by black South Africans in general, and by Xhosa people in particular, as instrumental in asserting their uniqueness and equality in the presence of those who previously regarded them as inferior. They are also seen as instrumental in providing a religious and political perspective that is informed by African experience.



Thus, as Manona points out, “the resurgence of the ancestors belief and its corresponding cult has not only a religious and symbolic significance, but also it exhibits a clear political dimension” (Manona, 1981:37).

This positive view of African customs, which includes Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals, has led to some attempts to give a biblical and theological justification for the performance of Xhosa sacrificial rituals. Biblical justification includes reference to the commandment to honour one’s parent (Ex 20:12), so that ancestral sacrificial rituals, if seen as honouring the ancestors, are not perceived as being incompatible with the Bible (Lungu, 1982:44). It is also justified by appealing to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:17 that He did not come to abolish but to fulfill the law. The conclusion of this appeal in Matthew 5:17 is that Xhosa people’ sacrificial rituals do not contradict biblical teaching because “Christ did not abolish the Xhosa people’s customs but it is the church that rejects them” (Lungu, 1982:45). It is quite obvious that these texts cannot go far in attempting to make Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals incompatible with the Bible. This is even more so, considering the fact that, when compared to other biblical texts quoted with regard to Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals, they are found to carry less weight (Lungu, 1982:43).

Theologically speaking, the justification for Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals is largely based on a clarification of the analogous nature of their sacrificial rituals to the doctrine of the communion of the saints. One aspect of the doctrine of the communion of the saints concerns the nature of the church as having three divisions, namely the pilgrim church on earth, the suffering church in purgatory, and the triumphant church of the saints and angels in heaven. This doctrine further integrates these divisions into one church, on account of the unity of faith, and these divisions are supportive of one another. The pilgrim church can thus appeal in prayer to the triumphant church, while the former can also join the latter in praising God and in praying for the suffering church in purgatory (CCC 994-958).

The theological justification for Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals is argued along the same lines of communion and mutual support. Just as the appeal to the saints for prayer expresses support between the living and the saints, so Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals express mutual support between the living and the ancestors. If the analogy between the saints and ancestors has a purely comparative purpose in suggesting that, just as some Christians appeal in prayer to saints for support, so Xhosa people appeal to ancestors through sacrificial rituals for support, then the analogy may be regarded as valid. However, if the intention is to interchange between the two, then the analogy is invalidated, because many writers do not attach any similarity of meaning to the two (Sipuka, 2000:203). See Staples (1981) and Lungu (1982) for a more detailed discussion in this regard.

In this regard, there is a need to understand that the criteria for becoming an ancestor are different from those for becoming a saint (Lungu, 1982:88). Therefore, saints cannot become ancestors, and ancestors cannot become saints (Lungu, 1982:88). On the other hand, there is a difference between the intention of appealing to the saints in prayer, and the intention of appealing to the ancestors through sacrificial rituals. Sacrificial rituals in honour of the



ancestors are meant to enhance mutual responsibility, traditional norms and moral taboos among lineage members. An appeal to the saints in prayer, on the other hand, has a universal character, in the sense that it is relevant to the church as a whole, which is wider than a lineage group. While it is true that popular devotion to saints includes a concern for earthly wellbeing, theologically speaking, it is seen as a concern for helping individuals to grow in grace and in their personal union with God (Sipuka, 2000:204).

Staples further states that prayer can be addressed to the souls in purgatory, because when they “enter heaven they will gratefully remember, before God, those who made intercession for them and in turn intercede for grace and blessing on their behalf” (Staples, 1981:281). According to his argument, Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals may be seen in a similar way as an offering to one’s ancestors in anticipation of their benevolent response to one’s offering. Staples’ affirmation that prayer can also be made to the souls in purgatory in the hope that, when they get to heaven, they will remember those who prayed for them, may be true on the level of popular piety. On the level of official teaching, however, it finds no support at all. The official teaching of the Catholic Church concerning souls in purgatory is that they cannot be of any use to the living. On the contrary, they are the ones who are assisted by the living (CCC: 1032). There are no grounds for an analogy, to say nothing about a similarity, between souls in purgatory and the ancestors. Souls in purgatory are prayed for, while ancestors are honoured and appealed to through sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:204). One doubts whether all this would find any biblical support.

The idea that Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals have God as their ultimate object is widespread among proponents of continuity between Xhosa people’s belief system and Christianity. Soga, a Xhosa Christian who is considered to be an authority on Xhosa people’s customs, states that God is worshipped “through the medium of *iminyanya* or ancestral spirits, who in the unseen world are nearer to Him, and know more than men on earth (Soga, 1931:150).

Most of the Xhosa Christian people interviewed by Pauw clarified the fact that the relation of the ancestors to God and the living is almost identical to that of the saints to God and the living. “The ancestors can speak to God and ask things of Him. They live with God. They are always with Him. They can ask things for us, because they are near God” (Pauw, 1975:218). However, with all the best intentions of accommodating the ancestors and accompanying sacrificial rituals within the Christian faith, it has to be said that the communion of the saints is not a viable model for this purpose, because the meanings attached to the ancestors and the saints differ (Lungu, 1981:81).

6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to describe and analyse modern Xhosa people’s sacrificial rituals. The sources consulted have been drawn from the Eastern Cape, considered as the traditional geographical area of Xhosa speaking people, and in which they are still concentrated today. It is



therefore hoped that the results of this research will truly apply to most modern Xhosa people in particular, and other Bantu people of South Africa and black Africans in general.

This study began its argument by singling out reported cases of sacrificial rituals that can concretely and objectively prove that sacrificial ritual performances are still taking place among modern Xhosa people. In order to provide a broader and more concrete picture, it was decided to consult research conducted specifically with regard to modern Xhosa sacrificial rituals. The results obtained sanction both continuity and syncretistic discontinuity between traditional and modern performances and understandings of sacrificial rituals. With regard to continuity, it was observed that most of the sacrificial rituals performed in the traditional context continue to be performed in the modern setting as well (Sipuka, 2000:205).

Syncretistic discontinuity, not really complete discontinuity at all, between traditional and modern sacrificial ritual performances was emphasised with regard to the way in which sacrificial rituals are performed and understood. It was pointed out that the rationale behind this discontinuity was not immediately clear, and this propelled the researcher to consider the factors that have influenced modern Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals, with the intention of obtaining clarity in this regard. Factors that have shaped modern Xhosa people's understanding and sacrificial ritual performances were identified as political, economic, social, environmental, ideological and religious in nature. They can be broadly categorised as socio-environmental and religious factors (Sipuka, 2000:205).

Social factors were seen to have both eliminatory and modificatory effects on Xhosa people's sacrificial ritual performances and understanding. Social circumstances have at worst rendered some sacrificial rituals, such as national sacrificial rituals, impossible to perform, and at best made some sacrificial rituals difficult to perform. They have also had major modification effects on performances and understanding of sacrificial rituals. People's exodus from their birthplaces and scattering due to political and economic factors, has contributed to the reduction in Xhosa people's unparalleled sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:205).

As was pointed out in chapter four, traditional Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals were meant for uniting lineage members. In the modern era, the attendance of lineage members at a sacrificial ritual has become something desirable. Consequently, on such occasions, much effort is made to inform as many lineage members as possible. At this level, it may be said that modern sacrificial rituals constitute mechanisms for undoing the destabilising effect of modernity, which weighs upon lineage members. McAllister observes that sacrificial rituals deal "with identifying cognatic and affinal links, clarifying uncertain relationships, exchanging information about the genealogical and physical locations of distant kin, conveying kinship information to the young people and creating an 'imagined' kin community for those present" (McAllister, 1997:285). As has been seen, however, this does not always work, given the fact that some lineage members sometimes fail to attend sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:206).



The destabilising effects of modernity on lineage members, and the strain involved in gathering them together, has begun to transform the Xhosa sacrificial ritual congregation from a lineage to a nuclear family affair. Staples predicts that, over time, it might even become a one person affair (Staples, 1981:241). Circumstances imposed by socio-environmental factors cause one to decide on one's own when, how and with whom to perform a sacrifice. If circumstances do not allow for sacrificial ritual performances, a personal address to the ancestors in the form of a prayer takes precedence over the customary one. When conditions are such that lineage members cannot attend sacrificial rituals, important friends of the person offering the sacrifice, as well as clan members, make up the congregation.

This phenomenon leads one to draw the conclusion that modern Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals have mostly become a family or personal affair, because traditional and modern understandings of sacrificial rituals continue to overlap. The increasing emphasis on the personal aspect of sacrificial rituals among modern Xhosa people now lies on thanksgiving sacrificial rituals for personal success, as some of the press reports used as examples show. The individualisation of Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals has engendered a situation that has rendered a clear categorisation of these sacrificial rituals difficult, because they sometimes appear to be fused together in conformity with the wishes and circumstances of the individual. It has also become difficult to identify the ritual elements involved in Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals, because individuals reduce or increase rituals, as dictated by their understanding and situation (Sipuka, 2000:207).

Christianity has had both the effect of elimination and superficial modification of Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals. The mutually exclusive views of Christianity and the Xhosa belief system concerning sacrificial rituals have driven a few Xhosa Christian people to relinquish their traditional sacrificial rituals, while others continue to adhere to them (that is why we speak of syncretistic discontinuity) in a disguised manner, under the name of "*idinala*" (dinner). Apparently, the "*idinala*" concept can be viewed as a synthesis of Xhosa and Christian people's understanding of sacrificial rituals, or as an adaptation of the former to the latter. However, a close analysis shows that it has become difficult to convincingly explain what takes place at "*idinala*", because the principles with regard to sacrificial rituals involved in both beliefs contradict one another. This poses a great challenge to Xhosa theologians who have to clarify this amorphous "synthesis" (Sipuka, 2000:207). This study's contribution to research in this area will hopefully be clarified at the end of this dissertation.

Other Xhosa Christian people, who represent the majority, have opted for a syncretistic attitude by adhering to both Christianity and their traditional belief system, without synthesising them. This has resulted in a dichotomous understanding of spiritual and physical salvation, as respectively offered by Christianity and the Xhosa people's traditional belief system. These are not contradictory, but rather complementary. This also results from the culture of co-operation based upon a religious affiliation, as well as on neighbourliness and kinship affinity (Sipuka, 2000:207). As illustrated earlier on, non-



Christians participate in Christian functions and vice versa. Some timid attempts have been made to provide a Christian explanation for Xhosa people's traditional sacrificial rituals, but the model used, namely the biblical commandment to honour one's parents and the communion of saints, has proved extremely ineffective.

Consequently, a viable solution would now be for Christianity to develop, within the Xhosa people's contextual milieu, an integrated view of salvation that would satisfy both spiritual and eschatological needs, as well as physical and daily human needs. Therefore, this chapter can conclude its investigation in the area of modern Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals by saying that the nature and purpose of modern Xhosa people's sacrificial rituals cannot be verbalized with any precision. This lack of precision may be attributed to the traditional understanding of sacrificial rituals that continually overlaps with the emerging understanding resulting from the factors discussed in this chapter.

Two types of understanding of sacrificial rituals continue to be simultaneously upheld: some Xhosa Christian people adhere to both Xhosa and Christian views regarding sacrificial rituals. They also continue to exist as unspecified syntheses through "*idinala*". The emerging understanding seems to point to a narrower and more personalised understanding of sacrificial rituals among Xhosa people. The concept of ancestors as objects of sacrificial rituals is now being gradually restricted to one's parents, and the congregation to one's family or homestead members. It can be predicted that, individually speaking, ancestors as sacrificial ritual objects and the sacrificial ritual congregation are now being determined not by blood and kinship affinity, but by voluntary association, for example, churches and clubs etc.

As previously mentioned, this appears to be the direction that Xhosa sacrificial rituals are taking, without completely getting rid of elements from the traditional sacrificial understanding. It thus remains an amorphous and fertile ground for new research by anthropologists and theologians. In this regard, especially in modern South Africa, the influence and power communicated by these diverse sacrificial rituals that permeate the core of the Xhosa people's lives, remain undeniably in existence: reciprocal or reversible affinity between the departed and the living, as well as renouncement and upholding of syncretistic attitudes, have respectively attributed to a few modern Xhosa Christians and the majority of Xhosa traditionalists, including high-ranking political authorities in South Africa, all emphasising the powerful impact of sacrifices upon the black South African community.

The findings concerning the performance and understanding of sacrificial rituals with regard to both traditional and modern Xhosa people may be generalised to the rest of the Bantu tribe of South Africa, namely Pedis, Zulus, Tsongas etc, since they all represent blood affinity, as was pointed out in chapter three of this dissertation. It goes without saying that social and environmental factors that have impacted on modern Xhosa people's performance and understanding of sacrificial rituals may generally apply to other South African Bantu tribes. However, there are still some similarities and differences between tribes. The following chapter will provide some examples of sacrifices from elsewhere in Africa and their impact, as well as their



communicative effect. This is indeed crucial in an attempt to show how the communicative power of sacrifice is shown in the various contexts considered in this dissertation.



CHAPTER SEVEN: SOME EXAMPLES FROM ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapters four, five and six of this dissertation, the researcher has undertaken to investigate blood sacrificial rituals among traditional Xhosa people, including Zulu and Tsonga ideas, as well as sacrificial rituals in the Xhosa modern setting. The findings are relevant to all Bantu people in the modern context, including Zulus and Tsongas in the South of the Sahara. This chapter includes a few examples from elsewhere in Africa for the sake of comparison and counter-checking. It is hoped that the information on blood sacrificial rituals in other parts of Africa will enhance the investigation concerning whether or not sacrificial rituals communicate some viable power to those involved in their performance. Therefore, this chapter will discuss Yoruba sacrificial practices (purpose of sacrifices) and sacrificial worship among the Ibibio people of Nigeria for the sake of comparison. Finally, the sacrifice made by Christ versus human sacrifices in Africa will be discussed, and conclusions will be drawn.

7.2 YORUBA SACRIFICIAL PRACTICES

The idea and institution of the concept of sacrifice are deeply grounded in Yoruba people's thoughts and practices. Sacrifice is an integral part of the traditional beliefs of these people. Yoruba people call sacrifice *ebo* and to sacrifice is *ruebo*. Positively speaking, a sacrifice is meant for gaining the favour of spirit beings for the preservation and continuation of life. People therefore maintain communion and good relationships with these spiritual beings.

7.2.1 Purposes of sacrifice

Sacrificial practices that were observed will help to clarify the manifold purposes of sacrifice:

- To appease spirits;
- To appease witches;
- To propitiate the powerful divinity of peace and war, who was at the same time a farm supervisor;
- To ward off affliction from witches, blood, oil and cold corn were offered to a *babalawo* (Ifa priest);
- To find favour with the divinity controlling fate, and to be bestowed with good fortune;.
- To offer to the ancestors as "an affirmation of the existence and power of the departed ancestors". The sacrificial ritual is also meant for their invocation, begging them to be present, to hear the offerer's supplications, and thereafter "grant his requests;
- To offer a sacrifice to some divinities and ancestral spirits for good crops. The supplicants brought the material for sacrifices (Awolalu,



1973:82-86). There were also human scapegoats who were sacrificed on behalf of their fellows (Awolalu, 1973:88).

The immolation of the victim, which is the climax of the sacrificial ritual, is accompanied by relaxation and jubilation. Yoruba people believe that the life of the animal is in the blood - when they offer the blood, they know they are offering the life of the animal to the divinity and the intention behind this is to get life in exchange, or to enjoy long life and prosperity. (Awolalu, 1973:90-91).

Other uses of blood include applying it to the body of the suppliant, in order to purify and strengthen it. Substituted victims are entirely offered to the divinities, and no cannibalism is witnessed among the Yoruba people. Where a cow plays the role of a human being's substitute, it is abandoned before the divinities, where it rots completely. This practice is still observed in Ilawe during the Oro Olofin festival, in which sacrificial cows are offered to Obalufon (a deity among the Yoruba people). Any priest who dares to cut a portion of the sacrificial cow for food will swell and die (Awolalu, 1973:91-92).

It is interesting to note the striking similarities between Yoruba people's sacrificial rituals and those of other South African people, namely the Xhosas, Zulus, Tsongas and other groups of Bantu people living in South Africa. Sacrificial rituals permeate the entire life of these people, and are ejaculatory and materialistic in nature. They mediate the communion between the living and the dead, and serve as a means of communication with them, in order to plead for protection, healing, fertility and prosperity. They also possess the power to achieve individual or community purification, and therefore establish harmony and good relationships between the living and the supernatural spirits, divinities and ancestors. However, there are also some differences.

Yoruba people believe that, besides a multitude of divinities, ancestral spirits, and various spirits and forces, all sacrifices are mainly offered to the Supreme Being. Among Xhosa people, there is a debate as to whether sacrifices are exclusively offered to God, only to the ancestors, or to both. Yoruba people offer foodstuff, palm oil, snails and individual cloths, besides animal and human sacrificial victims. These things are not emphasised much among Xhosa people. Therefore, in order to obtain more information about the power that sacrificial rituals have injected into African communities, a glance at the Ibibio people's sacrificial rituals will be useful.

7.3 SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP IN IBIBIO TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The Ibibio people constitute the sixth largest group of people, spread over ten tribes in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Their main occupations include "farming, trading, and fishing". Ibibio sacrifices can be understood when one understands their "theoretical conception of the world and of life". According to Ibibio people, the world has two aspects: the visible aspect, which "is the domain of ordinary human experience", and the invisible aspect, "the domain of God, the gods and the spirits". They believe in a life cycle. People are born in the visible world, get old and pass into the invisible one. They are



reincarnated as babies in the first world. Birth and death are moments in the life cycle. However, premature birth, twin birth, birth with feet first, death by accident, death of young persons, and even serious illness, are seen as abnormal and are attributed to the actions of evil, invisible powers (Ukpong, 1982:162). Sacrificial types include annual sacrifices, agricultural sacrifices, life cycle periodic phases and sacrifices (naming, puberty, death and ritual initiation) and installation sacrifices (Ukpong, 1982:162-170).

7.3.1 Religious significance of sacrifices

This section will attempt to explain the meaning of rituals and symbols in Ibibio sacrifices:

- A sacrifice is a means of communication with invisible beings supposedly living among men. Processes of communication in all rituals are symbolic, not verbal, and they consist of paying homage to them, returning thanks, and asking for favours.
- A sacrifice is a gift to invisible beings.
- A sacrifice is a means of expressing friendship and communion with good spirits, and a means of warding off evil spirits.
- A sacrifice is a means of atonement: Ibibio people categorise offences into three main categories: an offence (sin) according to the cosmic order violated by the act of sinning, adultery, which violates the sacred order, and other sins such as stealing, which only violate the profane order.

An offence possesses dimensions that might be classified as individual, social and sacred. The individual dimension instills guilt, and encourages the person to repent. The social dimension involves the context of the entire community and vice versa (Ukpong, 1982:187). Ibibio people believe that the entire community is liable for an individual's hidden sin and vice versa. Sacrifice is the only way to restore the disrupted order and reestablish friendship with the spirit world. "Atonement by sacrifice involves repentance (public acknowledgement) and reparation at the social and sacred levels" (Ukpong, 1982:187). Ibibio people have twenty-eight different types of sacrifices in different life situations, with an element of *do ut des*. The praxis and theoretical conception of the sacrifice are the deepest religious expression of the Ibibio people (Ukpong, 1982: 182-187). Therefore, it is important to take a look at the sacrifice of Christ and human sacrifices in African culture.

7.3.2 Christ's sacrifice and human sacrifices in African culture

Some examples concerning human sacrifice among the people of Nigeria can help to communicate the event of Christ's sacrifice in particular cultures in a way that is understandable to the people in these cultures. The following examples of blood sacrifices are closely related to Jesus' death, and can shed more light on the appreciation of Jesus' supreme sacrifice. Eleguru offered himself as a priest and sacrifice on behalf of his people. There are some similarities and differences between Jesus' and Eleguru's deaths: Jesus is "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). Eleguru's



supreme sacrifice is comparable to Jesus' supreme sacrifice in that both sacrifices constitute a demonstration of the greatest love a man can have for his friends. The only difference is that Jesus' death was divinely ordained and exempt from all divination paraphernalia. The evangelist Saint John declares: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). Both Jesus and Eleguru were aware of the dangers their people were faced with to some degree (Ubrurhe, 1998:211).

Jesus as God incarnate sought to meet the real needs of His people, even beyond the physical life. His knowledge was of a greater dimension than the mythological knowledge possessed by Eleguru, whose sacrificial death was mainly concerned with alleviating the enemy of man's physical and material property. As already mentioned, these two sacrificial deaths possess salient differences in terms of their significance, both extrinsically and intrinsically. Jesus' sacrificial death was aimed at doing the will of God (Heb 10:7, 9) and giving eternal life to whosoever believed in Him, restoring him to fellowship with God (Ubrurhe, 1998:211).

Eleguru's sacrificial death fails to meet his people's real need, which the supremacy of Jesus' death proclaimed over the self-willed death of Eleguru. Jesus' death meets the real need of men universally, but Eleguru's death only meets the physical need of his people. Jesus, the God-man, realised that if human beings kept on living with their sins, they would be thrown into eternal damnation, whereas Eleguru "feared the complete annihilation of his people by the annual genocidal deluge". Both were driven by the need to save their people from impending danger, and intervened by heroically paying the ultimate price through self-sacrifice. "Jesus at one stage prayed that the cup (passion, suffering, crucifixion and death) be removed from Him, but finally He resigns His case to the Father by saying: "Father, if it is your will, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but yours be done" (Lk 22:41). Mark's Gospel renders it as: "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will" (Mk 14:36).

However, Eleguru's death differs from that of Jesus, even though it was appreciated by Nigeria natives of his area, who later testified how it stopped the deluge of the lagoon river. His posterity was exempt from paying taxes for many years. Jesus' death was not comprehended by His people, the Jews, except for His disciples (after resurrection). Eleguru's salvific work was realised eschatology (here and now), while Jesus' was "realized and futuristic eschatology" (Ubrurhe, 1998:212). There is one important element here to be kept in mind - Dr. Ubrurhe says that Eleguru's story is a myth. In a myth, it is very easy to put things together and reach a desired conclusion. In this comparison, there is a need not to lose sight of the fact that Jesus was a historical figure who exercised an influential ministry among the people of His time, both by His teaching and His way of life. One can also find it complicated to compare a mystical and fictitious individual with a person who has really existed.

The Jews refused to acknowledge the suffering Messiah, because of their obsession concerning the reigning Messiah. They closed their eyes and



refused to acknowledge Jesus' resurrection, not because of the falsity of that miraculous fact, but because of their pride and lack of belief. They were fully convinced of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, as the bewildered Roman soldiers gave them an irrefutable report. The claim that Jesus' disciples had stolen His body was a self-protective tactic and a defence mechanism, as no investigation was conducted to arrest the culprits, who were known to the priests, all the Sanhedrin members and the Jewish public (Ubrurhe, 1998:212).

In any case, this study finds the comparison by Dr. Ubrurhe to be weakened by the inequality of these two figures, both in essence and mission. Eleguru's story has no mission at all, no gospel proclaimed, no cross, but only appears to be a publicly committed suicide. Jesus was caught by the Jews, taken to court and sentenced to death, according to Old Testament prophets. He even gave a prediction about His death – ie. that He would die and rise up again on the third day. The literal fulfillment of His prophecy is irrevocable proof of His Messianic redemptive work and deity. The New Testament synoptic Gospel placed an emphasis on the futuristic aspect of eschatology, while John emphasises the present as well as the hereafter. Eleguru's salvific work was lost, but Jesus' disciples perpetuated His work, despite acute persecution (Ubrurhe, 1998:212).

This indeed constitutes proof of the fact that the whole matter enfolded into the divine's universal and eschatological prophetic scope. It was all in connection with the fulfillment of the Lord's great commission: "all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded, and lo, I am with you always, even to the ends of the age" (Mt 28:18-20).

There is also another significant contrast between Eleguru and Jesus' sacrifices. Eleguru's death and salvific work were localised and mundane, whereas Jesus' death and salvific work had a universal and spiritual value that led to the eternal salvation of all believers. However, both deaths satisfy the three following conditions that are essential qualities of a sacrifice, namely:

- The presence of a victim,
- Consecration; and
- The surrender or relinquishing of the victim.

The Zulu writer, Sofola, says that: "any sacrificial act that lacks these qualities is meaningless and bogus" (Sofola, 1983:142).

From the moment at which the victim is being prepared for sacrifice, he is considered as sacred and treated as such. He goes before the divinities, not only bearing their guilt, but also to be their advocate. Before immolation, the priest and people confess their known and unknown faults, and send messages concerning their needs via the sacrificial victim. The sacrifice (he) is partly dressed in white and partly in grass, and is made to appear in public where worshippers circle around him, saying: "Take these away! Take



misfortune away! Take pestilence away! Take death away"! In so doing, people believe that their sins, misfortunes and calamities have been transferred to the victim, and are ceremoniously borne away by the scapegoat in the grove (Awolalu, 1973:87).

Although symbolism similarity is so salient and so strong between African traditional religion and Leviticus sacrificial systems, it should be emphasized that Leviticus sacrifices do not stem from human beings' acrobatic searches. African traditional religion sacrifices are conventions coming from men, whereas Leviticus sacrifices, as found in the Old Testament, with its priesthood, ordinances and regulations, including procedures and sacrificial victims, were a revelation from God, and were of the type which foreshadowed the once-and-for-all sacrifice of the God man, Jesus Christ. This all enfolded as a result of God's eternal, redemptive plan. Old Testament sacrifices were ordained by God, the Creator of the Universe, and were only performed for Him as their unique object (Lv 1-9, 11-16; 17-27:34). This is indeed true, as viewed from the Christian perspective.

The above section has attempted to examine the deepest core of sacrificial rituals in other parts of Africa, by showing how profoundly sacrificial practices have permeated African people's entire way of life. There exists a seemingly heterogeneous, total fusion between life and animal blood sacrifices or just sacrifices and life, which appear to be quasi-impossible to dissociate. This African religious fact witnessed throughout black Africa in general, and in black South African religious beliefs in particular, seems to point to forces originating from blood sacrifices that appear to throw into perpetual and desperate bondage those practically initiated into it. Who can stand the waves of violent killing of both animal and human sacrificial victims in African religiosity? This was also a striking reality in the case of Jewish bulls and goats, etc in the Old Testament sacrificial dispensation. These Old Testament typologies pointed to a future reality described in the New Testament dispensation, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

7.4 CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter has dealt with blood sacrificial rituals among the Yoruba and Ibibio people of Nigeria. It has highlighted the purposes of sacrifices among the Yoruba and Ibibio people, including blood sacrifices, and their religious significance, as well as the sacrifice of Christ and human sacrifice in African culture. It goes without saying that any denial of the above sacrificial realities, that is, of their similarities and differences in type, function and purpose to the biblical sacrificial system of the Old Testament, would be somewhat ridiculous and self-defeating. From the Yoruba and Ibibio people to the Xhosas, Zulus and Tsongas and other black African religious groups in general, as well as other black South African groups, the fact of empowerment through sacrificial rituals is overwhelmingly unfathomable.

With regard to the objects of African sacrifices, one can only support one of the African theological scholars, Wilbur O' Donovan, concerning what Jesus, in His parable regarding the rich man and Lazarus says in Luke 16:19-31.



Deuteronomy 18:10-11 reads: "Let no one be found among you who... consults the dead. Anyone who does this is detestable to the Lord". O'Donovan remarks that: "Traditional beliefs and practices involving ancestral spirits are not from God. They are part of Satan subtle plan by which he kept many people from having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ" (O' Donovan, 1996:222).

In most parts of the world, many people have claimed to see their ancestors or spirits from time to time. They may resemble a dead relative and even talk like them. Luke 16:24-26 and 2 Corinthians 5:8 teach that God assigns specific and definite places to the spirits of those who die, and restricts them to those places. They do not have the freedom to quit those places, unless they receive His special permission (1Sm 28:15-19). "Since demons have the power to appear to human eyes in any chosen form" (2Cor 11:14; Rv 16:13), and since demons are much more powerful and intelligent than people, it should not come as a surprise that demons have the ability to imitate the appearances and voices of dead relatives. "Why would demons imitate dead relatives? They do it to increase their deception of non-Christian religions, which leads men to trust in ancestors or other spirits, instead of trusting in Christ" (O' Donovan, 1996:224). This could be debatable, if viewed from other religious beliefs' perspectives. However, from the biblical standpoint, it might help reflective people from other religious beliefs to rethink their faith position, in comparison with what the Bible tells them.

The apostle Paul teaches that "...the things which Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice them to demons not to God, and I do not want you to fellowship with demons" (1Cor 10:20). This should sound an alarm to African sacrifice practitioners for them to understand that their sacrificial worship is debased of any valid, valuable and durable benefit, apart from making them stray far away from the one true and self-disclosing God of the Bible. Satan, in his subtlety, has been empowering animal sacrificial performers to form a strong, intimate and unbreakable bond with it, to the extent that people would prefer death rather than to be separated from their innate sacrificial rituals. Only turning to the powerful and unique sacrifice of Christ described in the New Testament can break the yoke of traditional blood sacrificial practices in the African religious context. The next chapter focuses on sacrifices and Christianity today, and will give more insight into our understanding of the practice of blood sacrificial rituals.



CHAPTER EIGHT: SACRIFICES AND CHRISTIANITY TODAY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will endeavour to discuss sacrifice in the Christian context. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ will be discussed in the following manner: an overview, the sacrifice of Jesus and its theological interpretation, the Paschal mystery of Christ and its nature, Christian teaching with regard to the Eucharistic sacrifice, an exploration on scapegoatism, and finally, the drawing of conclusions. The Jewish influence was evident with regard to ritual sacrifices in the “Corpus Hermeticum”. The Epistle to Diognetus classifies Jewish sacrifices as similar to pagan sacrifices. Diognetus ironically criticises the Jews, highlighting that the Creator of the Universe does not need anything. And, if ever need be, it at least would not be “all blood, and fat of whole burnt-offering”. Stephen and the Jerusalem Hellenizers held the same view. In front of the rising “tertium genus”, pagan syncretistic philosophers equated Judaism with Hellenism, and subsequently Christianity, based on the similarities in both traditional sacrifices. Celsus and Julian charged Christianity with deserting Hellenism and failing to adhere properly to Judaism. Replying to Celsus, Origen provided a summary concerning the treatment of Jewish sacrifices in Christian apologetics (Young, 1979:87).

Jewish sacrifices cannot be dismissed as being different from cult practices in other nations, simply because they are symbols of spiritual truths - now that the reality has been revealed through Christ, literal observance of ceremonial law is over, the proof being the destruction of the temple a few years after Christ’s crucifixion, death and resurrection. However, according to Julian, the proof-argument from the destruction of the temple does not hold water (Young, 1979:79-86).

Gregory of Nazianzus’ oration blew up Julian’s allegations against Christianity’s apologetic writings. The sacrificial system was introduced for the Jews in order to keep them away from idolatry, apostasy and “duritia” - insistence on the faithful fulfillment of sacrificial precepts was a method of ensuring obedience to God (Young, 1979:87-88). This obedience and humbleness are objectively concretised through Jesus’ vicarious death and self-sacrifice. Therefore, in order to avoid any kind of ungrounded criticism, a formal understanding of sacrifice today is very important. A better understanding of sacrifice today will effectively enhance one’s understanding of how the impact of the practice of sacrifice is dynamically shown in the New Testament and the church today. Therefore, this study will now take a look at the peculiarities and distinctiveness of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

8.2 THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST: AN OVERVIEW

In this section, the sacrifice of Jesus will be briefly discussed, since the theme of this dissertation concerns sacrifice. This study cannot concentrate on



sacrifice in the New Testament, since the purpose is to focus on the sacrifice of Jesus in Hebrews. The sacrificial theme that occurs in the rest of the New Testament was researched by Young (Young, 1975; 1979), and what is being presented here is a kind of framework or background for what will be discussed with regard to Hebrews. The discussion here is based mainly on Young, who describes the nature of sacrifice in the New Testament, and the researcher will then attempt to link his research to that of other researchers.

The New Testament teaches that Christ's sacrificial blood effects expiation and discontinues Old Testament sacrifices, for it proved to be the best and final sacrifice (Heb 9:27-28; 10:1-14: we will not bother to analyse Hebrews 9:27-28 and Hebrews 10:11-14 at this stage, because they will be treated in detail in the exegesis of Jesus' sacrifice in Hebrews). This entails consequences for theology and the church today. The atonement and sacrifice led to the creation of subjective and objective theories of atonement. Abelard held that the cross was a subjective human experience, but Anselm maintained that it was an objective transaction, reconciling God with sinful man. Protestant tradition accepts that the Eucharist is a sacrifice, in the sense of worship offering, praise and thanksgiving (Young, 1975:85-98).

However, Eliade (1987:555-556) says that "the self-giving of Jesus in His death on the cross is understood as the definitive and perfect sacrifice that has the power in itself to effect expiation and redemption and that, therefore, makes all earlier sacrifices superfluous". He carefully shows the danger of the substantiation doctrine held by the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern churches (Catholic orthodox churches). The Reformers, spearheaded by Calvin, took the most radical stand and "rejected the official priesthood and the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist" (Eliade, 1987:556).

Can sacrifice mean anything to us today? Primitive rituals played a role in the society of their time, and may also be relevant in helping to comprehend our own socio-cultural context, by replacing them with drama, novels, art, music and competitive sport. The offering of a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is still viable in the Christian context today. Transformed by reinterpretation according to Christian ideas of fellowship with one another and with God, communion sacrifice remains a central part of Christian life and worship. Jesus' once-and-for-all sacrifice replaced the sacrifices of sin, which include expiatory, propitiatory and aversion sacrifices (Young, 1975: 124-130).

A study of God and sacrificial worship shows that all that man can do is to respond with repentance to the sacrifice of Christ. The fellowship meal and communion sacrifice are summed up here. Christ's continuing sacrificial work remains part of the sacrificial worship and sacrificial living of the Christian. Therefore, one can say that the concept of sacrifice is rooted in the deepest experience of Christian religion (Young, 1975:132-138). Thus, how can Jesus' sacrifice be interpreted theologically today?



8.2.1 Sacrifice of Jesus: theological interpretation

From the outset, in terms of the repudiation of Jewish sacrificial practices by Christianity, the scriptures were kept to support the new spiritual cult. It has been difficult to draw a line between typology and analogy, since many writers switch from one to the other almost imperceptibly. The Day of the Atonement and the red heifer ritual are interpreted in the Epistle of Barnabas. The Epistle of Barnabas asserts that the scarlet woollen cord in the red heifer ritual symbolises the blood of Jesus, and the purification rite, the forgiveness of sins. The two goats in the Day of the Atonement ritual stand for the two comings of Jesus Christ: one as a suffering Messiah, “the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world” and another as the reigning Messiah in glory (Young, 1979: 145-148).

Jesus’ sacrifice is a covenant sacrifice. His sacrificial death inaugurated the ratification of a “New Covenant” with the “New Israel”. The New Covenant sacrifice had twofold purpose: to accomplish the typological representations of the Day of the Atonement and to establish a new relation with God (Young 1979:148-151). The above representations are equivalent to Pauline Passover sacrifice. He exclaimed: “Christ our Passover Lamb is sacrificed” (1Cor 5:7b). The shed blood of Jesus was “apotropaic”, the sacrificial Lamb was meant to redeem mankind from sin enslavement and to avert the evil power of the enemy (Young 1979:152-156).

Sometimes people can ask themselves what type of sacrifice for sin Jesus offered. Jesus’ sacrifice was expiatory, because it sanctified the sanctified ones. It was also an aversion sacrifice. Jesus conquered the tyranny of death, sin and the devil. It was not propitiation for God, as the sacrifice for sin was a ransom, an aversion sacrifice made to the devil in order to free mankind. Finally, the sacrifice of Christ was a propitiatory sacrifice because it confirmed the purpose of propitiating God by reconciling man with a wrathful and terrifying God. According to Eusebus’ *Domonstratio Evangelica*, the sacrifice of Christ is an anti-type of Old Testament sacrifices (Young, 1979:159-192).

In accordance with the Christian theology of sacrifice, Obstat claims that “the entire earthly career of Jesus was viewed as an expression of His inner self-giving to the Father... In accepting baptism from John, Jesus publicly dedicated Himself to human redemption and glorified His Father. All the actions of the public life translate Christ’s continuing attitude of self-oblation; these come to a climax in the Supper-Calvary-Easter event”. His blood shed for men ratifies the new covenant. The primitive Christian church seemed not to have known the import of Christ’s death and resurrection, but this was a consciously understood element of faith by the time Paul wrote his early letters. During modern times, the “validity of the mass as truly efficacious sacrifice” was questioned by Protestant reformers who insistently claimed that “Calvary was the all-sufficient and the unique sacrifice which rendered other sacrificial acts useless” (Obstat, 1967:837-842).

In modern times, New Testament literary scrutiny shows that the early church emphasised the link between the Eucharist and Last Supper, as well as



between the Eucharist and resurrection. However, in modern times, the Catholic Church's contemporary theology still holds onto the fact that "Christ is present in the Eucharist as the living word of God... Though the Eucharist is the sacrifice of Christ it is also the sacrifice of the church; Christ continues to offer sacrifice in and through the Christian community, for it is this act that gives expression in space and time to His enduring sacrificial attitude" (Obstat, 1967:839).

This study truly disagrees with this way of theologizing, because it denies us the permanence of our redemption, eternal salvation and forgiveness of sins through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. If we feel that we still have to offer some sort of sacrifice in order to supplement what Jesus has already done, then we are openly declaring the insufficiency of His sacrifice, that there is no difference between the old covenant and the new, that they are still coexisting and will therefore continue to coexist, and a complete denial of the New Testament teachings of Hebrews, chapters 9 and 10, as will be seen later in this dissertation. Before discussing Christian teaching on the Eucharistic sacrifice, this chapter will first look at Christ's paschal mystery, as well as its nature.

8.2.2 The paschal mystery of Christ and its nature

According to Chibuko (1999:5), the paschal mystery located within the entire framework of Christian mystery constitutes an integral part of the global Christian mystery. Broadly speaking, it comprises Christ' incarnation, birth, public life ministry, miracles, doctrine of passion, death, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, position at the right hand of God, and final coming in glory (parousia). The narrow or strict nature of the paschal mystery only includes His passion, death and resurrection. This paschal mystery is persistently the "bedrock, the heart, the center and the foundation of the entire church life", and is also revealing of its divine nature, as it fits into God's eternal redemptive plan.

With regard to the paschal mystery, Obstat (1967:840) says that "Jesus, humanity's High Priest, offered Himself to God as an immolated victim. Thereby He fulfilled all the sacrificial foreshadowings of Calvary established by God's old covenant with men. He reconciled sinners to God by a lasting reconciliation and formed a new people cleansed by His redemptive blood. His sacrifice on Calvary inaugurated the Christian rite and aptly set forth its spirit sacramentally on the cross". Therefore, in order to broaden our understanding of the practice of sacrifice, it is necessary to spend some time looking at Christian teaching on the Eucharistic sacrifice.

8.2.3 Christian teaching on the eucharistic sacrifice

This study uses the cultural paradigm of the Sukuma goat sacrificial ritual to discuss Christian Eucharistic teaching. This raises the African cultural paradigm to a higher level, which brings Pope John II BB's Post-Synodal Apostolic "exhortation" to sound the following alarming: "The intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in



Christianity” is considered to be the first inculturation dimension (Lupande et al, 1998:249).

Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God supersedes the purification and expiation rituals of the African tradition. He is “...the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (Jn 1:29). He is not just a special lamb or goat, but is the “definitive, the ultimate, the One and Only Lamb of God. He died for all the people everywhere”. Consequently, the Eucharistic sacrifice perfects all sacrifices.

Another Sukuma song praises magical medicine that protects and cripples all enemies, granting boldness, security and life assurance. The Eucharist is Jesus’ “medicine for mortality” to His disciples. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn 6:54). Jesus Himself is the medicine of eternal life. The “Missal”, a prayer recited before partaking of the Holy Communion, stipulates the conditions and anticipations of the congregants. The Eucharist transforms people into Christ. Partakers of the Holy sacrament should be marked by their walk and praise Jesus for the inexpressible gift of the Eucharist (Lupande, 1998:248-249).

In conclusion, one can emphatically say that the sacrificial goat and self-reliant orphan lamb may be used as a step towards an inculturated Christianity in Africa. Pope John Paul II’s Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation asserts that: “inculturation includes the whole life of the church and the whole process of evangelization. It includes theology, liturgy, the church’s life and structures” (Nm 62). Let us move forward boldly so that the church in Africa is truly a new homeland for Christ (Nm 6 and 56), and Christ and the members of his body, is Himself African (Lupande, 1998:249-253).

These are beliefs from the Catholic tradition, and although they intimate some respect, the researcher does not agree with the whole self-defeating argument regarding the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, which reduces the supernatural sacrifice of Jesus to nothing, in both scope and effect. Equating Jesus’ sacrifice with world religions’ traditional sacrifices by the sole declaration that the sacrifice of Calvary is repeatedly performed during the Eucharist celebration constitutes an unbearable denial of the truth. Jesus declares His work in terms of the Calvary to be incomplete, unfit and insufficient. This study does also not share the theological belief that “inculturation” has to include the whole life of the church and the whole process of evangelisation: that is, theology, liturgy, the life of the church and its structures, and incorporating elements from indigenous traditional beliefs and practices into Christianity. In the researcher’s opinion, this would be unacceptable, because it might lead to a totally syncretistic and misleading situation in many aspects. This study will refrain from elaborating on this for the sake of the scope and purpose of this dissertation, in the hopes that further research will deal with this in an appropriate manner.

The whole idea connected with both Jesus and the cultural transformation of Christianity sound strange. Currently, the Catholic Church has concluded the long-term debate concerning the incorporation of African traditional religion



sacrifices into the liturgy (mass), with echoes of cheerful, resounding melodies. What heralding signal is this? Is animal sacrifice to become part of Roman Catholic Church mass? An article by Sexton (2002) introduces a challenging idea to all honest theological scholars, church leaders (priests, pastors etc) and ordinary congregants: “Human life International reported that some South-Africans are calling for ancestor worship and animal sacrifices to be included in the liturgy of the mass”. Archbishop Buti Tlhagale from Bloemfontein asserts that plans to incorporate African pagan rites into the Catholic Church mass are in line with the Vatican Council’s invitation to churches to inculturate Christianity (Sexton, 2002: 1).

The London Daily Telegraph reported that Archbishop Buti stated that: “Animal sacrifice has a special place in the scheme of things and is celebrated in almost all African families. We have kept it out of the church of God too long. It is time we welcomed it openly into the Christian family of the living and the dead”. The ACPSM (African Catholic Priests’ Solidarity Movement) has been fostering the so-called “inculturation” of the church in South Africa (Sexton, 2002:3). A video recorded in one case reveals a priest blessing goats and chickens during the mass. Afterwards, the animals were slaughtered and their blood poured into a hole outside the church. Archbishop George Daniel, leader of the Pretoria Archdiocese for twenty-five years, testified that animal sacrifices, including chickens and goats, were already being performed in the parishes of his diocese.

Archbishop Buti has five dioceses under him, with a population of 100,000, which includes four ethnic groups and races: black, white, Asian and coloured. About 100,000 Catholic believers are clustered into forty parishes, of which twenty-two each have a resident priest, assisted by seventy religious women coming from six different congregations, as well as twelve major seminarians. It goes without saying that he exercises a great deal of influence on these adherents, which he uses by all means possible to promote animal sacrifice during mass (Sexton, 2002:4). With this reality of the practice of animal sacrifice in contemporary Christianity, it is important to attempt to make a distinction between the Eucharist and sacrifice.

8.2.4 Eucharist and sacrifice

The New Testament never speaks of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. The reason for this appears to be the very close relationship between the new ritual and the death of Christ. The meaning of the death of Jesus has incorporated everything that the sacrificial language of the Eucharist says about atonement. However, the New Testament does not speak of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. To partake of the Eucharist is to partake of the sacrifice of Christ (1Cor 10:16): the early church adopted the term “sacrifice” for the Eucharist, in order to rebut the irreligious charges against them. The popular term for a cultic act was “sacrifice”. Thus, Christians adopted sacrifice for the Eucharist. The missal prayer stresses that the Eucharist is a sacrifice. The objective character of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross as an atoning sacrifice has been supplemented: “Our liturgy strongly affirms that the atoning work of Jesus’ sacrificial death should plead that we continually receive its advantages, and



deploy cultic language to describe the life His death has made possible” (Williams, 1984:6-7).

This is not essential to it, but when included, it draws out the symbolism of the Eucharist in certain ways. What liturgical text should appropriately accompany this “abortive gesture”? This study thinks that the emblematic elements containing symbolism do not represent a physical reality, a fresh sacrifice and fresh blood shed through ritual performances. A person’s partaking of them as mere remembrance reinforces the value, validity and sufficiency of Jesus’ physical self-sacrifice until He returns. His once-and-for-all shedding of blood, represented by the Holy Communion cup, and His body by the broken bread, symbolically covers the spiritual, historical and eschatological scope of the church (Williams, 1984:8-9). In the above discussion, one has come to understand how the Eucharist came to be considered as a sacrifice, although the New Testament never speaks of it as such. The next section will look at the excursus on Christian and traditional views with regard to human sacrifices.

8.2.5 Excursus on Jesus and human sacrifices in Africa

This study is not interested in a very broad or detailed discussion here, but basically wants to position itself, because hermeneutically speaking, its interests are not in small details but in those areas that overlap between Christian and traditional views. In the African context, the idea of a human carrier or someone who lays down his life for his fellow community members hinders the propagation of the message of the cross, because it does not enlighten people’s understanding concerning Jesus’ death for the following reasons:

- In most cases, human victims were slaves or people illicitly procured from distant places.
- Only the case of Eleguru, as discussed in chapter seven of this dissertation, may be meaningfully used to explicate Christ’s self-giving sacrifice for the atonement of people’s sins.
- None of the sacrifices would actually have replaced the victim, in the majority of cases in which human sacrifices were made.
- This being the case, it could be argued that no sacrifice really took place.
- Sofola confirms this by emphasising that whenever a slave or foreigner, rather than a prince or a child of a diviner, was used as the victim of human sacrifice in African religion, no sacrifice took place. It was only a hoax (Sofola, 1983:145).

Eleguru’s case reinforces the concept of a carrier or scapegoatism. It is similar to Jesus’ case, in that he also laid down his life for the sake of other people. For instance, Eleguru, as the diviner-priest, did not adopt an escapist, self-seeking attitude so that he might choose another person as a victim in his stead, but voluntarily gave himself as a victim, because of his self-effacing, selfless love. Like Jesus, Eleguru could sincerely claim that: “Greater love has no man than this that he lays down his life for the people”. This is true to some extent, since it is the view of the researcher that Eleguru’s case could only be



used as a material object to teach people about the self-sacrificing love of Jesus.

However, there is still a need to recall that Eleguru is a mythological figure, to whom human personality traits have been given. Therefore, divine love, Agape love's spiritual value and validity, is far removed from a novelish, unrealistic, limited, drama-like and mythologically constructed one. Other African communities might have had other heroes such as Iden and Molemi, who made great sacrifices for the deliverance or liberation of their people. These examples may be used as bridges or contact points to make the Gospel message intelligible to Africans. Such an approach by Christian followers or missionaries could have made the Gospel of Jesus Christ explicit and permanent in people's minds. Only this would have made Christ come alive within the African cultural experience and contextual setting (Ubrurhe, 1998:213). There is no need to overemphasise the power of these human sacrifices to bring about healing, effect harmonious relationships between the world of spirits and human beings, as well as promote peace, deal with epidemics and natural calamities, and enhance spiritual and material prosperity within African communities.

8.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has briefly discussed blood sacrifices and Christianity today. It specifically undertook to discuss the sacrifice of Jesus as the climax and fulfillment of all Old Testament sacrificial schemes. It is the best sacrifice, and is totally sufficient and final. The theological interpretation of the sacrifice of Christ has been faced with the difficulty of drawing a line between typology and analogy within the realm of sacrificial practices. Jesus' sacrifice ratifies a new covenant with the new Israel. The purpose of the new covenant is to accomplish typological representations, and to establish a new relationship with God.

In its expiatory capacity, Jesus' sacrifice sanctified the sanctified ones. It was an aversion sacrifice and ransom, a propitiatory sacrifice and an anti-type of Old Testament sacrifices. The paschal mystery of Christ and its nature emphatically refer to the historical implementation of His eternal redemptive plan on earth, as well as its culmination. This chapter then discussed the Christian teaching on Eucharistic sacrifices. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church in South Africa today, represented by Archbishop Buti of Bloemfontein, has started the revivalism and integration of African traditional religion animal sacrifices into the Catholic Church mass, alongside the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. With regard to the Eucharist and sacrifice, this study has clarified the fact that the New Testament teaching does not view the Eucharist as a sacrifice. It was adopted as such by early believers, in order to escape from hostilities. An analysis of Eleguru's self-sacrificial and somewhat localised, redemptive act shows that it remains significant, though very inferior to, and incompatible with, Jesus' sacrificial act. It has a tremendous bearing on the topic of this dissertation, in that it highlights the powerful forces coming from sacrificial victims, both animals and human beings, Jesus' sacrifice releasing the most powerful and supernatural forces, as the best, most



sufficient and final sacrifice. The above material is relevant to this dissertation because it encompasses the idea of sacrifice today. After a theological exegesis on the theme of sacrifice in the Epistle to the Hebrews, information obtained in the above sections will help to show to some extent how the communicative power of blood sacrifice is viewed in the various contexts considered in this study.

CHAPTER NINE: SACRIFICES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AS A RELIGIOUS FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING SACRIFICE IN HEBREWS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will briefly discuss sacrifices in the Old Testament as a background to an exegesis of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews, indicating the significance of blood, fire and smoke as typical symbols in Israel's sacrificial performances. It will also look at the altar, including its name and shape. Afterwards, the researcher will provide an overview of Old Testament sacrifices, that is, Old Testament sacrificial typology and procedures. A brief overview of sacrifice in P will also be given. In this section, animals, techniques and basic types of animal sacrifices in P will be examined, namely: burnt offerings, peace offerings, usages, purification offerings, atonement offerings, the performance of purification offerings, order, and reparation offerings. This chapter will briefly discuss prophetic critique, as well as Deuteronomy and Israel's worship, before drawing conclusions.

The researcher will not go into too much detail here because this study is not interested in focusing on the theme of blood sacrifices in the Old Testament. Rather, this chapter will present a very short description of sacrifice in the Old Testament for the sake of background, as well as for positioning this dissertation. Similarly, blood sacrifices in each book of the New Testament will not be discussed, since the focus is on the exegesis of sacrifice in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and especially the sacrifice of Jesus.

Almost universally, people from ancient cultures offered sacrifices in order to obtain divine favours or even to sustain their gods, as in Mesopotamia (Ryken et al, 2000). The religion of the Hebrews was not the exception, although the idea that sacrifices feed Yahwey is an infrequent echo of other religions, and not seriously entertained (Lv 21:6; Ps 50:12-14). Rather, among other functions, sacrifices were gifts to honour a deity [God, Yahweh from Hebrew's perspective] (Mckenzie, 1976:754). Besides the slaughtered animal sacrifices, the burning rite upon the altar constitutes a common element of all types of sacrifice, as an offering to Yahweh (Eberhart, 2004:285).

The burnt offering fulfills the goal of biblical sacrifice, that is, "communication with God" (Eberhart, 2004:285). Blood, fire and smoke constituted the most typical symbols in the Hebrew Scriptures (Ryken et al, 2000). As already mentioned in the discussion of this study's methodology, the two analytical categories of objects and actions, as related to blood, fire and smoke, including the altar, will be used here, in order to show the factors that influence people to use them, and how they use them. Therefore, this chapter will now attempt to clarify this, beginning with the symbolic element of blood.

9.1.1 Blood

Tenney describes blood (Hebrew *דָּם*, *ḏām* “blood”, see Myers, 1987:440) as the following: “The viscous fluid essential to life which circulates throughout the body in veins, in arteries, and capillaries (Tenney, 1975:626). The term ‘blood’ is “understood in biblical writings, not only as that which is essential to life, but also the seat of life’s power. Though sometimes used simply to designate mortal life (usually in connection with flesh), it was often with God, the life giver” (Achte-meier, 1985:136). In the Old Testament, the word appears about 362 times (Harrison, 1999:99), of which 203 instances refer to death through violence, and 103 have to do with sacrificial blood, and Mckenzie (1976) also suggests such a tendency. The Old Testament also relates the concept of blood to life (Mckenzie, 1976:99), and that atonement is life (Harrison, 1999:99). Leviticus 17:11 contends that atonement is achieved through blood “by reason of life” (Mckenzie, 1976:757). This seems to point to the fact that the offering of blood through sacrificial rituals shows that a pure life is being given to God (Harrison, 1999:467).

Blood in sacrificial rituals stands for life, and is symbolically offered to a deity [or the God of the Bible]; it was the means by which the Old Testament covenant between God and the Israelites was ratified (Ex 24:3-8). It was “dashed” on the altar base (Lv 1:5+), or sprinkled before the sanctuary, poured at the base of the altar (Lv 4:6+; 4:7+), or smeared at the horns of the altar (Lv 4:25+). The blood of an animal eaten outside the sanctuary had to be poured onto the ground (Dt 12:24). The blood of the Passover lamb smeared on the doorposts was endowed with protective power (Ex 12:7, 13). The blood of the animal victim was dashed on the altar and on the people, conveying the understanding that covenant partners share a common life (Mckenzie, 1976:99). The significance of the sacrificial victim seems therefore to lie in the offering of life, not death. This means that the New Testament phrase “the blood of Christ” would have little more meaning than the “body of Christ presented”, because the “blood of Christ” contains “the life of Christ”, since life is in the blood (Gn 9:4; Dt 12:23). The Old Testament predominantly associates blood with death rather than life, and the “life of the flesh” can convey the meaning of “life yielded up in death just as readily as life set free for surrender to God” (Tenney, 1975:627).

Sacrificial rituals in the Old Testament uniformly emphasised the seriousness of sin, and the blood shed in sacrifices stood as an acceptable substitute for the life of the rebellious sinner, and as an act of atonement which allowed him to be restored to fellowship with God (Achte-meier, 1985:136). The shedding of the blood of the animal signifies life offered up in death on the sinner’s behalf, thus granting him the right to live and not to suffer the consequences of his sins. The Old Testament shows that the forgiveness of human sin was acquired through the death of an acceptable substitute, and this basic focus on the old covenant is transferred to the New Testament, with specific bearing on the work of Jesus Christ in the new covenant (Tenney, 1975:627). The significance of blood is

stressed in the theology of the Old Testament, “the institution of sacrificial atonement, and the work of the priest. Applied to the altar, blood becomes a powerful expiatory agent as sin offering, especially on the annual Day of Atonement” (Lv 16). The priest, who is himself set apart by blood consecration (Ex 29:19-21), alone is qualified to apply the blood (Achtemeier, 1985:136, cf. Lv 1-6). The Passover celebration reminds one of the blood on the doorposts of the Israelites’ houses in Egypt (Ex 12:7), and the redemption accomplished by the God of the covenant (see blood of the covenant: Ex 24:6-8; Ps 50:5; Zch 9:11). Finally, blood can also symbolise woes and terrors (e.g. 1Chr 22:8; 28:3; Ex 7:14-24; Jl 2:30-31). Therefore, after the above explanations concerning the significance of blood in Israel’s sacrificial worship and in the New Testament with regard to Christ’s work, this chapter will now look at the concept of fire in Israel’s sacrificial performances.

9.1.2 Fire

Several Old Testament words are usually used to denote various kinds of fire (Hebrew “*Aḥar*’²”, see Pfeiffer, 1975:608): “flame, light, that which burns, firebrand, torch, or fiery serpents” - corresponding verbs include “to set fire”, or “to burn” (Buttrick, 1962:269). Words related to fire are used both literally and figuratively in the Old Testament scriptures (Myers, 1987:442).

Literally speaking, fire was used for domestic purposes of cooking (Is 30:14), irradiation and heat, melting, casting, working and refining of metals (Myers, 1987:442). See Jeremiah 36:22; Zachariah 13:9; and Malachi 3:2. It was also used for burning waste and infected articles, as well as for the destruction of objects of idolatry (Lv 13:52, 57; Dt 7:5; 1Chr 14:12). Fire was used as a destroying energy in the form of lightning (Ps 29:7). In times of war, fire served to burn whole cities - it was an exorbitant instrument of retribution in the case of distressful offences (Gn 19:1-29), and as the usual means for offering sacrifices to God (Mckenzie, 1976:277).

Figuratively speaking, fire was symbolically used in the Old Testament to portray the image of divine “presence (Buttrick, 1962:269), holiness, glory, guidance and protection (Ezk 1:4, 13, 27; 8:2), God’s jealousy and wrath against sin, and the retribution of sin (Ezk 36:5; Is 10:16-17), against evil, lust, greed, war, trouble, suffering and affliction” (Job 5:7; Is 29:6). It was used for purification and testing, and as the power of the word and the truth of God (Jr 5:14; 20:9; Ps 39:3; 119:139), for prophetic inspiration, and for the zeal of saints and angels (Myers, 1987:442).

The most significant use of fire in the Old Testament was that fire was seen in sacrificial rituals as a consumer of the holocaust and for the burning of incense (Gn 8:20-21). Fire came to be a central part of intercepted sacrificial performances and continuous worship in the tabernacle, and later in the Temple,

upon the altar of which the fire was kept burning (Lv 6:12-13). It was miraculously provided by God (Lv 9:24; 2Chr 7:1-3), and in His provisions (Pfeiffer, 1975:608).

Any fire initiated by man or obtained from any other place than the altar was considered to be “a strange fire” (Lv 10:1-2) - it was ritually inappropriate and would cause the culprit to incur divine wrath. For instance, Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, were annihilated by the fire before God, because they had used a “strange fire” (Mckenzie, 1976:277) upon the altar (Lv 10). The immemorial altar fire had to be kept burning through wood supplies every morning (Lv 6:12). The acceptance of the sacrifice was revealed by divine fire, which suddenly consumed the offering (Myers, 1987:442).

The fire from God symbolised the acceptance of special sacrifices (1Ki 18: 24, 38; 1Chr 21:26). According to 1Kings 18:24, 38, “Yahweh is the God who answers by fire” (Pfeiffer, 1975: 608). Animal victims that were slaughtered were consumed by fire outside the camp (Lv 4:12, 21; 6:30). The book of Numbers 6:18 indicates that at the end of his vow, the Nazarite had to shave off his hair and throw it into the altar fire, in which the peace offering was being sacrificed (Pfeiffer, 1975:608).

Fire is definitely related to God. This is indicated by God’s manifestation to Abraham in making His covenant with him (Myers, 1987:442): a “smoking firepot and a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces” of the sacrifice (Gn 15:17). God manifested Himself to Moses through the burning bush, to Israel through the pillar of fire at night over the Israelite’s camp (Miller & Miller, 1973:194), and on Mount Sinai, God came down in fire and the outlook of His glory appeared as a consuming fire (Ex 3:2; 13:21; 19:18; 24:17). Leviticus 9:24 indicates that fire fell down from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering, causing the people to experience joy and fall face down in adoration (Buttrick, 1962:269).

The fire of God burned among complaining Israelites and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp (Nm 11:1). Fire is connected with worship in a special way in the Old Testament. The entire system related to the holocaust and the burning of incense shows that fire was very important at certain stages of Israel’s worship - offerings were consumed by fire and the “aroma was wafted up to God symbolically” (Pfeiffer, 1975:608). These are just some thoughts in connection with the concept of fire in Israel’s sacrificial worship. The next section will focus on the concept of smoke in Israel’s sacrificial worship.

9.1.3 Smoke

The word “smoke” may be defined as a “phenomenon accompanying the appearance of God in acts of self disclosure” (Buttrick, 1962:392). It is viewed as a “visible concomitant of the presence of God in divine self-manifestation” (Tenney, 1975:462). Firstly, the word “smoke” primarily “refers to the physical

phenomenon itself, the evidence that something is burning”. Secondly, it “is used as a symbol of all that is transitory” (see especially Hs 13:3, where “smoke” is grouped together with “cloud”, “dew”, and “mist”). It is “a manifestation of God’s mighty presence and more particularly of His fierce wrath”. Hebrew words connotating “smoke” are found in the following passages Exodus 19:18; Deuteronomy 29:20 [MT19]; Psalm 74:1; 104:32; 144:5, Exodus 20:18, Psalms 37:20; 68:1; 102:3 [MT4]; Proverbs 10:26; Cantique 3:6; Isaiah 4:5; 9:18 [MT17]; 14:31; 34:10; 51:6; Joel 2:30 [MT3:3], Nahum 2:13 [MT14] etc., Judges 20:40, Genesis 19:28; Psalms 119:83: 66:15, Ezekiel 8:11), and Isaiah 30:27(Bromiley, 1988:554).

The word “smoke” figures in the whole of the Old Testament. The “smoke” and “fire” that accompanied Theophany manifestation on Mount Sinai, together with the quaking of the earth, led exegists to point to volcanic phenomena (Buttrick, 1962:392). Genesis 15:17 shows that in the context of the Abrahamic covenant, he saw a vision of a “smoking fire pot and a flaming torch” passing through the pieces of the sacrifice that he had cut (Tenney, 1975:462).

Exodus 19:18 indicates that when Moses encountered God on Mount Sinai, the mountain was covered with thick smoke. In Isaiah’s vision of the Lord in the Temple, the Temple was filled with smoke (Is 6:4). In Isaiah 4:5, the prophet declares: “the Lord will create over the whole site of Mt Zion...a cloud by day and smoke and the shining of a flaming by night” (Bromiley, 1988:554).

The fire of God’s wrath is followed by “smoke...out of His nostril” (Ps18:8; Job 41:20). In Deuteronomy 29:20, Moses cautions against idolatry lest “the anger of the Lord...smoke against that man”. In Psalms 71:1, the psalmist shouts at the top of his voice: “Why does Thy anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture?” (Tenney, 1975:462), referring to the smoke of sacrifices and incense burning in Ezekiel 8:11 and Psalms 66:15. Symbolically speaking, smoke is also used to refer to insubstantial enemies, idolaters and the heavens (Bromiley, 1988:554). This study’s aim has not been to discuss the symbolic elements of blood, fire and smoke exhaustively, as they are used in the Bible. It was only thought to be incumbent on the researcher to briefly highlight the significance of these elements within the Old Testament’s sacrificial ritual system. Before going further, something will be briefly said with regard to the altar.

9.1.4 Altar

The altar is the most prominent biblical image for worship and religious allegiance (Achtemeier, 1985:22). A person should not be charged with exaggeration if he says that the altar constitutes the most visible sign of a person’s devotion to the true God. Worship in the old covenant entailed the building of altars or travelling to them for acts of sacrifice. Biblical altars convey a number of meanings, one of which is a symbol of the deity in sacrificial rituals, since the presentation of the victim to the deity was evidenced by contact with

the altar, and the application of blood symbolised the life of the victim on the altar (Mackenzie, 1976:23). However, the main meaning of the altar is a place of slaughter and blood sacrifice (Ryken et al, 2000).

9.1.4.1 The name

The typical word for altar in Latin is *ara*, *Altare* or *altarium*, from which the English word is taken as a noun coined from the adjective *altus*, which stands for “high”, implying any elevated structure with a flat top on which sacrifices to a deity were made (Buttrick, 1962:96-97) or offerings deposited (Tenney, 1975:118-119). The typical Greek word for altar is $\epsilon\tau\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$ ($\epsilon\tau\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$ $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\tau\eta\varsigma$, an altar for the true God, which seems to be derived from *baino*, “to come” and “go”. Therefore, the basic meaning would be an “approach”, since it had to do with a flat surface on which to place something. When $\epsilon\tau\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$ denotes a proper altar, *hieros* “holy” is added. The New Testament only uses the term once in connection with the Athenian altar of the unknown god in the Acts of the Apostles 17:23 (Achteimer, 1985:23).

9.1.4.2 The shape

All ancient religious practices were based on the idea of an elevated structure of stone or “turf”, upon which blood sacrificial offerings, burnt flesh and agricultural products (Gn 4:3) were placed before the deities (Myers, 1987: 42). There was an ancient idea that gods dwelt in big stones, and that they gained their strength through the oblation of shed blood (Miller & Miller, 1973:13-14). Featured as a universal worship device, which was taken by the Old Testament and developed into an object of ritual and sanctity, the altar was the focus of every sanctuary and the place of sacrifice (Ex 20:24, 25). The altar horns (Ps 118:27; Am 3:14; Rv 9:13) were considered to be of great sanctity, and were smeared with the blood of sacrifice in Leviticus rituals (Lv 4:30; 16:18). It seems as if the altar disposed of the sacrifice on its platform, making it possible for the blood that had mystic importance in the ritual to totally drain away (Tunney, 1975:120), a truth “spiritualized and consummated” in the New Testament (Heb 9:9, 22).

There are a multiplicity of altars, including pagan altars, patriarchal altars (Ex 20:24-26), Abraham’s altar at Shechem, one near Bethel (Gn 12:6-8); another at Mamre in Hebron (Gn 13:18), and one on Mount Moriah (Gn 29:9-13). Isaac built an altar at Beer-sheba (Gn 26:23-25), and Jacob built one at Shechem (Gn 33:18, 20) and another one at Bethel (Genesis 35:1-7) (Pfeiffer, 1975:51). The altars of the tabernacle constituted a great object lesson and revelation of spiritual truth (Ex 27:1-8; 38:1-7; Ex 30:1-10; 2Chr 1:5, 6). The altar of burnt offerings, which was located in the eastern part of the court, was the first to be seen by whoever drew near the tabernacle (Miller & Miller, 1973:14). The altar of incense was located before the veil that hid the Holy of holies (Ex 30:6; 40:5). It was known as “the altar before the Lord” (Lv 16:12). Incense was burned twice a day on this altar, symbolising the prayers of saints (Rv 8:3). The Temple altar

was a huge altar of bronze located in the “upper court” (Jr 36:10) of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem (Harrison, 1999:38). It was structured in a way that allowed worshippers to see the blaze of sacrifices from the courtyard below (2Chr 4:1).

The Hebrew word for altar “*mizbēah*” comes from the word for slaughter. However, they are biblical altars on which other kinds of offerings are made (Harrison, 1999:38). Besides the central altar of sacrifice in the courtyard, the temple also contains two altars in the sanctuary: A golden altar for the offering of incense, which represents the prayers of the people ascending to the Lord, and a table for the perpetual offering of the “bread of presence”. However, these altars and the sacrifices offered on them were secondary in significance and location (Ryken et al, 2000). The interest of this study has not been to discuss the concept of the altar in its entirety, because this is not the purpose of this dissertation. It is only for the sake of background that the concept of the altar has been briefly discussed here. A succinct overview of Old Testament sacrifices will now be presented.

9.2 OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES: AN OVERVIEW

The word “sacrifice” stands for the ritual through which the Hebrew people offered the blood or flesh of an animal (or grain, as in Lv 6:14-23) to God as payment for their sins (Lv 6:24-30). Sacrifice and sacrificing originated from the Garden of Eden, soon after the fall of mankind. Cain and Abel’s sacrifices were rejected or accepted, not on account of the nature of their sacrifices, but rather on account of their respective hearts’ attitudes (Gn 4). According to Youngblood, God’s provision of animal skins to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 presupposes the slaughter of a sacrificial animal, but what is evident here seems to be warmth and comfort rather than atonement (Youngblood, 1997).

Unlike Youngblood’s allegations, this study is of the opinion that it is also dangerous to dissociate the nature of the sacrifice from the disposition of the worshipper’s heart in this specific case, which involves Cain and Abel as representative worshippers of all time. This is because from a well-disposed heart naturally comes a good sacrifice, and the opposite is also true. Furthermore, the presupposed slaughtering of an animal in Genesis 3 cannot be dissociated from the manifestation of God’s love, the symbolic and typological redemption imagery that alone confers true, lasting and overwhelming warmth.

Abraham was the representative of all mankind who now recognised God’s gracious provisions and promises. Abraham worshiped God through sacrificial offerings - then, God taught him that the ultimate sacrifice would be the sacrifice of a human being, one of Adam’s descendants - an only Son miraculously provided by God.

The fuller designation of sacrifice is to be found in Mosaic Law, where it has three central ideas: consecration, expiation (covering of sin) and propitiation (satisfaction of divine anger), as will be seen later on in this dissertation. Sacrifice in the Old Testament ultimately typified the final perfect sacrifice of Jesus, the ultimate substitute (Youngblood, 1997).

The Old Testament contains the main biblical references to cultic sacrifice (Porter & Evans, 2000). Sacrifices were performed on the altar by Israel's priests, on behalf of the entire community of the Israelites or individual worshippers in Israel (Myers, 1987:899). The Old Testament contains both "special sacrifice like covenant sacrifices, and regular sacrifices", which are all described in detail in Leviticus 1-7 (Harrison, 1999:466). These include cereal offerings, meal offerings, drink offerings and animal offerings, the last of which this study will focus on (Mckenzie, 1976:754-756). Given the fact that the central interest is a thematic exegesis of sacrifice in Hebrews, especially the sacrifice of Jesus, the next sections will only give a brief description of types of sacrifices, as well as sacrificial procedures.

9.2.1 Old Testament sacrificial typology

In Israel, sacrificial types included the following: regular sacrifices made by priests in the tabernacle during the wilderness journey and at Shiloh, and in the Temple while in the Promised Land. These types of sacrificial offerings were performed every morning and every evening, consisting of a one-year old lamb for a burnt offering, a tenth of an ephah of flour as a meal offering, and a fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering, as Numbers 28:3-8 reveals (Pfeiffer, 1975:1499).

The books of Numbers 28:9 and Leviticus 24:8 suggest that on the Sabbath, regulatory sacrificial offerings had to be doubled, and the same book of Numbers 28:11-15 points out that at the time of the new moon (monthly) regular sacrificial offerings had to be composed of two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs, three-tenths of an ephah of flour for each bullock, two for the ram, and one for each lamb, including a drink offering and a kid of the goat as a sin offering. Ashes mixed with water served as a purification agent, and in the case of a need for a new supply of ashes, the priest had to slaughter a red heifer and burn the whole animal (Buttrick, 1962:149). Among Old Testament sacrificial typologies, one can identify gifts and tributes consisting of:

- Propitiatory sacrifices, that is, sacrifices and offering primarily validated as gifts identical to those to be given to the king or other dignitaries seeking favours from them. The books of Judges 3:17; 1 Samuel 10:27; and Malachi 1:8 substantiate this (Buttrick, 1962:149-154).
- Tributary sacrifices (first fruits and tithes): sacrificial gifts offered to the superior, probably taking the form of a tribute (Mckenzie, 1976:754). The first-born of all living creatures had to in this sense be offered to the deities. However, human beings and unclean animals were redeemed

- through ransom payments in the form of money or any other equivalent valuables. See Exodus 13:11-16; 34:19-20; Leviticus 27:26; Numbers 18:15-17 and Deuteronomy 14: 23; 15:19 in this regard (Myers, 1987:900).
- Votive sacrifices: after being qualified as propitiatory or tributary, sacrifices could be characterised as votive, that is, subsequent to a vow or pledge to concretely pay a god in return for fulfilling a wish or promoting the interests of supplicant worshippers (Myers, 1987:900)). This kind of offering was made special for good use. See Leviticus 22:2; 27:2 and Numbers 15:3 in this regard (Buttrick, 1962:149).
 - Thanksgiving sacrifices are identical to thanksgiving offerings. See Leviticus 7:12-13, 15; 22:29; 2Chronicles 33:16; Psalms 107:22; 116:17; Jeremiah 17:26 and Amos 4:5 in this regard (Mckenzie, 1976:757).
 - The free will offering was performed at Pentecost, the restoration of the altar at Jerusalem, festivals and outside of designated festive offerings. The animal offered for the free will offering was not to be entirely without blemish. See Deuteronomy 16:10; Ezra 3:5; Numbers 29:39 and Leviticus 22:23 in this regard (Mckenzie, 1976:757).

In a more simplified form, a person can identify five main types of sacrifices in the Old Testament:

- The burnt offering, in which the sacrificial victim was slaughtered, cut into pieces, and then completely burnt upon the main altar as an offering to God (Lv 1:1-17; 6:1-6).
- The grain offering (Lv 2:1-16; 6:7-16), which was made of cereal, oil and frankincense. A cake was made from the cereal and oil and brought to the priest, who took a handful for himself. The remainder was burnt on the altar, together with the frankincense, so that the grain offering could be considered as an offering to God (Eberhart, 2004:488).
- The communion sacrifice (Lv 4:1-17; 7:11-34) consisted of immolating the sacrificial animal victim, and cutting it into pieces. The major part of the meat was eaten by the worshippers celebrating, and some was consumed by the priest. However, the fat, considered as the “most valuable part of the animal”, was burnt on an altar as an offering to God (Eberhart, 2004:588).
- The sin offering (Lv 4:1-5:13; 6:17-23) consisted of immolating the sacrificial animal victim and applying some of its blood to “sancta”. The remaining proceedings were similar to those of communion sacrificial offerings.
- The guilt offering (Lv 5:14-26; 7:1-7). Its ritual was identical to that of a communion sacrificial offering, that is, the sacrificial victim was slaughtered and apportioned into the worshipper’s part for consumption, and the celebration and priest aspects were also there. The fat was still burnt upon the altar as an offering to God (Eberhart, 2004:488, cf. sacrifice in P below).

It seems as though the inclusion of “first fruits and firstlings” in tributary offerings possibly resulted from a widespread ancient conviction that new things had a special value attached to them which made them inviolate (Lv 19:23-25), and therefore were to be sanctified for the gods or other holy beings (Myers, 1987:900). The common belief behind this was that the surrendering of a prime part would secure the protection of the rest from harm. Since inception, the value or quality of first fruits was not determined, but later on came to be stabilised as a tenth part or tithe, the identity of the two things. See Leviticus 27:30-32; 2Chronicles 31:5-6, 12; Nehemiah 10:38; 12:44; 13:5, 12; Amos 4:4, and Malachi 3:8,10; in this regard. It is evident from an examination of Deuteronomy 14:22-29 and 26: 1-15 that the terms “firstlings” and “tithes” came to be interchangeably used (Myers, 1987:900).

Peace offerings such as atonement sacrifices were partially burnt. This was a symbol of a harmonious relationship between an Israelite man and Yahweh. It served to express such a relationship and to strengthen it. Leviticus 3 describes the entire ritual. Among the types of peace offerings were the thanksgiving offering, the votive offering and the free will offering, whose rituals were essentially identical. See Leviticus 7 and Numbers 15:3 in this regard (Mckenzie, 1976:757). The peace offering symbolism was the “sacrificial banquet” by worshipping supplicants to the deity, who in turn expressed his acceptance of this act and his willingness to dine with them. This predicts a most hearty and friendly relationship (Mckenzie, 1976:757).

Atonement sacrifices were occasioned by a disruption in the relationship between a deity and a worshipper. These sacrifices are meant to appease the deity, and to urge him to restore his good favours. The ritual of the atonement sacrifices is described in Leviticus, chapter 4. The sacrifice of a human being was a perversion of religious devotional worship, and an abominable way of seeking divine favours (Pfeiffer, 1975:1496). The account of the attempt by Abraham to sacrifice Isaac stands as a theological affirmation of Yahweh’s rejection of this type of sacrifice (Mckenzie, 1976:757).

There were also alimentary sacrifices in Old Testament sacrificial rituals, such as blood and fat for gods as the seats of “vitality and energy” - the sacrifice was therefore intended to supply deities with quality “blood and suet”. Relatively speaking, this activity endured in the Hebrew sacrificial system, by endeavouring to keep for Yahweh only those parts of the oblation victim. There was also the daily fare of gods and the bread of the presence. See Exodus 24:5-11; Leviticus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32: 37-38 and 1Samuel 2:15 in this regard (Buttrick, 1962:150-151).

Covenant and communion sacrifices (blood sprinkling) were primarily meant to promote communion and social equity between gods and men. The sprinkling of blood on the people was the outward acknowledgement of the covenant. This sacrificial usage continued during the Passover sacrificial ritual. It signified that

participants were recorded as “kinsmen” to Yahweh, and therefore recipients of His protection from harm. See Exodus 12:7 and 13: 22-23 in this regard (Buttrick, 1962:151).

In an expiatory sacrifice, a sin offering was performed to deal with sin in general, as well as with moral misdeeds, “contagion” in the case of childbirth, and leprosy. It was also performed at the most important festivals and the consecration of priests, in order to remove pollution. There was also the guilt offering, surrogates and scapegoats. See Leviticus 6:1-26; 19:20; 5:16-17; 14:12-13 and Numbers 6:12 (Buttrick 1962:151) for a detailed description of sacrificial types in the Old Testament cf. sacrifice in P below. At this juncture, it is incumbent on the researcher to describe Old Testament sacrificial procedures before concluding this overview.

9.2.2 Old Testament sacrificial procedures

In accordance with Leviticus, chapters one and three, the following procedure applied whenever an Israelite worshipper brought his sacrifice to God: The worshipper brought his offering to the North side of the forecourt of the tabernacle or temple (Harrison, 1999:466). The next step consisted of identifying himself with his sacrifice by laying his hand on the animal's head. Except during national sacrifices (Lv 16:15; 2Chr 29:24), the worshipper himself had to slaughter the sacrificial animal victim. The priest collected the blood of the animal by means of a basin, and sprinkled it by dashing or tossing it in small quantities against the altar. The rest of the blood was then spilled onto the base of the altar (Pfeiffer, 1975:1497).

Afterwards, the worshipper skinned the animal and apportioned it into joints (Lv 1:6, 12). The kidney, fat or suet, liver, entrails and the tail fat of a sheep were surrendered to God as a burnt offering (Lv 1:8; 3:3-4, 9-10; 4:8-10). The priest burnt and “offered it up in smoke” on the altar (Harrison, 1999:466). All the parts of the animal except the skin were consumed by the fire on the altar in the case of a burnt offering. During a peace offering, pieces of the vestige of the sacrificial victim were shared by participants, including priests. Such a communal meal was very significant as a means of fellowship with the Lord. See Deuteronomy 12:6-7 and Exodus 18:12; 24:5, 11 in this regard (Pfeiffer, 1975:1498).

The book of Leviticus 7:28-34 indicates that the pieces of the slaughtered peace offering kept for the priest and his family were called the “wave and the heave offerings”. The first was made of the breast of the animal, and was put on the altar and back as a symbol of presenting it to God and His returning it to the priest. See Leviticus 7:14, 32, 34, NASB; and Numbers 18:8-19 in this regard (Mckenzie, 1976:756). It is important to now take a look at sacrifice in P.

9.3 SACRIFICE IN P

9.3.1 Animals

As a general rule, sacrifices can be broken down into two categories in terms of which animals were used: those sacrifices which precisely and clearly called for a particular animal for each and every favourable sacrificial opportunity, and those which called for a series of different animals, based on the social standing or economic status of the individual offerer. In the former category, one can include the burnt offering, the peace offering and the reparation offering, while in the latter category, one would include the two forms of purification offerings. It would not be accurate to say that the prerequisites for the burnt offering, peace offering, and reparation offering were rigid - there was room for flexibility, but this flexibility was not the same as that reserved for the purification offering. For the burnt offering, one had to offer a male animal from the herd or flock, or a bird (turtledove or pigeon). The peace offering could be either a male or female from the herd or flock (Wright, 1986).

The reparation offering was always a ram, except for the Nazirites who were defiled and had to bring a lamb. The reparation offering was also unique in that most of the time this sacrificial prerequisite could be converted into an equivalent in silver. In contrast to these requirements, the laws for the purification offering in Leviticus 4:1–23 adhere strictly to the social standing of the offerer. The priest, community, ruler and individual had their own requirements which could not be varied. The additional situations for the purification offering listed in Leviticus 5:1–13 affirm a separate system altogether. In this text, the prerequisites for the purification offering are ranked in accordance with the economic standing of the offerer. The animals used for sacrifices were domestic animals. Even though there were wild animals that were fit for consumption, according to the laws of *kašrut* (e.g., the hart, gazelle, roebuck, wild goat, ibex, antelope and mountain sheep - see Dt 14:5), these animals were never used for sacrifices. What was acceptable as game was evidently not suitable for the altar (Wright, 1986). With this in mind, this chapter will now look at the technique of sacrifice.

9.3.2 The technique of sacrifice

In order to establish a platform for formal discussion, it is essential to note that since the P code constituted the ground and context of the Sinaitic revelation and the primordial location of Israel's cultic commandments, all sacrificial law was made in reference to the tent of meeting or tabernacle that was erected there (Ex 35–49). In accordance with the P source, all this material was thought to be equally applicable to the domain of the temple. The sacrificial act comprised six elementary steps which can be broken down into two groups: those which were performed by the layperson who offered the animal, and those which were confined to the priests. Laypersons were “responsible for:

- Bringing the animal to the sanctuary,

- Laying hands on the animal,
- Slaughtering the animal (included cutting up the animal and washing or cleaning the insides - see Leviticus 1:6, 9). The priests were responsible for :
 - Tossing the blood,
 - Burning the animal (or part of it), and
 - Disposing of the remains” (Wright, 1986 - see also Pfeiffer, 1975 for Old Testament sacrificial procedures above).

The first three actions of the layperson took place at the opening of the tent of meeting, a spot where the laypeople could also witness the Lord’s “consumption” of the sacrifice (Lv 9:23–24). The fact that the laypeople were entitled to accomplish actions 1–3 can be observed from the tone of Leviticus 1. Those actions for which the layperson was responsible are identified by the P writer with the third person singular: “he shall lay his hand . . .” (Lv 1:4). Those actions which the priest was to perform are rendered so: “and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall present the blood . . .” (Lv 1:5). The meaning of the hand-laying rite, which is so fundamental to understanding the process of atonement in the expiatory sacrifices, has long been obscure to scholars. It has recently been suggested that the rite of hand-laying merely meant that the animal belonged to the owner (Wright, 1986).

This theory belongs to the generally prescribed law of laying one hand on the animal. The remarkable act of laying of two hands on the Day of Atonement must be explained differently. In this case, the act of laying of hands singled out a particular animal as the recipient of this ritual action. The actions that only the priest could do (tossing blood and burning the animal) were those which had to take place at the altar. Since only the priests were given access to this location, the responsibility was naturally theirs. Blood manipulation varied from sacrifice to sacrifice. With burnt, reparation and peace offerings, the blood was sprinkled around the altar. Contrary to these, the purification offering required that the blood be first smeared on the horns of the altar, and then the rest poured out at the base of the altar in the case of a ruler or commoner. For the priest or entire congregation, the blood was first sprinkled seven times before the veil of the sanctuary, and then put on the horns of the inner incense altar. The remainder was poured out at the base of the outer altar. In certain cases, the priests were also required to eat the sacrifice (Wright, 1987 - see also cereal and reparation offerings).

The allotment and ordering rites were different for each sacrifice. The burnt offering, of course, had no ordering rite: the entire sacrifice was burnt on the altar. For the other sacrifices, disposal rites varied, seemingly in accordance with sanctity. Thus, the peace offering, which was of lesser sanctity (“holy”), could be eaten for two days and only burned on the third, whereas the purification sacrifice (“most holy”) had to be eaten on the same day (Wright, 1987). Special laws (Lv 7:16–18) of disposal also applied to utensils used in preparing expiatory

sacrifices (Lv 7:28). With regard to disposal rites in general, see Wright (1987). At this point, a look at the basic types of animal sacrifices in P would be useful.

9.3.3 Basic types of animal sacrifice in P

9.3.3.1 Burnt offering (*ôlâ*)

The Hebrew term for “burnt offering” is *ôlâ*, literally meaning “an offering of ascent” or “an ascending offering” (Levine, 1974:6). The noun is used with its relative verbal root *ha ăleh ôlâ*, meaning “to make an *ôlâ* ascend.” It is not difficult to determine why this name is suitable for this particular offering. The *ôlâ* sacrifice was one which was entirely burnt on the altar and so its smoke—or better, its scent—was directed toward the heavenly realm, wherein the deity was thought to have “inhaled” it. The *ôlâ* was generally offered along with accompanying cereal and drink offerings (Nm 15:1–10). In Ugarit, this sacrificial type was called *šrp*, meaning “(totally) burnt”. This sacrifice was a widely used one in ancient Israel. Indeed, the phrase “burnt offerings and peace offerings” (e.g. Ex 20:24) could be used as a merism for the entire sacrificial system (Levine, 1974:21).

In the book of Ezra, the term *ôlâ* reflected both the purification and the burnt offerings that were offered by the returning exiles (Ezra 8:35). Levine has argued that the *ôlâ* sacrifice should be understood as one which drew the deity’s attention and requested the deity’s presence at a particular ritual occasion. Such a theory would explain the usage of the *ôlâ* for divination purposes, when the deity’s response to an urgent plea was desired, as in the case of Balaam’s oracles (Nm 21–24), or the usage of the *ôlâ* by Elijah as a means of testing which prophetic group truly “had YHWH’s attention”, so to speak (1 Ki 18). It would also explain the usage of the *ôlâ* as a term for child sacrifice, which was thought in some circles to show one’s consummate devotion to the deity (2Ki 3:26–27), and hence worthiness of divine assistance. Milgrom has argued that the *ôlâ* was the earliest form of atonement sacrifice in biblical writings (Cheyne, 1958:243).

Job 1:5 contains good evidence of this: “Job would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of his sons, for he said: ‘It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts’”. The atoning function of the *ôlâ* survives, inter alia, in the P source itself. Although P generally holds that only the purification and reparation offerings deal with sin, in Leviticus 1:4 it is said that the burnt offering “shall make atonement” for the offerer. In the researcher’s opinion, this is a remarkable usage because nowhere else does P spell out how this atonement would work. All ensuing discussion of atonement revolves around purification and reparation offerings. In Milgrom’s view, the development of these specialised offerings brought about a restructuring of the role of the more general *ôlâ*. One must be careful, though, not to assume that this restructuring of the system and perfecting of the typology of atoning

sacrifices was late, simply because they do not occur in pre-exilic sources. They probably did exist, but non-priestly sources took no interest in the more exacting classification of the priestly system (Cheyne, 1958:243).

Another level of meaning present in the *ôlâ* is that of a gift to the deity. Of course, this gift is not just any type of gift, but one which the deity consumes, a “soothing odor”. The consumable gift was thought to be in many respects the food of the deity. Just as the temple was thought to be the deity’s home, complete with furniture and other components, so this divine home had its furnace, the altar. The daily sacrifices for the deity are described in Exodus 29:38–42 (see Nm 28:3–8 and Ezk 46:13–15). These sacrifices took place in the morning and the evening, and consisted of the *ôlâ* (lamb), along with a cereal and drink offering. It was called the *tamid* offering in rabbinic sources, because the scripture says it was to be offered “continually (*tāmīd*) . . . throughout your generations” (Ex 29:42). It is no accident that Exodus 29:42 continues to require the sacrifice “at the door of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet you, to speak there to you”. This *tāmīd* sacrifice was symbolic, not only of the deity’s meal, but by extension, of the deity’s presence among the people. No greater cultic calamity could be imagined than the loss of this sacrifice, since it symbolised the severing of the divine-human relationship (Cheyne, 1958:243, cf. Dn 8:11).

9.3.3.2 Peace offering (*šēlāmîm*)

The translation and interpretation of this sacrifice has bothered scholars for many years. It seems clear that at least three terms can refer to this sacrifice: *zēbah*, *zibhê-šēlāmîm* and *šēlāmîm*. The history of the development of these terms has been dealt with by Rendtorff (1967). The *šēlāmîm* seems to be a special type of an earlier *zēbah* sacrifice. One should not infer that *zēbah*, meaning “slain sacrifice”, refers to any slain sacrificial animal. In spite of its name, which is quite general, this sacrifice name often occurs in the pair *zēbah* and *ôlâ*. In this regard, there can be no doubt that *zēbah* refers specifically to the *šēlāmîm* offering. The sacrifice has commonly been translated as a “peace offering”, but this is certainly an unfortunate rendering. It tells us little about the nature of the sacrifice. Just what is peaceful about this sacrificial rite? Some say that the peace refers to a harmonious relationship between humanity and God. Smith went even further, and said that it symbolised a communion between them (1889).

Others have argued that the peacefulness refers to a covenantal pact, either between God and humanity or simply between different people. Of course, the lexical root of the term *šēlāmîm* (*šlm*) does mean “peace,” and in certain cases, nouns formed from this root in Hebrew and Akkadian refer to covenantal relations. However, each one of these attempts to establish the function of the *šēlāmîm* in terms of etymology has not been persuasive. In the case of the

šēlāmîm, Gray’s dictum that usage is a more important determinant of meaning than etymology is certainly true (Gray, 1925:1–20).

In the P source, the *šēlāmîm* sacrifice is broken down into three subtypes (Lv 7:11–18): the *tôdâ* or “thanksgiving” sacrifice, the *neder* or “vowed sacrifice,” and the *nēdābâ* or “free will offering”. All of these sacrifices played a very important role in the life of the individual. Besides constituting the basic form of sacrifice brought on feast days (1Sm 1:3–4; Dt 12:11–12), the *šēlāmîm* also played an important role in the ritual of lamentation and thanksgiving that is so prominent in the Psalms. Very similar to the *šēlāmîm* are the *pesaḥ* or “Passover” and *millû îm* or “ordination” sacrifices. Although the *pesaḥ* sacrifice is prepared in a different manner (it is roasted and not boiled, according to Ex 12:9), it is a sacrifice that all of Israel must consume. The *millû îm* sacrifice is prepared almost exactly like the *šēlāmîm*, the significant difference being that the blood is applied to the ear, thumb and toe of the Aaronid priest (Ex 29:19–34). The *pesaḥ*, *millû îm* and *tôdâ* sacrifices were all to be eaten on the very day that they were offered, unlike the other *šēlāmîm* types. This is certainly due to the fact that the former rites are all obligatory ones. The fact that their flesh must be consumed within one day points to a higher level of sanctity. The other *šēlāmîm* rites were not obligatory, and therefore the prescriptions for consumption and disposal of the remains were more flexible. It is therefore quite logical to ask oneself what the role of these types of sacrifice was.

i) Role

One negative conclusion that emerges from even a cursory look at the *šēlāmîm* material in the Bible is that the sacrifice had nothing to do with atonement. Although the fat and certain other organs of the sacrifice were burnt on the altar as a “pleasing odor” and the blood was sprinkled on the altar, nowhere does one hear of these acts as atoning for any sin. It seems that the peace offering, in this case, was nothing more than an accepted manner for slaughtering any animal that was to be used for human consumption (Lv 17:1–7) in the P system. The role of human consumption constitutes the primary level of meaning of this sacrifice, and helps to explain why the *ôlâ* and the *šēlāmîm* are routinely paired together in biblical (and Ugaritic) rituals. The *ôlâ* was the sacrifice that constituted the basic nourishment for the deity, while the *šēlāmîm* in turn nourished the people (Cheyne, 1958). This was recognised by the rabbis (see the discussion of the *Mekhilta* above), who explicitly compared these two offerings on exactly this point. Indeed, so formative was the notion of celebratory eating to the *šēlāmîm*, that the rabbis even labelled one application of the *šēlāmîm* sacrifice as the “celebration sacrifice” (*šalmê-šimḥâ*).

The celebration role of the *šēlāmîm* is certainly its most prominent characteristic. If one defines the *šēlāmîm* as a celebration sacrifice, one cannot only explain its presence in the rituals of thanksgiving and fulfillment of vows, but also understand its role on feast days. In many texts in the Bible, the command “to

celebrate” (*lišmōah*) can only refer to the obligation to consume the *šēlāmîm*. So prominent is this association that the rabbis themselves say: “‘celebration’ means nothing other than consuming the flesh (of the *šēlāmîm*)”. Rabbinic materials also further subdivided the *šēlāmîm* to include both the *ḥāgîgâ* sacrifice, the sacrifice that all Israelite males were obliged to consume during the three pilgrimage festivals, and the *šimḥâ* sacrifice (*šalmê-šimḥâ*), which all Israelites, male and female, had to consume at these times (*Sifre* 138).

Because the *šēlāmîm* was symbolic of moments of joy or celebration, the *šēlāmîm* could be banned on days of public mourning in certain circumstances. This appears to be the logic of Isaiah 22:12–14. Isaiah reports that the Lord had called for public mourning, yet Israel was slaying her fatlings and rejoicing. Such a practice does not seem to have been uniform in Israel, for on other occasions, *šēlāmîm* was offered during times of public mourning. With regard to these latter examples though, one should note that the *šēlāmîm* was offered in conjunction with the burnt offering and, as Milgrom (Cheyne, 1958:244) has indicated, it was the *ôlâ* that had the primary role in these rites. Therefore, it is necessary to now consider the purification offering.

9.3.3.3 Purification offering (*ḥaṭṭâ t*)

Leviticus 4:1–5:13 and Numbers 15:22–31 refer to this type of offering. The traditional translation of this term has been “sin offering”. This translation, followed by the Septuagint, was based on etymological considerations. The Hebrew root *ḥṭ* means “to miss the mark, to sin”. However, as Milgrom (1983a: 67) and others have noted, the term would better be understood as referring to the process of purification. This seems clear from the verb used in conjunction with *ḥaṭṭâ t, lē-ḥaṭṭē*. This verbal form is best understood as a *Pi el* privative which conveys the sense of cleansing, purging or purifying an object. Even more important is the fact that the *ḥaṭṭâ t* offering is often used in situations that have no relation to sin. For example, consider the cases of the parturient (Lv 12), the person suffering from a discharge (Lv 15), the Nazirite who completes a vow of abstinence (Nm 6), or the installation of a new altar (Lv 8). In each of these cases, the act of sacrifice serves to purge or purify something, rather than to remove sin. This is not only logical, but the biblical text explicitly says that this is the function of the sacrifice. For example, in the case of the parturient, instead of the ritual closing with a formula for forgiveness, one reads: “and the priest shall perform purgation for her (*kippēr*) and she shall be clean” (Lv 12:8). The rabbis also noted this: “The sacrifices [the parturient] brought, are nevertheless, for the purpose of permitting her to partake of consecrated food and are not expiatory”. At this stage, it would be useful to say something about purification and atonement.

9.3.3.4 Purification and atonement

The purification role of the *ḥattā t* challenges one to reconsider the role of the *ḥattā t* in rituals that seem to have an atoning function. Can these rituals also be understood in a purification sense? Milgrom (1983a) has argued in favour of this, on the basis of the atonement rituals found in Leviticus 4:1–5:13 and Leviticus 16. Milgrom pays particular attention to the role of blood manipulation in each of the rituals described here, for it is the blood itself which acts as the purging agent. In light of this fact, it is significant to note that blood is never placed upon the individual. If an individual was being cleansed, one would expect the blood to be placed on him or her. Instead, it is placed on various cultic components. Even more telling is the variability of this blood ritual with respect to the status of the sinner.

Leviticus 4 makes a very careful distinction between the statuses of various classes of people. The inadvertent sins of the priest and community as a whole are more serious than the sins of the individual, be he a commoner or a ruler. Most serious of all are avoidable offences of any kind. In each of these cases, as the seriousness of the sin becomes more pronounced, the blood is brought closer to the very inner sanctum of the Holy of holies. Thus, the blood used for the commoner is placed on the altar of the burnt offering outside the sanctuary per se (Lv 4:30). The blood used for the sin of the priest or community as a whole is placed within the sanctuary itself, sprinkled on the veil separating the Holy of holies from the outer chamber, and then placed on the incense altar. Finally, the blood of the purification offering at Yom Kippur, which atones for avoidable sins (so the sense of *peša* in Lv 16:16 seems), is sprinkled “in front of the mercy seat” within the Holy of holies itself (Lv 16:14).

Milgrom has argued that this sequence of the graded usage of blood with respect to the grid of the sacred shrine shows that what is being purged is not the sin from the sinner, but the effects of sin, i.e. cultic impurity, from the sanctums within the sanctuary. Since blood is understood to be a purging agent, one would expect the sinner to receive this material, if the primary intention of the ritual was to eliminate his/her sinful condition. Such an understanding would agree with what is said about the purification role of the *ḥattā t* blood in the case of those suffering from discharge: “Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst” (Lv 15:31, cf. Nm 19:13). Impurity, understood in this way, becomes “a physical substance, an aerial miasma which possessed magnetic attraction for the realm of the sacred” (Milgrom, 1983a: 77).

The purification offering is designed to remove this maleficent material from the sanctuary itself. If the impurity is allowed to accumulate, the deity will be forced to leave the sanctuary. This understanding of the process of atonement is quite distinct from previous theories (Gese, 1981; Janowski, 1982), which hold that the process is primarily concerned with removing sin from the sinner. Whereas the

latter stresses the role of the sacrificial victim's death in the atoning process, Milgrom stresses the role of purification. When stated in this general way, Milgrom's argument is very persuasive. Things become more difficult when Milgrom attempts to argue that the purification offering has no role to play whatsoever in removing human sin. Indeed, the scripture itself says that the purification rite is performed so that the sinner may be forgiven (Lv 4:20, 26, 31). However, Milgrom contends that forgiveness is not for the sinful act per se, but rather for the consequence of the act, the contamination of the sanctuary. How then is the actual act of the individual sinner forgiven? Milgrom argues that forgiveness of the original sin itself is accomplished by a feeling of remorse. This feeling is indicated in the biblical text by the use of the verb *āšēm* (Lv 4:13, 22, 27), which Milgrom translates as "to feel guilty". However, there are still problems here. If such an important atoning function is present in the act of feeling remorse, why is this term absent in Numbers 15:22–31? And why is it absent in the case of the priest (Lv 4:1–12)? This situation is complex, and does not offer any easy solution. Certainly, Milgrom's work is an important contribution, but it still leaves loose ends. The next section examines the performance of the purification offering.

9.3.3.5 The performance of the purification offering

The purification offering varies across four classes of individuals:

- Priest,
- Congregation
- Ruler, and
- Individual.

(Lv 5:1–13 constitutes a special case which this study will not have room to discuss). Not only does the act of blood manipulation vary in these four classes, but so do other elements of the ritual. The four classes can actually be reduced to two groups:

- Priest and congregation, and
- Ruler and individual.

The performance of the purification offering has six discrete steps:

- The animal is brought to the tent of meeting;
- The offerer lays on hands;
- The animal is slain;
- The blood rites are performed;
- The animal's remains are disposed of by burning or are eaten; and
- A forgiveness formula is cited, which formally concludes the atonement process.

Within this schema, there are two elements which serve to highlight and distinguish the offerings of the priest/congregation from those of the ruler/individual (see also Eberhart, 2004 above).

- Firstly, the blood and disposal rites are performed differently, depending on whether one is handling the animals of the priest/congregation or the ruler/individual. For the priest/congregation, the blood is brought into the sanctuary and sprinkled seven times on the veil that stands in front of the Holy of holies, and is then daubed on the horns of the incense altar (Lv 4:5–7a; 16–18a). The remainder of the blood is poured out at the base of the altar reserved for the burnt offering, which is outside the tent proper (Lv 4:7b; 18b). The fat of the bull, as well as certain organs, are burned at the altar of the burnt offering (Lv 4:8–10; 19–20); the remainder of the animal, including its edible flesh, is burned outside the camp (Lv 4:11–12; 21).

For the ruler/individual, the rite is quite different. The blood is applied to the horns of the outer altar and then poured at its base (Lv 4:25; 30). The fat is burned on the altar, but the remainder, that is, the edible flesh, is eaten by the priests (see Lv 6:17–23—English 6:24–30). It is difficult to know how to interpret the act of eating the meat. Is this an act of disposal parallel to the burning of the bull, or is the consumption simply a prerequisite for the priesthood? This asymmetry has been noted by Levine, who uses this data to reconstruct two originally separate offerings that lie behind our present text. The rite of the priest/congregation, he believes, is a “purification rite intended to safeguard the sanctuary and its ministering priesthood from contamination” (Levine, 1974:103).

- The other rite is similar to the peace offering, and originally had nothing to do with the process of purification - rather, its function was “to expiate certain of the offences of the ‘people’, of Israelites, individually, and even of their *něsî îm*, the tribal chiefs”. A later revision artificially fused two independent pieces of tradition. Levine’s hypothesis is quite different from the theory of Milgrom. Although several aspects of Levine’s hypothetical reconstruction are weak and have been appropriately criticised by Milgrom, his basic description of the problem posed by the present form of the text holds, and has not been adequately addressed by Milgrom’s own integrated reading (Milgrom, 1983a). What about the concept of order in these sacrificial processes?

i) Order

The purification offering generally takes place in conjunction with other sacrifices. It is always the first sacrifice to be offered when it is offered in conjunction with other sacrifices, such as the *ôlâ* and the *ăšēm*. The reasons are quite obvious:

- The purification offering cleanses the sacred components so that they are able to receive subsequent sacrifices.

- In some lists, the purification offering is listed after the *ôlâ* (Nm 28–29). This is not an exception to the general rule. Rather, this phenomenon results from the particular literary genre of the sacrificial list.
- Descriptive lists often put the purification offering in the second position, whereas prescriptive lists, which describe the actual order, always put the purification offering first.

9.3.3.6 Reparation offering (*āšām*)

This offering has generally been translated as “guilt offering”. This translation is based on etymological considerations - the root *āšēm* can often mean “to be or feel guilty”. However, as Milgrom has shown (1976), although feelings of guilt are integral to the atonement process, the basic feature of the sacrifice is its function as a means of reparation. Unlike other sacrifices which one “offers” (*hiqrib*), the *āšām* can “be paid” (*šillēm, hēšib*). Also, unlike other sacrifices, the *āšām* can be converted into a monetary equivalent and simply paid. Of all the offerings in the P system, the *āšām* is the most difficult to understand. Indeed, some scholars have claimed that even the P school no longer appreciated the distinction between the *āšām* and the *hattā t*. Almost every imaginable historical reconstruction of the relationship between the reparation offering and the purification offering has been undertaken. Needless to say, no overwhelming consensus has been reached. The most detailed recent study of the reparation offering is that of Milgrom (1976).

In many respects, Milgrom’s research represents a major advance over previous studies. He offers a persuasive hypothesis as to how reparation and purification offerings should be differentiated, but one should be aware that his proposal cannot account for every single example in the P source. Before presenting his theory, the following conditions for the reparation sacrifice should be mentioned:

- The act of misappropriating or misusing an item of sacred value (Lv 5:14–16); Sinning inadvertently and not knowing it (Lv 5:17–19);
- Swearing falsely with regard to damages done to another person (Lv 5:20–26—English 6:1–7);
- The rite of purification of the leper;
- The rite of renewing the vow of the Nazirite who has become unclean (Nm 6:10–12); having sexual relations with a slave who has been betrothed to another man (Lv 19:20–21).

Milgrom sees a thread of continuity between cases 1, 3, and 5.

In each of the above cases, something sacred to the deity has been violated. The first case is the most obvious - it explicitly states that the person has misused a sacred item. As Milgrom observes, this text is very similar in function to the problem of desanctifying an animal that is unfit for sacrifice, which is discussed in Leviticus 27:9–13. Here, a penalty is charged for this desanctification, a penalty equalling the value of the animal plus one-fifth. Milgrom (1976) believes that it is

not coincidental that Leviticus 5:14–16 charges the same penalty for misusing a sacred item. In both cases, one is dealing with a situation in which an item's sacred status has been profaned. Leviticus 25:9–13 stipulates the charge imposed for the right to do this, whereas Leviticus 5:14–16 stipulates the penalty imposed for the crime. The case of swearing falsely can also fall into this group, because a false vow necessarily entails a misuse of the divine name which was originally invoked by the person in question. Indeed, as Milgrom demonstrates, the violation of vows and desecration of sacred items are treated as parallel phenomena in Ancient Near Eastern legal materials.

Finally, the case of the Nazirite who has become unclean also represents a case in which a sacred item has been sullied. In this case, it is the Nazir himself who has become like a priest himself, and hence “holy to the Lord” (Nm 6:8). As Milgrom indicates, the example of the Nazir has a formal parallel with the case of land dedicated to the sanctuary (Lv 27). Both are results of a vow, both are for a limited period of time, but most importantly, both vows can be prematurely terminated and carry similar penalties for doing so. Whereas the Nazir brings an *āšām*, the donor of the land must provide the equivalent of the entire value of the land, plus an additional 20 percent (in other words, the equivalent of the *āšām*). The example of the leper and the betrothed slave girl are the most difficult in terms of Milgrom's theory. Neither are said to have violated a sacred item in any way. Milgrom tries to explain the case of the leper on the grounds that elsewhere in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible, leprosy is often the result of a serious sin against the sancta of a particular deity. On these grounds, Milgrom suggests that the leper must bring an *āšām* because he suspects that he may have offended the deity. The slave girl cannot be accounted for in terms of this theory (Schwartz, 1986).

The case of a person sinning and not knowing it also poses some problems. The text in question (Lv 5:17–19) is so similar in wording to the material in Leviticus 4 that some scholars have suggested that it is a duplicate of the purification rite that has been misplaced by the P editor. Milgrom presumes that the P source knew what it was doing when it put this narrative here. The crucial characteristic that separates Leviticus 5:17–19 from the purification offering in Leviticus 4 is that the individual in question sins and does not know it. Leviticus 4, on the other hand, deals with cases in which inadvertent sin is later realised or made known to the offender. Leviticus 5:17–19 therefore appears to presume a case wherein an individual suffers from either a guilty conscience or, perhaps like Job, the effects of divine retribution, but cannot pinpoint the cause. In the Ancient Near East, there are many cultic and ritual materials that deal with this exact problem. In each case, when an individual felt the effects of some divine chastisement, the presumption was that he or she had offended the deity in some way.

On the basis of this comparative model, Milgrom suggests that Leviticus 5:17–19 functions in the very same way. In this regard, its textual placement after Leviticus 5:14–16 is quite understandable: whereas vv 14–16 deal with a known

infraction against the sancta, vv 17–19 deal with a supposed or alleged infraction. In summary, one could say that the basic distinction between purification and reparation offerings is that the former deal with the issue of impurity, while the latter deal with profanation of sacred items. Although not every example in the P source can be explained this way, the overwhelming majority can. At this point, the issue of prophetic critique will be discussed.

9.4 PROPHETIC CRITIQUE

It has been common for Christian scholars in the past to denigrate the entire enterprise of biblical sacrifice. One scholar went so far as to describe the system as a means of “self-help”. This obvious importing of an Augustinian-Lutheran reading of a Pauline soteriology into the Old Testament is unacceptable to biblical critics of the most recent past (Stendahl, 1963). In any event, there can be no doubt as to why Christian treatment of biblical sacrifice spends as much time as it does on the issue of the Old Testament prophetic critique of the sacrificial system: it calls into question one of the fundamental tenets of Mosaic law. For Christian interpreters, these prophetic criticisms suggest that routine observance of the law in all its particularity is not as important as a more general stance of obedience towards one’s God. If one can thus find a foothold in the Old Testament itself for questioning the validity and perhaps timelessness of Old Testament law, then the Pauline imperative that law is only made as a temporary measure will not seem that far removed from the Old Testament itself.

Perhaps it was just this type of thinking that prompted Milgrom to read at least one prophetic critique in a very different manner (see other examples such as 1 Sm15:22–23; Is1:11–14; Am 5:21–23 and Mi 6:6–9). Milgrom contends that the prophetic critique, at least in Jeremiah, is not a radical questioning of the cult’s very foundation (Milgrom, 1983a: 119–21). Milgrom’s hypothesis is all the more intriguing when one realises that the particular text in Jeremiah which he addresses is perhaps the most thorough cultic critique in the Bible: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God . . .’” (Jr 7:21–23).

The text appears to call into question the very foundation on which the sacrificial system rests: Mosaic legislation. Weinfeld (1976) argues that this prophetic text was a “slap in the face of the priestly code”. It seemed to overturn the priestly notion that all cultic laws had been part of Mosaic law. Weinfeld also notes that this text was adopted by Maimonides as proof of the secondary importance of sacrificial practice in the first place. However, Milgrom reads the text quite differently. He notes that Jeremiah’s rebuke only specifies the burnt offering and the peace offering (here called *zēbah*). In the P code, these two sacrifices only occur together in the context of voluntary offerings of the individual. The *zēbah*

never occurs in any cultic calendar of public sacrifice; it is not a statutory offering. The primary staple of the fixed temple cultus was the *tāmīd*. In terms of this offering, Milgrom argues, Jeremiah has nothing to say. “Rather he turns to the people and urges them to renounce their individual offerings because their ritual piety is vitiated by their immoral behavior” (Milgrom, 1983a: 274).

One problem with Milgrom’s argument, beside it being an argument from silence, is the context of Jeremiah 7 itself. Jeremiah’s indictment of the cultus in vv 21–23 occurs within Jeremiah’s temple sermon, which itself seeks to undermine the basis of the mythic nature of the temple. Hyperbole against the sacrificial cultus is just what one would expect here. Another problem is Milgrom’s attempt to overspecialise the meanings of *ôlâ* and *zēbāḥ* in this prophetic context. There is no evidence that Jeremiah is here dependent on an overly specialised priestly sense. Rather, the pair *ôlâ* and *zēbāḥ* are better understood as a merism, a cliché which indicates that the sacrificial cultus in general is not right. Levine has shown how this pair functions in exactly this way (Levine, 1974:21).

In summary, one should not mistake the prophetic critique of the cult for systematic theology. Prophetic discourse occurs in a highly charged atmosphere. It is a mixture of hyperbole, exalted rhetoric, and even polemic. A more balanced view of the prophet’s criticism of the cult can be found in the work of A. Davidson (1904). He argues that the Bible contains two models for dealing with human sin. The most prominent would be that of the P code. In P, sins are forgiven through a system of sacrificial atonement. The sins envisioned to fall within this framework are those acts of disobedience which are committed within the context of a larger covenantal bond. The prophets, on the other hand, are concerned with sins of a vastly different nature: sins that represent blatant, gross rebellion against the very fabric of the covenant charter. So heinous are these deeds that the whole covenant framework is called into question. It is not a question of rejecting P, but rather finding oneself in such a radically new context that P’s norms are no longer viewed as applicable.

Toeg (1974) and Childs (1986) have recently argued that this prophetic understanding of human sin is also to be found in the P code itself. Both scholars point to Leviticus 26, a chapter that lists the curses and blessings that will accrue to Israel, depending on her response to the covenant. This chapter moves beyond the concerns of purification and atonement found in Leviticus 1–25. Israel’s wanton disobedience, which is foreshadowed here, calls for measures of divine punishment that cannot be altered by the sphere of the cult. The language of judgment found in Leviticus 26, especially the threat to terminate the cultic order itself, is very close to prophetic thought. Toeg goes further and even claims that, in one sacrificial law found in P, Numbers 15:22–31, one can also find evidence of a quasi-prophetic critique. In this text, the P writer indicates that not only will all overt sins be unforgivable in terms of any cultic procedures, but the penalty will also be severe - banishment from the community. The threat of

banishment is conceptually very close to the prophetic warning of exile. But perhaps even more striking is the P writer's extension of this penalty to all who sin in this fashion. Elsewhere in the P code this penalty is used very sparingly, and only for the most heinous of sins. Here, however, any overt sinner is to be banished. Toeg (1974) argues that this text, which presents itself as simply another religious law, ought to be understood as a form of prophetic rhetoric, this time employed by the P writer to exhort his community to be obedient.

Fishbane (1985) has picked up Toeg's argument, and has provided additional support for the homiletic nature of this text and its role in the context of preaching, rather than strict legal enforcement. Whether or not the specific points of Toeg's and Fishbane's theories are accurate need not be discussed here. What is important to note is that within the P code itself, there are allusions to the type of criticism of the cult that one finds within prophetic materials. This evidence, in and of itself, should call into question any overly rigid typological distinctions which would isolate priestly concepts of the cult from those of the prophets. The difference has to do with emphasis and rhetorical purpose, rather than with outright contradictory evaluation of Israel's spiritual heritage. This leads this study to briefly examine Deuteronomy and Israel's sacrificial worship.

9.5 DEUTERONOMY AND ISRAEL'S SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP

The reformation that King Josiah undertook revolutionised all aspects of Israel's religion. The centralisation of the sacrifice was in itself a sweeping innovation in the history of Israel's cult, but its consequences were, as one shall see, decisively more revolutionary in nature, in that they involved the collapse of an entire system of concepts that for centuries had been regarded as sacrosanct (Freedman, 1997). The elimination of the provincial cult made possible the transformation of Israel's religion into a religion that minimised external expression. Indeed, the very purpose of the book of Deuteronomy was to curtail and circumvent the cult, and not to extend or enhance it. The Deuteronomy conception of cult is, as shall be shown, vastly different from that reflected in the Tetrateuchal sources. It represents a turning point in the evolution of Israel's faith (Brown, 1993:149-150). In accordance with Deuteronomy, the sanctuary is "the place where YHWH chose to cause His name to dwell" (Von Rad, 1953:38-39). The new theological conception of the deity is repeated without digression. Therefore, the Temple is not God's habitation, but only a house of worship where Israelites and foreigners alike may deliver their prayers to the God who dwells in heaven (Freedman, 1997: 176).

The book of Deuteronomy cannot conceive of the possibility of seeing the divinity. The Israelites only saw "His great fire", which symbolises His essence and quality (Dt 4:24: "For YHWH your God remains in His heavenly abode"). The attempt to eliminate the inherent corporality of the traditional imagery also finds expression in Deuteronomy's conception of the ark. The specific function of the ark is to house the tablets of the covenant. (Dt 10:1-5). The sanctuary is

conceived as a house of prayer, not a cultic centre. This minimisation of the cult signals a religious turning point, materialised by the abolition of high places and provincial sanctuaries (Freedman, 1997: 177).

The first thing that catches one's attention when endeavouring to grasp the significance of sacrifice in Deuteronomy is that one does not find sacrifice being practised for its own sake. In terms of Deuteronomy, the Deity has no need of the "pleasing odor" of sacrifices, and nothing is mentioned of the "food of God", which is amply attested to in the Priestly Code (Lv 1:9, 13, 17; 21:6, 8, 17, 21). Neither is there any mention of the sin and guilt offerings designed to atone for involuntary sins, ritual impurity, perjury, theft and deception (Lv 4-5). The author's view seems to be that spiritual purification and repentance consist of confession and prayer, and that no sacrificial offerings expiate sin (Brown, 1993:125-133).

The only instance in which the book of Deuteronomy does mention a rite analogous to the sin and guilt offering in character is in the law of unsolved murder (Dt 21:1-9). However, the rite conducted here does not consist of a complete sacrificial offering with ceremonial slaughtering and blood sprinkling, but only involves the breaking of the heifer's neck in an uncultivated valley. This act, carried out by the elders, does not exclude the presence of the priests, who are there not to execute rituals, but merely guarantee the religious aspect of the ceremony by presiding over it (Brown, 1993:203-211). The whole thing has a symbolic value. The heifer's neck is broken at the scene of the crime, as it were, and the elders only cleanse their hands as a purification expression of innocence (Ps 24:4; 26:6-10; 73:13; etc).

There is no laying of hands on the heifer, nor the transference of sin to it, as in the case of the scapegoat ritual (Lv 16:21), because its beheading as such does not atone for sin - expiation is only effected by the confession and prayer uttered at the end of the ceremony. It is true that the custom itself originated from the elimination ritual (Wright, 1987). However, in the present elimination, nothing is said about removal of sin or impurity by the priests, as in Levitic 14: 53 and 16:22, or about transferring the evil to the open country, as in Leviticus 16:22 and the Mesopotamian incantations (Wright, 1987).

In this rite, God absolves the sin Himself without recourse to any intermediary, whereas in P all expiatory sacrifices are executed by priests, whose mediation alone effects the expiation of sin. In the law of Deuteronomy, atonement is possible through the elders, representatives of the guilty who seek absolution through confession and prayer, while in P, expiation is achieved through ritual sacrifice and incense burning, without prayer on behalf of the penitent (Brown, 1993:252-262).

Deuteronomy sacrifices consist primarily of offerings which are consumed in the sanctuary and shared with "*personae miserabile*": the poor, the Levites, the alien resident, the orphan and the widow. Deuteronomy's constant emphasis on

sharing with the indigent person creates the impression that the main purpose of sacrifice is to provide food to Israel's destitute people (Dt 16:22). Therefore, sacrifice, according to Deuteronomy, is not an institutional practice but a personal one, with two major objectives: humanitarian, that is, to share with the poor, and private, to fulfill a religious obligation and express one's gratitude to God by means of a votive offering (Brown, 1993:261; see also 1Sm 12:6, 17, 26; 23:22-24).

Deuteronomy 12:27 describes the right attitude for sacrificial offerings, but also differentiates between the non-burnt and burnt offerings, and ordains that the flesh and blood of the burnt offering be offered entirely on the altar, whereas the blood of the non-burnt offerings is to be poured upon the altar and the meat eaten. The burning of the suet, the piece of fat that was set aside for God, thus rendered the meat permissible for consumption by the priests and lay people (1Sm 2:12-17). This study fully agrees with Freedman, Von Rad and Brown with regard to Deuteronomy's reforms in Israel's sacrificial worship, and is of the view that these reforms can even be applicable to church worship, whereby the internal attitudes of worshippers should matter the most, rather than external manifestations. These reforms also agree with Hebrews 13:15, 16, whereby the emphasis on sacrifice is placed on the confession of Jesus' name, praise deeds of mutual love, and sharing.

9.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to give a brief overview of biblical sacrifices and sacrificial offerings as background information to an exegesis of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews. A few paragraphs have been devoted to briefly explaining some symbolic images within Hebrew sacrificial worship, namely blood, fire and smoke. Thereafter, the researcher looked at the altar, as well as its name and shape. Following this, Old Testament sacrifices were described by means of an overview, including Old Testament sacrificial typology and sacrificial procedures. The chapter then went on to describe sacrifice in P: animals, technique of sacrifice, basic types of animal sacrifice in P, namely burnt offerings, peace offerings and usage, purification offerings, atonement offerings, the performance of the purification offering, order and reparation offerings. While discussing the material concerning sacrifice in P, some parallels were identified, especially in the following cases:

- Desecration of a sacred item in Leviticus 27:9-13, and Leviticus 5:14-16 concerning a false vow. Both violation of a vow and desecration of sacred items are treated as parallel phenomena in Ancient Near Eastern legal materials.
- The example of Nazir in Numbers 6:8 has a formal parallel with the case of land dedication to the sanctuary in Leviticus 27.
- The example of the leper and the betrothed slave girl. Both in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, leprosy is often a result of serious sin against the sancta of a particular deity.

- There is also the case of a person sinning unknowingly in Leviticus 5:17-19 and Leviticus 4, which is also found in the Ancient Near East, where many cultic and ritual materials deal with the same problem.

Many parallels exist between Old Testament sacrifice and the Epistle to the Hebrews in terms of sacrificial types, animal victims, and the role of the blood of animals as a means of cleansing, as well as for covenantal ratification, and the paradigmatic sacrifice of a human being, which constitutes a notable shift in biblical sacrifices (Heb 9:19-28, cf. Ex24:5, 6; Lv 14:4,7; Ex 29:12, 36; Lv 17:11; Heb 10:1-18). This chapter went on to examine prophetic critique, as well as Deuteronomy and Israel's sacrificial worship, where significant reforms that were achieved in Israel's sacrificial worship were highlighted, which have injected fresh understanding into the knowledge and practice of sacrifice. Internal devotion, confession of sins, prayer and love for one's neighbour, sharing and concern for the poor, widows and foreigners, based on obedience to God, constitute the new meaning of true sacrificial worship. The above reforms in Israel's sacrificial worship appear to be a paradigm shift parallel to Hebrews 13:15-16, where sacrificial worship is no longer a matter of the shedding of animal blood, but rather confession of the Lord's name and performance of mutual deeds of love and sharing.

The next chapter will be devoted to the exegesis of the theme of sacrifice, especially the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Old Testament sacrifices were a divine provision which ensured a harmonious relationship between Yahweh and His chosen people. They were a means of reconciliation and forgiveness in the case of any kind of disruption in this relationship. They also served as a means of atonement, expiation and propitiation, and their sprinkled blood effected the purification of people and the sanctuary, as well as the cleansing of sanctuary furnishings and utensils. These sacrifices were effective, as they pointed to God's future redemption through the sacrifice of a human being, Jesus Christ, as will be seen in the exegesis of the theme of sacrifice, in particular the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

CHAPTER TEN: THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS IN HEBREWS: AN EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This theological exegesis will deal with the theme of sacrifice in the Epistle to the Hebrews and, more specifically, the sacrifice of Jesus. The aim of this study is not to analyse this theme in the minutest detail, but to achieve a thorough and proper analysis of the sacrifice of Jesus for the sake of comparison with African material. Therefore, this analysis will be centred on the last section of Hebrews 9 and the middle section of Hebrews 10, because this is where the theme is emphasised. Whatever overlaps in other parts of the text will be worked into this dissertation. This study will concentrate on the abovementioned texts in order to create a Christian framework, so that people coming from Africa can use the Epistle to the Hebrews to understand their culture better and how they can link together Christianity and African traditional religion, as far as the communicative power of blood sacrifices is concerned.

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews by looking at its nature, depicting the facts that it was representative, substitutionary and penal. The motivation behind it and its purpose will then be discussed, by attempting to show that its aims were to taste death for mankind, to bring sons to glory, to render the devil powerless, and to atone for sins. Following this, the chapter will go on to discuss this particular sacrifice's superiority, by pointing out the following: the sacrifice of Jesus accomplished God's will with regard to sacrifices, Christ's seated posture implies that His sacrificial mission has been accomplished once and forever, the superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus, the new covenant which confirms the fact that sin has been removed, and finally, how the sacrifice of Jesus dealt with sin.

This chapter will also attempt to show how Jesus' blood-life sacrifice sanctions the superiority of His sacrifice. Firstly, the following issues will be discussed: animal blood-life sacrifice as a prerequisite for the Leviticus high priest's entrance into the earthly sanctuary, the significance of animal blood-life sacrifice in the old order, the benefits of animal blood-life sacrifice in the symbolic earthly tabernacle, as well as the animal blood-life sacrifice and the purification significance of the red heifer. Thereafter, the discussion will focus on the following facts: Jesus' entrance to the heavenly sanctuary with His blood-life sacrifice stresses His sacrifice's superiority, secures eternal redemption, is a ransom price, achieves eternal atonement for sins, cleanses the worshippers' consciences, occurs through the Eternal Spirit, and sanctions His sacrifice's absolute superiority, because it was the sacrifice of Himself.

Finally, this chapter will discuss Jesus' blood-life sacrifice in terms of how it communicates power for manifold benefits, namely soteriological benefits,

psychological benefits and sociological benefits, and conclusions will then be drawn. Therefore, the nature of the sacrifice of Jesus will first be examined.

10.2 THE NATURE OF JESUS' SACRIFICE

10.2.1 The sacrifice of Jesus was representative

The writer of Hebrews considers Jesus to be the representative or mediator of men before God. He was designated as a High Priest (Heb 5:5), and every high priest is assigned responsibilities on behalf of men, that is, as Hebrews 5:1 states, to offer sacrifices to God (Morris, 1986:305). Old Testament high priests could be sincere and dedicated representatives. However, they were also sinful human beings like those they were representing – therefore, they were also to offer sacrifices for their own sins, as indicated in Hebrews 5:3 (Marshall, 2004:608).

Given the sanctity attached to sacrifice-making, only those called by God were acknowledged as priests (Marshall, 2004:608; see Heb 5:4-5). Therefore, the functional truth about Leviticus high priests can also be applied to Jesus. His being truly human, which is very significant, as the writer of Hebrews emphasises, qualifies Him to be a High Priest. Since He belongs to mankind's family, He is indeed capable of sympathising with the weaknesses of human beings (Morris, 1986:305-306). See also Young (1981:338-342) for a discussion of the functions of the high priest. In this regard, Hebrews 4:15 reads: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are –yet was without sin" (NIV) (Morris, 1986:304).

Throughout the Epistle (Heb 2:17; 3:1-2; 4:14-16; 5:5-6; 5:9-10; 6:20; 8:1-2; 9:11; 10:21), Jesus is acknowledged as a High Priest and is described in expressions and words that indicate that He is a representative of men before God (Marshall, 2004:608; see also Taylor, 1961-62:173-174). Especially important are those texts in which the preposition *·ΒΕΛ* ("on behalf of") is utilised to denote actions which men are incapable of accomplishing themselves (Heb 6:20; 7:25; 9:24; 5:1), and which Christ performs on their behalf (MacLeod, 1989:423; Taylor, 1961-62:172). One of the characteristics of a high priest is that he is a mere man recruited by the Perfect Manager into His enterprise, according to His divine, absolute, and accurate criteria. His job description is to mediate gifts and sacrifices for sins between his fellow men and God, and between God and himself (Archer, 1957: 34-35). Gordon says that the writer of the Epistle has the Day of Atonement in mind here. He specifies that the high priest is a mortal ($2<09 \bar{H}$), and that he acts on behalf of mortals (Gordon, 1991:66).

One has here a picture of a sinful man trying to reach out to God through a human intermediary, who acts as a facilitator or stand-in by means of animal

sacrifices and their blood. This shadowy and typological exercise in the Leviticus sacrificial system impacted on the real needs of the worshippers, which were primarily the covering of sins, restoration to proper vertical and horizontal relationships, as well as, to some extent, physical and spiritual well-being. The numerous animal victims were substitutes for sinful human beings' lives, and therefore worked as a means of expiation, propitiation and redemption, whose concrete realisation and application are found in Christ (Young, 1979:87-88).

Archer (1957) points out that sacrifices only became effective for those who had committed sins of "ignorance", that is, of thoughtlessness or carelessness or *bishegagah* (Nm 15:27-31), an "inadvertent-going-astray". Except for the sin of blasphemy, no sacrifice is provided (Archer, 1957:35). Gifts here probably stand for inanimate "offerings and oblations", and sacrifice would seem to refer to animated things, pointing to the Leviticus sacrificial holocaust. However, this differentiation is not always consistent with the Aaronic sacrificial system (Hewitt, 1973:95)

The weak consciousness on behalf of the priest serves as a strong safeguard. Consequently, he offers sacrifices for his own sins. Verse four emphatically states that a God-appointed priest must stay within the criteria and ordination regulations. With the above five insights, the writer of Hebrews draws a picture which applies to Jesus. The high priest must be endowed with infirmity, just as other men are. Verse four refers to priesthood through corruption, force or fraud. Westcott says that: "the notoriousness of the high priestly corruption at that time could not fail to give point to the language of the Epistle" (Westcott, 1984:120).

Although the contrast here is clear, there are several problems with this verse. The first stems from the remark that the high priests made their double offering "daily" ($\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \epsilon\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$). However, the double offering involved is clearly that of the Day of Atonement, which, as the writer of Hebrews knows (Heb 9:7), was a once-yearly observance (Brooks, 1970:208). Various attempts have been made to resolve this difficulty. Thus, the phrase "as the high priest" could be elliptical, and Christ would not need to do daily what the high priest did yearly. This reading has a distinctly odd sense, and the construal of $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \epsilon\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ as unrelated to $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \epsilon\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$, is artificial (Attridge, 1989:213).

"Daily" might be explained as a translation error, but this is highly unlikely in a work so obviously Greek in language and style. Since such explanations are unsatisfactory, it seems likely that the writer of Hebrews has somehow conflated the daily sacrifices with that of the Day of Atonement, which is for him the paradigm sacrifice. How he has done so is unclear. He may have the twice-daily animal sacrifice, the *Tamid* offering, in mind. Although the high priest was not obliged to make this sacrifice, except during the week preceding the Day of Atonement, he was permitted to make the offering at any time (Attridge, 1989:213).

Significantly, Philo suggests that the high priest offered sacrifices daily. There is no indication, however, that one of these sacrifices was understood to be for the high priest's own sins, and the sin offering specifically prescribed for priests is not a daily sacrifice. Another, more likely, explanation is that the writer of Hebrews had in mind, as the daily sacrifice for the priest's own sins, the meal offering that accompanied each *Tamid* sacrifice. The meal offering for the priests was also considered to be a sacrifice (21Φ.: ∇), although it did not involve any bloodshed and was not specifically designated as a sin offering (Attridge, 1989:214). Philo deals with the daily meal offering, assumes it to be for the priests, and mentions it before animal sacrifices, although, according to Pentateuch regulations, it was not offered first. A similar description of this function and sequence of the meal offering may well be presumed by this verse of Hebrews. The lack of precision of this verse suggests that the writer, like Philo, was not intimately acquainted with temple rituals, but instead based his understanding of it on his interpretation of the sacred texts filtered through an exegetical tradition. An analogous situation can be seen in the description of the temple and its furnishings (Heb 9:1-5), which is not the focus of this study (Attridge, 1989:214).

The second major difficulty with this verse is in terms of the description of Christ's sacrifice, where Hebrews says that He "did this" (9ε→9ε (□Δ fBε.: 0Φ, <). The antecedent of the demonstrative could be taken to be "offered as a sacrifice for His own sins", implying that Jesus does not have to do this daily, because He did it once. It is, however, clear that Christ is understood to be sinless, therefore the demonstrative must be construed as a reference to the sacrifice "for the sins of the people" (Attridge, 1989:214).

This study is not interested in Hebrews 8:1-2 because the focal point is the theme of sacrifice. Hebrews 8:3 is a disclosure of the symbolism announced in Hebrews 5:1, 3. The writer of Hebrews enters the temple again, and once again sees an extraordinary priest, altar, and a sacrifice upon the altar. The elements described in this section do not show a sacrificial animal. The writer's view is that the priest is seemingly, at this time, the practical sacrifice to be laid upon the altar. Then, the altar is the cross standing on Mount Golgotha, on which God's eternal sacrifice was immolated. Hebrews presents a tremendous shift in the New Testament from animal sacrifice to human sacrifice, the latter of which was abhorred by God and considered to be an abomination in His eyes in terms of the Old Testament sacrificial dispensation (Ex 13:15-16; Dt 18:9-13). Hebrews 10:5-7 shows this paradigm shift by means of a quotation from Psalm 39:7-9, which predicted the self-sacrifice of the God-man, Jesus Christ, as part of His eternal redemptive plan (Desilva, 2000:320-322).

Attridge (1989) says that the exposition of the theme of Christ as the heavenly minister proceeds through the application of a general principle. The principle that a priest is installed to offer gifts and sacrifices has already been described in Hebrews 5:1. From this it is deduced, with the logical language of necessity (□<∇(6∇ ρε<), that Christ too must have something to "offer" (BΔεΦ, <E(6→). The

writer of Hebrews provides the following insightful remarks: Jesus is appointed as a High Priest, it is not His doing, and God tells Him to bring a sacrifice. With regard to Hebrews 8:3, Ellingworth (1993:403-404) supports these remarks.

Loader (1981:148-150) offers another interpretation of this verse. He believes that it is not concerned with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, but “very probably” with His continuing ministry of intercession, and possibly a sacrifice of praise within the Christian community, as in Hebrews 13:15-16 (*4ζ ∇↔∂≡¬). This involves understanding $B\Delta\equiv\Phi, <E(t\rightarrow$ as “gnomic”, with $f\Phi\partial. <$ being understood, and $\partial\Delta\dots \nabla B\Delta\equiv\Phi, <E(t\rightarrow$ as generally meaning “he must be active as a high priest”. However, Loader admits that the $\partial\Delta$ raises the “greatest difficulty” for interpretation. $\alpha B\partial\Delta \square: \nabla\Delta\partial\Delta^{TM}<$ is thus deliberately avoided, in contrast to Hebrews 5:1. The problem arises, as Loader himself suggests, because “the details of the heavenly activity are not in foreground in chapter 8”.

The consequent ambivalence thus makes it very difficult to exclude Loader’s interpretation - the immediate context in verses one to six speaks of a single act ($\heartsuit\forall 2.: \Phi, < \nu 1$) that has lasting effects ($\partial\partial\partial\Delta\Delta, <, \nu 6$). Nevertheless, in view of the strong reference to Christ’s sacrifice in Hebrews 7:27, described at length in chapter nine, it is preferable to take $B\Delta\equiv\Phi\Delta\Delta\Delta\Delta B\Delta\equiv\Phi, E(t\rightarrow$ as referring, at least primarily, to Christ’s sacrifice. $B\Delta\equiv\Phi\Delta\Delta\Delta\Delta$ usually refers to sacrifice in Hebrews (Swetnam, 1981:121-122). Loader is, however, right to insist that there is no question, here or elsewhere in Hebrews, of the sacrifice of Christ itself continuously taking place in heaven (Ellingworth, 1993:404).

This study is of the view that, if one assumes the continuity of Jesus’ sacrifice in heaven, one is then saying that the Calvary sacrifice is not sufficient, and therefore needs to be supplemented by other sacrificial activities in heaven, which the writer of Hebrews does not seem to support. Christ performed a single sacrifice for sins for all times, and then “He sat down”, meaning that His work was accomplished and perfectly completed forever (Smith, 1984:124). “A seated priest is the guarantee of a finished work and accepted sacrifice” (Gossai, 2001:234). Unlike Ellingworth, this study can assert that the work accomplished at Calvary by the Great High Priest was done, and was not to be continued in heaven. With regard to this, Hebrews 10:18 says:” And where these have been forgiven there is no longer any sacrifice for sin”. The researcher will come back to this later in the dissertation, but for the time being, a look at the substitutionary aspect of the sacrifice of Jesus would be useful.

10.2.2 The sacrifice of Jesus was substitutionary

Worshippers whose sins were until death (Morris, 1951:466; Marchant, 1948:205) were redeemed by an animal victim, which was sacrificed in their place on the annual Day of Atonement (MacLeod, 1989:424). Leviticus 16:21 reveals that the high priest placed his hands upon the head of the goat, in order to signify people's identification with the animal and the transference of sins of the people to it (Lindars, 1991:77).

In this manner, the writer of Hebrews perceives the death of Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. In Hebrews 2:9, the writer specifies that Jesus' incarnation was realised so that "He might taste death for every one" ($B\infty\Delta \Downarrow B\infty\Delta B\forall<g\in H$). Chrysostom (1978), like Luther (1968), indicates that the verb "taste" ($(\beta\cong\forall A)$) in the phrase ($(\beta\cong 0g\forall A g\forall<g\cong A$) ("that He might taste death" Heb 2:9) had the implication of the short duration of Christ's death. They say that, as a physician tastes a drug to encourage the patient to drink it, in the same manner, Jesus tasted death in order to persuade Christian believers to face it (MacLeod, 1989:424).

However, according to Behm (1964:677), Macleod's interpretation fails to understand both the formula and the context. The phrase ($(\beta\cong 2\forall A 2\forall<g\cong A$) is equivalent to the rabbinical confrontation with the Jews in John 8:51-52, whereby the phrase "to see death" ($(\beta\cong 2\forall A 2g<\forall g\cong\langle)$) and ($2,\forall A,\top < 2\forall<g\cong\langle)$), used by Jesus, and "to taste death" ($(\beta\cong 2\forall A 2\forall<g\cong\langle)$), used by Jews, are equal. It is evident from the context that Jesus talked of a second or eternal death, although the Jews misunderstood this, and thought that He talked of physical death (Bernard, 1928:318; Morris, 1986:469).

In the present context (Heb 2:9), the reference has to do with death in all its fullness, including its physical and spiritual aspects (Delitzsch, 1978:116; Westcott, 1984:47; Moffat, 1917-18:26). "The phrase is a graphic expression of the hard and painful reality of dying" (Behm, 1964:677). This study agrees with the fact that the above phrase refers to physical death for all mortals, and spiritual death for disobedient people who die in sin. However, for Jesus, only the taste of physical death applies, because He is sinless and obedient to His Father, and therefore spiritual death can never be applied to Him, consideration being taken of His essential nature. Besides, it can be understood that the question of death has to do with the theology of God as the God of life. Therefore, some explanations regarding the matter of life and death in the New Testament would be appropriate here. The researcher wants to stress, however, that this is just a brief survey on what other New Testament books say about the concepts of life and death with regard to the theology of God. A new topic or heading is not being introduced, or unrelated material being combined. Rather, important information as far as the concepts of life and death are concerned in the New Testament is being provided.

New Testament references to the significant matter of life are found, as one might expect, in all the books of the New Testament. The doctrine of life is more clearly expressed in the theology of both Paul and John. The New Testament teachings concerning life evidently contain elements from the Old Testament, as well as having late Jewish and Greek origins. Remarkably, they are found in the Synoptic Gospels. The New Testament reveals the fact that the Old Testament looks at life as a “priceless possession” (1980: ad loc; see Mk 8:37).

Jesus is often called upon to use His power, in order that sick or dying men might live (Mk 5:23, *zese* - that she may live; cf. Jn 4:47-54), or even to restore to earthly life those who are already dead (Mk 5:35-43; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11:1-44). As in the Old Testament, temporal categories are used for life (Lk 1:75; cf. Heb 7:3; Rm 7:1-6), which is regarded as something dynamic, but at the same time bounded and transitory (Ac 17:28; Jas 4:14). It is no mere natural occurrence, but an event which can succeed or fail (Lk. 15:13, *τὸ ζῆναι*, to live dissolutely; 2Tm 3:12, *ζῆναι φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν*, to live a god-fearing life). True life depends on the word of God (Mt 4:4, quoting Dt 8:3), while to live away from God is portrayed as being dead (Lk 15:24, 32). The basic necessities of life, such as food and clothing, are by no means looked down upon or neglected – rather, they are gratefully received as gifts from the Creator (Mt 6:25-34; Lk 12:15). God, who can kill and make alive (Mt 10:28; Rm 4:17), is the absolute or sovereign Creator (Ac 17:25), the Lord (Lk 12:20; Ac 10:42; Jas 4:15), and the embodiment of life - He is the living God (Mt 16:16; 26:63) and the God of the living (1980: ad loc; cf. Mt 22:32; Mk 12:27; Lk 20:38).

After the present life, there is another life to come (Mk 10:30; 1Tim 4:8, “Godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (*τὸ ζῆναι ἰσχυρὸν ἐστιν ἐν παντί, ὡς ἔχει ἐπαγγελίαν τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς καὶ τῆς μελλούσης*). It is portrayed as “eternal life” (*ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, Matt. 19:16; par. Mk. 10:17; Lk. 18:18; Matt. 25:46; cf. 2 Tim. 1:10, *ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἀθανάτου*: *ζωὴ*, meaning life and immortality). A person reaches this not by reason of the immortality of the soul—this Greek idea is completely alien to the New Testament—but as a gift from God who resurrects the dead (Mt 22:31-33, parallel to Mk 12:26-27; Lk 20:36-40). The fact that the future life is occasionally referred to by the use of *zoe* alone, i.e. without any qualifying phrase, shows that such life is regarded as real and true, the very life of God Himself (Mt 18:18; Mk 9:43, 45). There is no implication here, however, of the deterioration of earthly life, as found in later Hellenism. On the contrary, man’s relationship to God’s will in this present life determines his destiny in the life to come (Mt 19:16, parallel to Mk 10:17; Lk 18:18; Lk 10:25). Matthew 7:13-23 (cf. Lk 13:23-30) takes up the idea of the two ways found in Deuteronomy 30:19; Jeremiah 21:8, Wisdom and Inter-Testamental literature, Qumran and later Christian writings (cf. Pr 8:20; 9:6; 12:15; 16:25; 2 Ezr 7:7-10 etc.). This close relationship between the present and future life is most visibly portrayed in the parable of the last judgment (Mt 25:31-46): the disobedient will suffer eternal punishment, while the righteous will enter into eternal life (1980: ad loc, cf. Mt 25:46).



Paul's view of life is deeply affected by the resurrection of Christ from the dead (1 Cor 15:4), which, being an accomplished fact, has proved the power of divine life over death (Rm 14:9). The apostle looks at Christ as the very embodiment of God's living power, conquering death and raising the dead (2Cor 13:4). Life means Christ's everlasting life, life after death and beyond the grave (1980: ad loc). Through His resurrection, Christ, the Last Adam, has become the author of a new life for mankind (Rm 5:12-21; 1Cor 15:20-34). The life of Christians is not their own life, but the life of Christ: Christ lives in them (Gal 2:20; Phlp 1:21), they live the life of Christ (2Cor 4:10). Their life is justified by Christ (Rm 5:18), and by His life they will be saved (Rm 5:10). The life of Christ is mediated to Christians neither through power (as with the gnostics), nor through mystic union, but by the word of life (Phlp 2:16; cf. 2Tm 1:10; Tt 1:2-4), and by the creative power of the resurrection Spirit (Rm 8:2, 6, 10-17; 1Cor 15:45). The new Spirit-wrought life of believers (Rm 6:4) does not try to run away from everyday life and into Stoic or gnostic indifference and asceticism. Rather, as Paul regards it, the Christian is to serve his fellow man responsibly, in whatever historical situation he finds himself. Since he no longer lives for himself (Rm 14:7; 2Cor 5:15), but for God (Rm 6:10-14) and Christ (Rm 14:8; 2Cor 5:15), his life shows positive, remarkable results (Gl 5:25, 26) as he follows in the footsteps of Christ and takes up Christ's cross (2Cor 4:9-18). Hence, Paul can make the following contradictory statement: "We are treated . . . as dying, and behold we live" (2Cor 6:8-13), since life comes from and through death. Not living for oneself means having an attitude of love for others (Rm 13:8-10; 14:11-23). It is important to note the datives and synonymous constructions which Paul uses with *zao*, in order to teach that "living for . . ." and "living with . . ." belong to the very structure of life (1980: ad loc). In the believer's new life, there is a tension between present and future, indicative and imperative (Gl 5:25).

His new life already exists, but has not yet been fully manifested (Col 3:3, 4). Christ's resurrection is the pledge of our own future resurrection to an eternal life, where death and all the imperfections of the present creation will be things of the past (Rm. 8:18-39). "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" ($\sum \cong B \cong 402Z \Phi \cong < 9 \nabla 4$, 1Cor 15:22; Adam). The new life is not confined to historical time, but points forward to eternal life when the last enemy, death, is defeated (1Cor 15:26, 28; Rm 6:22; Gl 6:8). Paul depicts the passing from temporal to eternal life in terms of cosmic drama, miraculous transformation and rapture (1Th 4:13-17; 1Cor 15:20-34, 35-50, 51-58). In so doing, he is following apocalyptic tradition, using apocalyptic imagery and symbolism. He does not engage, however, in the speculations of late Judaism, but confines himself to metaphorical hints concerning the form which the future life will take. It will be a bodily life (1Cor 15:35-44; 2Cor 5:1-10 - note that the Jews could not conceive of life in a disembodied state; Body). It will involve seeing face to face (1Cor 13:12; cf. 2Cor 5:7), entering into the fullness of righteousness, peace and joy (Rm 14:17), glory ($* \bar{\nabla}$, 2Cor 3:8-18) or glorification (Rm 8:17), but above all, being with Christ forever (1980: ad loc, cf. 1Th 4:17; 2Cor 5:8; Phlp 1:23).

The evangelist John presents the Word as being eternal life, even before His incarnation. He has lived eternally with God and for the benefit of men (Jn 1:4; 1 Jn 1:1-4) i.e. He is the source of divine life and power, both in the old and new creation. Through His incarnation, He is the revelation of God, but He not only brings eternal life through His word (Jn 6:68; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2) - He Himself is the true life (1Jn 5:20), as His various "I am" sayings indicate: "I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:35, 48), "the light of the world" (Jn 8:12), "the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25), "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). The pre-existing Son of the eternal Father is sent into the world to give life to men, both by His word and in His own person (1980: ad loc, cf. Jn 6:33; 10:10; 1 Jn 4:9).

The life of God is obtained through faith. He who believes in the Son has life (1Jn 5:12), eternal life (Jn 6:40, 47) - he has already passed from death to life (Jn 5:24; 1Jn 3:14). The eternal life which is granted to believers expresses itself through love (Jn 15:9-17) and joy (Jn 16:20-24). According to 1 Jn 3:14, brotherly love is the criterion for true life: "He who does not love remains in death. We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren." Although at many times John's view of life corresponds with that of the gnostics, he moves in the opposite direction, for whereas the gnostics transferred eternal life to an almost inaccessible world beyond time and space, John brings it right into the present and anchors it firmly to the word, commandment and person of Christ (Jn 17:3). In possessing this eternal life here and now, believers find death and judgment no longer factors to be reckoned with (Jn 5:24; 11:25), for such life has the seeds of eternity within it (Jn 4:14; 6:27; 12:25). All that remains for Christ's disciples is to see the divine glory (2, TΔ™Φ4< 9←< * >∇<, Jn 17:24), and their salvation will be complete (Bultmann, 1964:870-871).

The book of Revelations brings together the Son of man tradition with the figure of a slain lamb: "I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (Rv 1:17-18; cf. 1:13-16; 4:9-11). Whereas the Gospel of John, with its Hellenistic background, focuses entirely on the present life, Revelations goes back to Jewish traditions and concerns itself exclusively with the life to come. In the vision of the new Jerusalem, the mythical, early oriental pictures of the tree of life and the water of life, familiar from the story of the Garden of Eden (Gn 2:9-17), reoccur as images of the fullness of life in the new city of God (Rv 22:2-14, 19; 21:6; 22:1, 17). The vision of the new heaven and earth is the most wide-ranging in its promises: the last enemy, death, will be defeated (cf. Paul, 1Cor 15:26), and our eternal life with God will be utter perfection: "God Himself will be with them; He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (Bultmann, 1964:870-871, cf. Rv 21:3-4).



The New Testament idea of death is in line with the old Jewish view. The Hellenistic influences of Inter-Testamental Judaism have scarcely had any effect. For the most part, a consistent view is maintained. Whenever the term $\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$ (mortal) appears, it shows that the mortality of man is taken as a self-evident fact. Man lives in the shadow of death (Mt 4:16; Is 9:1, Septuagint). God, the source of all life, is the only one to whom immortality belongs (1Tm 6:16), whereas man has to live out his whole life with the fear of death (Heb. 2:15). As in Judaism, death is always seen as the death of an individual, and the possibility of viewing death as relative, by referring to the continuing life of a community, is foreign to New Testament thought. This being the case, significance is naturally attached to the question of what causes death. The answer to this question is briefly provided by Paul in a pregnant statement: "The wages of sin is death" (Rm 6:23). In terms of this view, the devil (Satan) can be seen as the one who has power over death (Heb 2:14), although, of course, it is God Himself who can destroy both body and soul in hell (1980: ad loc, cf. Mt 10:28; Rv 2:23). For the New Testament, the question of the cause of death is not a speculative one. Indeed, it is in connection with death that we are made most clearly aware that the New Testament is not interested in scientific problems. The question must be interpreted in light of its answer. In this way, one can see that Paul does not reflect upon death as a biological phenomenon, but as a theological one, in the sense that, in the universality of death, the universality of man's guilt and need for redemption become evident. When man turns his back upon God, "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rm 4:17), he cuts himself off from the root of his life and becomes subject to death. The phenomenon of death reveals, in this interpretation, the objective state of man in his lifetime. Living by what is created, by natural things over which he exercises control, he has cut himself off from the source of true life and thus given himself up to worthlessness (1980: ad loc). In his "progress" towards death, man can catch sight of the basic condition of his life. He lives as a sinner in death. Death is thus the power dominating his life, and to that extent, it is a present reality. Spiritual and physical death, inextricably bound together, constitute the reality of a life in sin. This leads the sinner to cry: "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24). In the same way, the father of the prodigal son calls his son dead (" $\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$ ", Lk 15:24, 32). In the fourth Gospel, death and life are also present realities of existence, depending on how man responds to Jesus as the divine crisis of his existence (Jn 5:24; 8:51; 11:25). He who cuts himself off from the church, in which the life-bringing word is proclaimed, is at the point of death (1980: ad loc, cf. Rv 3:2). It is Paul who reflects most on the link between the guilty state of man and his mortal destiny. After setting out, in Romans 1-4, a number of arguments to provide evidence that all men, without exception, have fallen into sin and thus become subject to death, and that they are called to life in Christ, he goes on in Romans 5:12-21 to further develop these themes, based on the Adam-Christ typology. The life which has been brought about by Christ is made to form an analogy to the fact that "sin came into the world by one man and death through sin" (Rm 5:12; cf. 1Cor 15:21-22). Paul explains that death has spread to all men "because all have sinned", thus guarding against the idea that

death as a result of sin is simply a fate that we have inherited. He emphasises its active character, and the fact that death is punishment for each man's sin. This does not, however, alter the important statement that all men, without exception, are subject to sin and death. Hence, salvation and life, which is victory over death, are not to be expected as a result of man's own efforts, but only through an act of God's grace, coming from outside man and appropriated by him (1980: ad loc).

In his rebellion against God, man is always seeking life through his own works, and as a result, whenever he avails himself of the law as a means of salvation, he only finds death. For Paul, therefore, law, sin and death are all on the same level. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law" (1Cor 15:56). Therefore, for the man who tries to find life on the basis of law, death becomes a present reality: "When the commandment came sin revived and I died" (Rm 7:9-12). If death is viewed as the historical result of human sin, the "natural" connection of human death to that of other living creatures poses the question as to why non-human living creatures are likewise subject to mortality. To this question, Paul, in line with contemporary Judaism (Gn 12:5), replies that "creation" has been subjected, not by its own will, but as a result of human sin, to futility and a transient state. It now waits to be set free from death, together with the "children of God" (Rm 8:19-22). Thus, Paul does not even regard death in the world of nature as a "natural" phenomenon (1980: ad loc).

In accordance with all that has been said, it is clear that, in the New Testament, death is not looked at as a natural phenomenon, but as an historical event, showing clearly the sinful condition of man. In this historical sense, death is seen as a power which enslaves man during the course of his life (Heb 2:15). Hence, it sometimes occurs in a quasi-personal form (Rv 20:14). The possibility of removing the fear of death by means of intellectual insight concerning its inescapability, or through a resolute or heroic act of dying, is therefore kept out of New Testament thought. The effect of the latter means would be to intensify sin. This is because it would mean that a man was trying to earn salvation by his own effort, even at the moment of dying, when death itself spells out a definitive judgment of that entire attitude. Statements about the death of Jesus constitute the focal point of the story of salvation in the New Testament. They are nearly always found in the New Testament in relation to statements about His resurrection and the justification or new life of those who believe (1980: ad loc).

Following the above explanation concerning the question of life and death, there is a need to continue with the discussion on the substitutionary nature of the death of Jesus. The context seems to suggest that the writer used the preposition $\cdot B\Xi\Delta$, with the connotation “in place of” or “instead of”. This thought in connection with the substitutionary importance of $\cdot B\Xi\Delta$ in Hebrews 2:9 is supported by Delitzsch (1978:421); Owen (1968:360-361) and Lenski (1966:77). In becoming the target of divine wrath against human sins, Christ was merely doing vicarious work, not only on “our behalf” or “with a view to our good”, but “in our place” (Macleod, 1989:424-25). Christ stood in the place ($\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \equiv: TM<$) of those who were sinners - “He who knew no sin” was made a sinner in place of sinners. If interpreted in this manner, this passage forms an “interchange” (cf. Hooker, 1971), and poses the question as to whether or not this is an instance of “vicarious suffering of Judgment”. It also displays the influence of the LXX Isaiah 53, specifically verse 9: “He did no iniquity” ($\square<.: \forall< \rightleftharpoons 6 fB\Xi.: 0\Phi\gamma<$). As the suffering servant took upon Himself the judgment that was destined for sinners (Is 53:4), Christ was made a sinner in the place of sinners. Even if it is as transparent as in the case of 1Peter 2:21-25 (cf. Breytenbach, 2005a), there are clear similarities between 2Corinthians 5:21 and the Greek text of the book of Isaiah (Breytenbach, 2005:169).

In exactly the same way, Galatians 3:13 formulates the idea of “interchange”. Again, Christ is described here as the one who took the place of Paul and those that he incorporates in his “we”. He and other Jewish Christians were “under the curse of the law” (Gl 3:10). In Galatians 3:13, the crucifixion of Christ is described in the language of the Greek Bible. Paul seems to follow the Jewish interpretation of Deuteronomy 21:23, and uses the phrase “everyone who hangs from a tree” ($B\Box H \textcircled{R} 6\Delta\gamma:\zeta:\gamma<\equiv H fB\mathfrak{R} \Pi\beta\delta\equiv\Lambda$) to refer to Jesus’ crucifixion. Christ became a curse “for us” ($0\Delta\Delta\Phi\vartheta\in H\dots(\gamma< : \bar{\gamma}<\equiv H \Downarrow B\infty\Delta \equiv: TM< 6\forall\vartheta\zeta\Delta\forall$). He was cursed by God. The consequence of being cursed “for us” is described by Paul through the “redemption” metaphor (cf. Tolmie, 2005).

Christ redeemed those who did not keep all that was written in the book of the law and did not do them (cf. Dt 27:26). The crucifixion of Christ, as a cursed person, is known to be in the place of those under the curse of the law, in order to be set free from the curse placed on those who have not observed the law. The blessing He had, as the seed of Abraham (Gl 3:16), came to be the blessing of nations (Gl 3:14). The $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \equiv: TM<$ phrase cannot be “explained in the light of Deuteronomy 21:23 as inter-text”. It appears rather in pre-Pauline tradition, upon which this study will focus later (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1985). The effect of Christ’s death is, inter alia, described either by the Greek phrases $\Downarrow B\Xi\Delta$ or $B\gamma\Delta.:$ with genitive, or $*4\zeta$ with accusative. This means that the way in which the Apostle Paul understood the effect of Christ’s “dying for” or “being delivered for” must be viewed in such a manner that it can be described by any of the above cases, since Paul uses them interchangeably.

The relation described by the action in the verb, and the result or effect brought about by this action can be expressed by the phrases $\downarrow BE\Delta$ or $B\gamma\Delta$: with genitive, or $*4\zeta$ with accusative. This is the case in the sense of “for”, “to the benefit of”. This $*4\zeta$ plus the accusative can have this meaning for Paul, which is clear from 1Corinthians 8:11 and 2Corinthians 8:9. It is clear that he uses $\downarrow BE\Delta$ in this sense in Romans 5:7. Those who copied his letters had no doubt about replacing his $\downarrow BE\Delta$ with $B\gamma\Delta$., in the sense of “pro”. This is evident in the *varia lectionis* to Galatians 1:4 and 1Thessalonians 5:10 (Breytenbach, 2005:171).

The explanation of the consequences of Christ’s death $\downarrow B\infty\Delta \equiv :^{\text{TM}}\langle$ by means of final clauses in 1Thessalonians 5:10 ($\zeta\langle\forall\dots \square:\forall \Phi\cdot\langle \forall\leftrightarrow\vartheta(.Z\Phi T:\gamma\langle$) and 2Corinthians 5:15 ($\zeta\langle\forall \cong \supset .^{\text{TM}}\langle\vartheta\gamma H :06E94 f\forall\Lambda\vartheta\cong\rho H .^{\text{TM}}\Phi4\langle \square88\square \vartheta(\downarrow B\infty\Delta \forall\cdot\vartheta^{\text{TM}}\langle \square B\cong 2\forall\langle \bar{\zeta}94$), clearly shows that Christ died for a specific purpose. 1Corinthians 15:3b cites another pre-Pauline tradition, saying that “Christ died for our sins”. From this expression, one can learn three things:

- It is the “interpretation of the death of Christ, the Messiah, the King of the Jews.
- Albeit that the linguistic pattern $\square B\cong 2\langle^{\circ}\Phi\gamma4\langle \downarrow BE\Delta \vartheta4\cong H$ is deeply rooted within Greek tradition, the phrase has its own peculiarities”. In the Greek tradition, “dying for” can be to the benefit of humans or “a better and great ideal”, for instance, the $B \bar{8}4H$. It is certain that “our sins” in 1Corinthians 15:3b does not fit into this model or example, and must therefore be explained differently.
- Thirdly, the phrase “for our sins” has the effect of removing the consequences of sins of those who were identified by “us”.

Given the fact that this study has recently dealt with this theme *in extensor* (cf. Breytenbach, 2003), it should be enough to note that the “uncommon combination of the $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$ -phrase with $\epsilon\zeta\eta\theta$ in 1Corinthians 15:3b assumes that the Greek tradition of “dying for” has been summed up by the Israelite-Jewish concept, namely that death removes the consequences of sins. This is often translated as “atonement” or “expiation” by English-speaking theologians, but, with the exception of Romans 3:25, Paul never uses a Greek equivalent for such a pattern. In 1Corinthians 15:3b, he refrains from providing an explanation of “the formulaic” phrase in such a sense. Two reasons can be mentioned for this: Paul simply quoting the tradition and the $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$ -phrase does not imply a cultic background when describing the effect of the verb $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$. The “anacoluthon” at the end of $\epsilon\zeta\eta\theta$ in Romans 8:3 could indicate that Paul draws on a tradition that also appears in Galatians 4:4 and in the Johannine tradition (Breytenbach, 2005:173, cf. Jn 3:16 and 1Jn 4:9). The emphasis in Romans 8:3, however, is on the expression $\iota\kappa\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. God punished sin in the incarnate Son, the verb that signals the legal symbolism by which the sending of the Son is explained (cf. BDAG, s.v.). The direct purpose of the passing of the sentence is given by the phrase $\text{καταρτίζουσι τὰς ἁμαρτίας}$, which can be rendered as “concerning sins”, meaning “to take away the consequences of sins” (cf. BDAG, s.v.).



In this case, it is possible to infer that Paul's use of terminology shows a combination of imagery from the realm of the expiation of sins (cf. Breytenbach, 1989a; 1993:73-75) and legal terminology. The $\beta\gamma\Delta\mathcal{R} \square: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}.$: $\forall H$ points to the suppression of the consequences of sin. As in the case of $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \mathcal{G}^{TM} < \square: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}4^{TM} <$ in 1Corinthians 15:3b, no definite terminology of expiation is used. Given the text, this study will not introduce it. According to Galatians 1:4a, Jesus delivered Himself "for our sins": $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \Delta^{TM} < \forall: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}4^{TM} <$ (Aland et al, 1983). The text of 1Corinthians 15:3b fuses the tradition of the expiation of sins with the Greek tradition of "dying for". In the case of Galatians 1:4, this may also be applicable (Breytenbach, 2005:174). One more possibility with regard to Paul's words can still be considered. Three reasons might lead one to presuppose that he uses traditional language: the affinity between Galatians 1:4a and Romans 4:25a, which is considered to be a traditional parallel, the use of the verb ($B\forall\Delta\gamma\forall$ -) $\forall: * \cong: 4$, which in both cases could render the meaning of LXX Isaiah 53:12, and the verb could also point to early Christian traditions. Jesus was betrayed ($B\forall\Delta\gamma\forall$ -) $* \cong: \Delta < \forall 4$) by Judas (1Cor 11:23; Mk 14:11, 18, 21, 41) and given to the Romans for punishment (Mk 15:1, 10, 15; Ac 3:13). Nevertheless, one important difference exists between Galatians 1:4 and Romans 4:25a on the one hand, and Isaiah 53 on the other. In accordance with LXX Isaiah 53:12, the $P\Lambda I I Z$ of the servant was delivered unto death ($B\forall\Delta\gamma* \bar{2}0 \gamma\mathcal{O}H \mathcal{2}\zeta < \forall\mathcal{G}\cong <$). He was delivered because of the iniquities of the people: $*4 \square \mathcal{G}\square H \square: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}.$: $\forall H \forall \leftrightarrow \mathcal{G}^{TM} < B\forall\Delta\gamma* \bar{2}0$ (Breytenbach, 2005:174). The sins of the community thus brought about the death of the servant. Could Galatians 1:4a be interpreted in the same manner? Did Jesus Christ give Himself "because of our sins"? If this is so, then this interpretation could also apply to Romans 4:25a, where the parallel with LXX Isaiah 53:12 is clearer: ^{TM}H (sc. $[0\Phi\cong -H \textcircled{0} 5\beta\Delta\cong H)$ $*4 \square \mathcal{G}\square H \square: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}.$: $\forall H \forall \leftrightarrow \mathcal{G}^{TM} < B\forall\Delta\gamma* \bar{2}0$. In light of 1Corinthians 15:3b; Romans 8:3 and Romans 4:25b ($6\forall\mathcal{R}$ "($\Xi\Delta\mathcal{2}0 *4 \square \mathcal{G} \leftarrow < *46\forall: T\Phi4 < \cong: ^{TM} <$), however, it appears as if Paul himself understood the tradition behind Romans 4:25a, and thus Galatians 1:4a, in the sense of "concerning our sins/ trespasses" means that the deliverance removed the consequences of sin. This rendering seems clear when one considers Galatians 1:4ab, "to set us free from the present evil age" (Breytenbach, 2005:175). Therefore, as in the case of $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \mathcal{G}^{TM} < \square: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}4^{TM} < \cong: ^{TM} <$ in 1Corinthians 15:3b and $\beta\gamma\Delta\mathcal{R} \square: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}.$: $\forall H$ in Romans 8:3, no terminology of expiation is used in Galatians 1:4 and Romans 4:25a. The $\beta\gamma\Delta\mathcal{R} / \leftrightarrow B\infty\Delta \mathcal{G}^{TM} < \square: \forall\Delta\mathcal{G}4^{TM} < \cong: ^{TM} <$ or $*4 \square \mathcal{G} \square B\forall\Delta\gamma\forall B\mathcal{G}\phi: \forall\mathcal{G}\forall \cong: ^{TM} <$ phrases indicate that the consequences of sin have been abolished. Neither they nor the ruling or main verb ($B\forall\Delta\gamma\forall$ -) $* \cong: *T: 4$ express a specific cultic background in relation to which the abrogation of the consequences of sin has to be interpreted. The wider context of the interpretation of the death of Christ (1Cor 15:3b), respectively of His self-deliverance (Gl 1:4), or being delivered (Rm 4:25a), or His mission (Rm 8:3), has it that the death on the cross separates the sequence between human sin and death (cf. Rm 3:23). Therefore, it might be said that this position of pre-Pauline tradition understands the death of Christ as being "concerning sins", thus removing the consequences of sins or trespasses. The prepositional phrases

with sins or trespasses do not show a specific background. In the case of those governed by the verb ($B\forall\Delta\forall$) $*\therefore*T:4$, the influence of LXX Isaiah 53:12 cannot be ruled out. Galatians 2:20 and Romans 8:32 take us beyond the analysis of achievable or viable pre-Pauline phrases. The “traditional formulaic language underlying” Galatians 1:4 and Romans 4:25 is used in both Galatians 2:20 and Romans 8:32.

Because Paul is referring to this tradition, he puts words together more freely and brings in $\Lambda\supseteq\bar{H}$ as a subject or object of $B\forall\Delta\forall*\therefore*T:4$, probably indicating the further influence of LXX Isaiah 53 (cf. the $B\forall4*\therefore\equiv<$ of verse 2). The Greek text of Isaiah 53 is worded in such a way that there is no reason to introduce the idea of the cultic expiation of sins in its interpretation of the suffering of the servant. Uniformly stated, the phrase $\delta\forall\mathcal{R}\ \delta\beta\Delta4\equiv H\ B\forall\Delta E*T\delta\gamma<\ \forall\leftrightarrow\vartheta\epsilon<\ \vartheta\forall\phi H\ \square:\forall\Delta\vartheta.\therefore\forall H\equiv:TM<$ in verses 6-7 has to be interpreted in light of the $*4\zeta$ -phrases in the verses that come before, so that it should be rendered: “But he was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities... and the Lord gave him up because of our sins”. He felt the pain of punishment for their sake (cf. Janowski, 1993).

Verse 12 supports this rendering (cf. *supra*). As a result, whoever wants to interpret Galatians 1:4; 2:20; Romans 4:25 and 8:32 “in the light of the suffering of the servant of Isaiah 53, has to follow Isaiah and understand the sins or the transgressions of the ‘us’ as the reason why the Son has been delivered or handed himself over”. This is not an expiation of sins, but rather vicarious suffering. In accordance with the $*4\zeta$ with an accusative in Romans 4:25a, one has to consider the alternative, that Paul was acquainted with the interpretation of the deliverance of the Son with regard to the Greek text of Isaiah 53 - a tradition in terms of which the crucifixion was understood as an act in which Jesus was (passively) handed over because of the transgressions of the community of believers, an idea which occurs in 1Peter 2:21-25 and 3:18 (cf. Breytenbach, 2005a).

In the texts dealt with above, the death of Christ was considered to be intended to benefit those who worded these texts - “this is my body for you” (1Cor 11:24- $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta\ \Downarrow:TM<$), “Christ died for our sins” (1Cor 15:3- $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta\ \vartheta^{TM}<\ \square:\forall\Delta\vartheta^{TM}<$), the Lord Jesus “gave Himself up for our sins” (Gl 1:4- $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta\ \vartheta^{TM}<\ \square:\forall\Delta\vartheta^{TM}<\ \equiv:TM<$), the Lord Jesus was delivered because of/for our transgressions (Rm 4:25a- $*4\ \vartheta\ \square\ B\forall\Delta\forall B\vartheta\phi:\forall\vartheta\forall\ \equiv:TM<$), “God made Christ who knew no sin a sinner in our place” ($\Downarrow B\infty\Delta\ \equiv:TM<$ -2Cor 5:21), “Christ became a cursed in our place” (Gl- $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta\ \equiv:TM<$). When looking at the passages in which the $\square B\equiv 2<\downarrow\Phi\delta\gamma 4<\ \Downarrow B E\Delta\ \vartheta 4<\equiv H$ appears in a Pauline sentence, not clearly identified as pre-Pauline tradition, three observations can be made:

- In the first place, the death of Christ is described as an act of love by Himself (2Cor 5:14) or by God (Rm 5:8).

- Secondly, the $\Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta \equiv: TM <$ is enlarged into $\Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta B_{\zeta} < \vartheta T <$ (2Cor 5:14-15) or $\Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta \square \Phi \gamma \exists TM <$ (Rm 5:6), or the brother for whom Christ died is mentioned (1Cor 8:11 *4 $\zeta \odot <$, Romans 14:15 $\Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta \equiv \Rightarrow$).
- Thirdly, the qualification $B \gamma \Delta \mathcal{R} / \Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta \vartheta TM < \square: \forall \Delta \vartheta 4 TM < \equiv: TM <$ is absent. Paul merely asserts that Christ died (e.g. 1Th 4:14; Gl 2:21) or that Christ “died for us”, without any further qualification (cf. 1Th 5:10- $B \gamma \Delta \mathcal{R} / \Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta \equiv: TM <$).

The phrase without the $\vartheta TM < \square: \forall \Delta \vartheta 4 TM <$ in 1Corinthians 15:3b needs to be viewed as a shorter tradition, although this might be not correct. The versions in 1Corinthians 8:11 and Romans 14:15 seem to point out that Paul used the formula in such a way that he interpreted the crucifixion as Christ dying for persons. This interpretation uses the Greek tradition of someone dying for someone else. Paul knew this motive, as can be seen in Romans 6:7 (for more detail, cf. Breytenbach, 2003).

Earlier on, this study argued that 1Corinthians 15:3b digresses significantly from the “linguistic pattern and the conceptual background of the $\square B \equiv 2 < \downarrow \Phi \delta \gamma 4 < \Downarrow B \exists \Delta \vartheta 4 < \equiv H$ phrase. “Paul’s reception of the traditional formula and the way in which he understood it, can be illustrated by referring to Romans 5:8”. The “*genitivus absolutus*” characterises in what condition the $\equiv: \gamma \delta H$ were when Christ died “for” us “as we were still sinners”. Paul therefore departs from the traditional view that “Christ died for our sins” (1Cor 15:3b) to Christ having died “for us sinners”. This suggests why he could begin his deliberations in Romans 5:6 with “as we were still weak, Christ died for the ungodly” ($O \Delta 4 \Phi \vartheta \in H \dots \Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta \square \Phi \gamma \exists TM < \square B \exists 2 \forall < \gamma <$). With this knowledge, one can easily go to 2Corinthians 5:14, where it is stated: “one died for all” ($\gamma \supset H \Downarrow B_{\infty} \Delta B_{\zeta} < \vartheta T < \square B \exists 2 \forall < \gamma <$).

According to Paul, all human beings are sinners (Rm 3:9, 23; 5:12d). In terms of this anthropology, he had to widen the understanding of the result or outcome of Christ's death. Christ did not only die for the sins of His followers, but He died "for them as being sinners and therefore the ungodly, for all, for humankind". The death of Christ should in this way be understood as being profitable to all sinful human beings. This "theological insight" could be viewed as the compelling force behind Paul's mission to the Gentiles. Before considering this remark any further, it is incumbent on this study to look at the ($B\forall\Delta\forall$) $\cdot\cdot\cdot$ $\cdot T:4\downarrow BE\Delta$ $94<\exists H$ phrases. In these examples, the tradition in Galatians 1:4 and Romans 4:25a was worded in such a way that "Christ was given up because of our transgressions" (Rm 4:25a), or that Jesus Christ gave Himself up for our sins (Gl 1:4). In his receiving of this tradition, Paul excluded the word "sins" and shortened it to: God gave up His own Son "for all of us" (Rm 8:32)- $\downarrow B\infty\Delta$ \equiv $\cdot TM< B\zeta<T<$). "Be it that the legal context of the deliverance of Jesus unto the Romans still echoes in the context", the question "in what way was the deliverance 'for all of us'?" should be answered in congruence with the whole of Romans 5-8". The Son was delivered for "all of us" as sinners. In order to grasp the effect that the death of Christ had on sinners, one must go back to the "dying for" texts in Paul's letters.

Rereading the "backdrop" of the Greek idea of "dying for", 2Corinthians 5:14 implies an unfamiliar result ($\square\Delta\forall$) of the death of one for all ($\gamma>H$ $\downarrow B\infty\Delta$ $B\zeta<T<$ $\square BE2\forall<\gamma<$). They are all dead ($\equiv\supseteq B\zeta<9\gamma H$ $\square BE2\forall<\exists<$). Christ's death for the ungodly or humankind is described as an act of love, but it does result in redemption, although not in the death of humankind. In terms of the deliverance tradition, Paul indicates a similar consequence, as can be deduced from Galatians 2:20. The Son of God delivered Himself for Paul ($\downarrow B\infty\Delta$ $f:\exists\rightarrow$) with the result that Paul "died". How can this be understood (Breytenbach, 2005)?



Before pursuing this argument, the researcher will provide a short summary. Paul acquired the tradition that Christ died “for us”, or that He was delivered “concerning our sins”. He promoted the interpretation of the death on the cross in four ways. Firstly, he personalised the tradition. Christ died for persons: the Son of God delivered Himself for Paul. In the second instance, he universalised it. Christ died for us “when we were still sinners”; he therefore died “for the ungodly”, that is, “for all”. In the third place, this death is an expression of love. Lastly, the death of Christ results in salvation (Breytenbach, 2005; Rm 5:8; 2Cor 5:15). At this point, one needs to go back to the passages in Galatians 3:13 and 2Corinthians 5:21, and the notion that the status of Christ and “us” as cursed and sinners were interchangeable. God “cursed Christ, made Him who knew no sin a sinner, $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \equiv: TM<$ “. In terms of these passages, the texts that came before, for instance, Galatians 2:20 and 2Corinthians 5:14 respectively, can only be interpreted as follows: the Son gave Himself up in Paul’s place (Gl 2:20) and if one dies in the place of all, all are dead (2Cor 5:14). Romans 5:8 supports this interpretation even more: Christ died as a sinner in the place of $\equiv: \gamma \rho H$ “when we were still sinners”. Words such as “substitution” or “representation” are frequently used to describe this process of interchangeability, but one should refrain from bringing “traditional dogmatic” ideas into the interpretation of $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta$ phrasing in 2Corinthians 5:14, Galatians 2:20 and Romans 5:6, 8. It is clear that Christ took over the position in which those who became beneficiaries of His death had been. If one concludes by saying that the death of Christ “for all” has the consequence of the death of ungodly humankind, one still has to investigate one’s original question further (Breytenbach, 2005). How did Paul regard this as being viable? In attempting to answer this question, this study can only try to explain its perception of his logic. The $(B\forall\Delta\forall-)*.: *T:4 \Downarrow BE\Delta \rho 4<\equiv H$ phrase might be of help. As du Toit (2005) re-emphasises, $B\forall\Delta\forall*.: *T:4 \rho.: <\forall \rho 4<4$ is a “forensic” term indicating the delivering of some- one to be punished. The passionate accounts in the Gospels constitute the backdrop to Paul’s interpretation of the deliverance of Christ, the Son of God. He was delivered to be punished. The “forensic overtones” in Galatians 2:20 and Romans 8:3, 32 are clear. Paul views the death of Christ as the consequence of the judgment by God. He cursed Christ $\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \equiv: TM<$ (Gl 3:13); He judged sin in the incarnated Son of God (Rm 8:3). The crucifixion needs to be understood as a “prolepsis of the eschatological judgment by God”. He handed over and judged Christ, instead of the ungodly, instead of all. According to the “dying for” tradition, Paul introduces “an awkward twist to the Greek motif (cf. Breytenbach, 2003).

Those Christ died for, are not saved by His death, as “Alkestis’ husband was saved by her death”. Paul does not share in the opinion of Caiaphas, who anticipated Jesus’ death to save the $\clubsuit 2<\equiv H$ (Jn 11:50-51). In 2Corinthians 5:14, Paul clearly expresses his view: all have died. Here, Paul implies that Christ’s death includes the whole of humankind. The same line of argument is seen in Romans 8:3: God sent His only Son $f< @:\equiv: T:\forall \rho 4 \Phi\forall\Delta 6\in H \square:\forall\Delta \rho.: \forall H$. He represents humankind when he is made a sinner (2Cor 5:21), a curse (Gl 3:13) handed over for punishment on their behalf.

In Hebrews 2:5-9, the writer stresses that man does not yet have sovereignty, and he implies that this is because of sin. As his vicar, Jesus bore the curse of sin upon Himself in His self-sacrifice, and because of that sacrifice “man’s ultimate sovereignty over the earth is assured”. Such representation presumes that a substitutionary significance be contained in the preposition $\cdot BEA$ (MacLeod, 1989:425). Scholars such as Lührmann (1974:434), Westcott (1984:47) and Riesenfeld (1972:510), to name but a few, prefer a “representative sense” (“for in behalf of”, “for the sake of”) for $\cdot BEA$ in Hebrews 2:9, but not a substitutionary sense.

Just as the Old Testament priest offered sacrifices “for” the people, Jesus, in the same way, offered Himself in death “for the sake of men”. Davie, Riesenfeld and Robertson mention two main objections:

- The writer of Hebrews would have used $\zeta < \vartheta$.: if he had intended a substitutionary meaning. In the time of the New Testament, the use of $\zeta < \vartheta$.: was sensibly reduced, even though it must be said that the writer of Hebrews also used it in Hebrews 12:2, 16 (Davie, 1967:90). Furthermore, in the writer’s use of $\zeta < \vartheta$.: in Hebrews 12:2, 16, the meaning is that of “in exchange for”, not “instead of” Therefore, he could have used βBEA , because it has two meanings, namely that it conveys the idea that Christ died both “for our sake” and “in our stead” (Davie, 1967:90). As Riesenfeld (1972:512) agrees, the meaning of “on behalf of” is very close to “in the place of” or “instead of...”. Robertson (1934) also agreed with this, and so does this study.
- The writer could not have signified that “Jesus died instead of every one, for all men still die”. The requirements to die are related to Old Testament covenant stipulations which defined the relationship between YWH and His chosen people, the Israelites, in terms of blessings in the case of obedience, and curses (including physical death) in the case of disobedience. The culprit was condemned to die by the divine hand or the hands of the community of Israelites by means of stoning, without pity. This was also considered as a means to purge the community of God’s covenantal people of any defilement, in order to avoid contamination of the community and to stop the spread and intensification of evil (1980: ad loc).

The book of Deuteronomy 7:9-10, speaking to the Israelites, says: “ Know that the Lord God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations with those who keep His commands. But those who hate Him He will repay to their face by destruction; He will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate Him”. Deuteronomy 27:26 indicates that the covenant breaker is a cursed person. Deuteronomy 13, as well as Leviticus 19-20, provides various laws and requirements for the death penalty in the event of their transgression. A prophet or dreamer who deceives God’s people and leads them into idolatry must die. This does not spare a person’s own bother, son, daughter

or wife, if it is found that they are encouraging Israel to worship other gods. They were then entitled to die. When it was reported that evil men or women were dwelling in a certain city, the city, together with its inhabitants, was completely destroyed after a thorough investigation. (Dt 13:15-18).

The covenantal stipulations empowered Israel's community to put to death, by stoning, any person who was considered to be cursed according to these stipulations (Dt 13; Lv 19-20). The Old Testament covenantal requirements to observe, keep and practise the words of the covenant, inevitably resulted in an obligation to die in the event of non-observance, breaking or a failure to practise them. The people, the Israelites, had God's legally prescribed permission to remove evil-doers from the community, by putting them to death. The same procedure and reason seems to apply to the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus was condemned to die as a political rebel because of the charge "King of the Jews". Luke 23:2 clearly indicates that Jews accused Jesus, saying: "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposed payment of tax to Caesar and claimed to be Christ, a King". Before the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, Jesus was accused of claiming the ability to destroy the Temple of God (Mt 26:61).

During Jesus' trial, the high priest, whose name is not specified, charged Jesus under oath by the living God, asking whether or not He is Christ, the Son of God. At His affirmative response and reference to His position and future glory, He was charged with blasphemy. Requiring the opinion of the people, the community of the Israelites present at that time unanimously agreed that Jesus deserved to die for His blasphemy (Mt 26:64-65; Lk 22:66-71). Without going into much detail in relation to the Old Testament theology of the covenant and its requirements, the few scriptural passages mentioned above indicate that Jesus' claim to be able to destroy the Temple of God, as well as His affirmation of being Christ and the Son of God, in the ears, minds and rigorous beliefs of the Jews present at that time was a grave profanation, blasphemy and deception, and the claimant only deserved to die as a cursed individual, in accordance with the requirements of the Old Testament covenantal theology. Therefore, the community of the Jewish people represented at the Sanhedrin could do nothing else except remove Jesus or put Him to death, in the same way as any other cursed individual, prophet, dreamer, criminal or evil-doer who has misled God's people, according to Deuteronomy 13.

In terms of the objections mentioned by Davie and Riesenfeld, however, the objection by Montefiore (1964:58) seems to miss the point completely, since Jesus' death was more than a physical death, in that He took up the curse of death in both its physical and spiritual dimensions. In other words, He died in order to spare others from experiencing a second death. In Hebrews, therefore, Jesus differentiates Himself from a priest who offers a sacrificial victim "for" the people, as He is Himself the sacrificial victim who dies in the place of sinners (Owen, 1968:360-361). This study is of the opinion that, even though Jesus died instead of sinners, only those sinners that believe in His sacrificial work and

practise it are the ones who will not feel the sting of the second death. In this regard, Revelations 20:6 reads:” Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years”.

The fact that Christ’s death was substitutionary is referred to in other instances (see the “for us” section above). In Hebrews 7: 27, Christ’s sacrificial offering is differentiated from those of the Leviticus high priests, who vicariously offered animal sacrifices as substitutes ($\cdot B\bar{E}\Delta$) for the payment of sins. It is quite clear that the writer of Hebrews considers the death of Jesus to be substitutionary, since he maintains that He did not offer the extraneous blood of animals, but the complete offering of Himself: $\infty \forall \Delta \bar{g} \bar{\zeta}$ (Schrenk, 1865:280). This also appears in Hebrews 9:12-14 - Christ did not go into the heavenly Holy of Holies through the medium or merit of extraneous animal substitutes, but through the merit of $*4\zeta$, “His own blood” (MacLeod, 1989:426).

In contrast to the Old Testament priests “He offered Himself” ($\infty \forall \Delta \bar{g} \bar{\zeta}$). The same idea is found in Hebrews 10:19-20, where readers are ensured that they have access to the Holy of holies through the medium or virtue of the blood of Jesus (Buchanan, 1972:168). This access has been obtained through the substitutionary death of Jesus (MacLeod, 1989:426). Through the medium of His flesh or substitutionary bodily sacrifice, the way to fellowship with God is made available (Meeter, 1916:147 – the reason for this lies in covenantal practices in the Old Testament). At this stage, there is a need to understand how the sacrifice of Jesus was essentially penal.

10.2.3 The sacrifice of Jesus was penal

In alluding to Isaiah 53:12, the writer of Hebrews points out that Christ was sacrificed “to bear the sins of many”. In the LXX of Isaiah 53:11, $\zeta < \forall N\bar{E}\Delta T$ is the translation of the Hebrew word in Isaiah 53:12. The Hebrew verb in Isaiah 53:11 means “to bear a heavy load of guilt”. The Hebrew verb in Isaiah 53:12 means “to bear guilt or punishment”. These afflictions of the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah are of “a vicarious atoning” type (Delitzsch, 1978:341). Christ was offered “to bear the sins of many” (Heb 9:28, $\therefore H \bar{g} \bar{B} \cong 88^{TM} < \Pi, \bar{\rho} < \square: \forall \Delta \bar{g} \therefore \forall H$). $\therefore H$ with the infinitive can stand for purpose or result. Usually, these categories seem to merge in that “a result may be a designed consequence” (Harris, 1975-78:1187).

In the context of Hebrews 9:26-28, the writer is attempting to prove that Christ’s sacrifice cannot be repeated, arguing this on the grounds of Jesus’ humanity. Men have one life to live and then they die, at which time judgment comes into the world to come (Bruce, 1980:520). Thus, it stands with Christ: He can die but only once (Hughes, 1977:386-87), and at His second coming, “when He shall deliver His people from judgment” (MacLeod, 1989:427). Westcott (1984:278) and Davidson (1882:188), to name but a few, believe that men die once and come into judgment, but Christ died once and will return as a judge.

However, Newell (1945:324) has argued differently: men die once and come into judgment. Christ died once and faced judgment, that is, as a sin bearer. “Christ on the cross met the double appointment: not only physical death, but death under divine judgment” There is a clear distinction between Christ and other men, however. Generally speaking, death has been intended for men as a penalty for their sins (Büschel, 1965:92-93). Christ, the spotless, sinless sacrificial victim (Heb 4:15; 7:26), on the other hand, has vicariously borne upon Himself the consequences of the sins of human beings, and has purged the punishment for them (MacLeod, 1989:427). The phrase “to bear sins” ($\zeta < \forall NEAT$) has been given four different interpretations:

- Bengel (1971:643), who found that 1Peter 2:24 was being alluded to, gives the following interpretation: “Christ carried our sins up on the cross”.
- The interpretation that “Christ carried our sins up to the altar of the cross and offered them” is provided by Westcott (1984:277), who also cites 1Peter 2:24. However, in this text, $\zeta < \forall NEAT$ expresses the idea of “taking the blame for sins” (Kelly, 1969:123). Westcott argues that the writer of Hebrews is not concerned here “primarily with...the punishment of sins”. Dods (1970:341) asks: “in what intelligible sense can sins be borne but by bearing their punishment”? Furthermore, Kelly (1969:122) observes that the “idea of sins being placed on the altar and slain there is impossible to reconcile with OT conceptions”.
- This interpretation is supported by Deissmann (1978:88-91) and Lührmann (1974:627), who say that “Christ has taken sins away, that is, removed them” (MacLeod, 1989:428).

The writer of Hebrews, however, uses other sentence constructions such as: “... but now He appeared once for all at the end of the ages to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” and “because by one sacrifice He has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy”, for the “putting away or taking away of sins”. In Hebrews 9:26 and Hebrews 10: 14 respectively, although the corresponding Hebrew words might mean “bear” or “take away”, $\zeta < \forall NEAT$ does not seem to have these meanings. On the contrary, it has the meaning of “to lay or impose a burden on someone”. In the Old Testament, when a Hebrew word is rendered by $\zeta < \forall NEAT$, for example in Numbers 14:33, it has the meaning of “to bear the punishment of”. (4) This interpretation reads thus: “Christ has vicariously taken upon Himself the consequences, that is, the punishment and the responsibilities of our sins (Owen, 1968:412-13; Alford, 1958:184; Morris, 1986:93)

Although this study agrees with the above interpretations, the interpretation offered by Deissmann that “Christ has taken sins away, that is, He removed them” may prompt inquiry to some extent. If so, from where to where? Nearly more than two thousand years have passed since Jesus offered Himself for the sins of many on Calvary Hill. But, since then, sins of all kinds have not ceased to exist. How should people account for the historical applicability of such a removal? Given the abstraction and non-palpability of sin, how can one

objectively localise the sin's primary abode and secondary destiny after removal? In the researcher's view, this removal cannot be generalized, but must be concretely qualified. This is because the taking away of sins has to do with the restoration of the relationship whereby one must die if one does not follow the rules of the covenant. Jesus' death was inclusive, and he died on our behalf, thereby restoring the relationship. It does not matter how much sin there has been -one will still die. Thus, the amount of sin does not count, but rather the fact that one has to die. Death pays the penalty, and in this way the relationship is restored.

According to this study, the taking away of sin is both inclusive and exclusive. It is inclusive as an opportunity for anyone to grab. In this sense, it is a universal offer. On the other hand, it is exclusive in that only those who believe in and seek God for mercy, who accept what Jesus did on the cross and repent of their sins, can have them removed. This removal should not be understood as something physical, material or mechanical, but rather as a metamorphosis in the spiritual arena, felt by and affecting the whole person. It is also very significant to note that the removal is not synonymous with cessation, because sanctification is a process, and the person whose sins have been removed may sin again without being enslaved by sin (see Heb 2:17-18; 4:15-16; 7:24-25; 8:8-12; 10:16-18). With this in mind, this chapter will now examine the motivation behind the sacrifice of Jesus, as it is viewed in Hebrews 2:9 and Hebrews 5:7-10.

10.3 THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes that Jesus tasted death by "the grace of God" or $\Pi\zeta\Delta\Delta\theta\theta\ \alpha\epsilon\grave{\iota}\nu$ (Morris, 1986:275 - see Heb 2:9; 4:15-16; 5:7-10). By grace, the writer understands "the divine goodwill and loving favor" that is at the very centre of the Christian Gospel (Moffat, 1924:349). It "is God's favor towards those who don't deserve His favor" (Guthrie, 1983:105). It is His state of undeserved and free love. In Hebrews 2:9-10, the accent is placed on the divine initiative for universal salvation (MacLeod, 1989:429). The writer of Hebrews employs $\Pi\theta\Delta\text{:}H$ 13 times, and in each instance with an anarthrous noun, although he uses $\Pi\zeta\Delta\theta H$ with an articular genitive (e.g. Heb 12:15).

In Hebrews 2:9, the genitive seems to be anarthrous. In this regard, three different interpretations have been given:

- Origen and Bengel say that: "Christ died for everyone except God". Bengel finds a parallel in 1Corinthians 15:27, where all is surrendered to Christ, except God (MacLeod, 1989:429).
- Ambrose and Mopsuestia hold that: "Christ died for every one except His deity", that is, His deity did not die. This perception appears to be irrelevant to the context, even though the teaching about the "impassibility" of Christ's divine nature is doctrinally orthodox (Hughes, 1977:95; Shedd, 1978:404). If this was the writer's intended meaning, he would most likely

have constructed the phrase in the following manner: $\Pi\Delta\rho H \rho\uparrow H$
2, $\bar{\rho}0\rho\equiv H$ (Moffat, 1924:27; Spicq, 1953:419).

- “Christ died separated from and forsaken by God”, as Matthew 26:46 suggests. This interpretation is supported by scholars such as O’Neill (1966:82) and Elliott (1972:339-341).

This study is of the view that, if the interpretation supported by scholars such as O’Neill and Elliot were the true meaning that the writer of Hebrews intended to convey, then he would have used a more graceful rendering, such as $\zeta\rho,\Delta 2,\equiv\rightarrow$ or $6,\Pi\Delta\Phi:\Xi<\equiv H \zeta B\in 2,\equiv\rightarrow$ (Moffat, 1924:27; Tasker, 1954-55:184). Nevertheless, many writers have denied this rendering because it lacks any significant support. Its widespread recognition and acceptance might be based upon its homiletic possibilities. It may have originated from a scribal lapse, misreading $\Pi\zeta\Delta\Phi$ as $\Pi\Delta.:H$ or “as marginal gloss” (as suggested by 1Cor 15:27), in order to suggest that “every one” in Hebrews 2:9 excludes God (Metzger, 1971:664). See also Alford (1958:39-40), Delitzsch (1978:113-15) and Hughes (1977:94-97) in this regard.

As in Paul, “God is the ultimate fountain of grace” in Hebrews (MacLeod, 1989:429 - see Heb 4:15-16; 13:9b, 25b; 12:15a). There is one other instance in Hebrews that seems to support the writer’s suggestion concerning the divine initiative behind Christ’s sacrifice. Normally, of course, he suggests that Jesus is the High Priest who offered the sacrificial offering of Himself (Heb 7:27; 9:25; 10:12). However, in Hebrews 9:28, he employs the passive participle $B\Delta\equiv\Phi,<,\Pi 2,.:H$ (“having been offered”). The context of Hebrews 9:26-28 would indicate that God is the one who offered Him (MacLeod, 1989:430). In Hebrews 9:27, he emphasises that “it has been appointed (implying God) for man to die once”. The idea expressed in verse 28 appears to be parallel, namely that “Christ died once by divine appointment” (Bruce, 1964:222).

Five different agents have been suggested here with regard to the use of the participle:

- Davidson (1882:188) says that “the agent is material; the chief point being Christ’s being offered to put away sin”.
- “The agent is mankind”, thus $\cdot B\in \rho^{\text{TM}}< \square<2\Delta\phi BT<$. Delitzsch (1978:135) approached this view, but denied it on the basis of the argument that the men who killed Christ had no intention of atoning. See also Alford (1958:183) in this regard.
- Delitzsch (1978:135-136), Westcott (1984:277) and Guthrie (1983:200) say that: “The agent is human and demonic violence subservient to divine sovereignty”, since the idea is parallel to Acts 2:23.
- Owen (1968:411) and Alford (1958:183) suggest that “the agent is Christ Himself, that is, His Human nature/victim/ was offered by His divine nature/High Priest”, $*4\square B<,\leftrightarrow:\forall\rho\equiv H \forall\emptyset T<\supset\equiv\Lambda$, in Hebrews 9:14.
- Bruce (1964:222), Montefiore (1964:162) and Moffat (1924:134) say that: “the agent is God”. This view is preferable in that “the passive parallels

man's passive experience of death by divine appointment". This study also agrees with this view because, unlike Owen and Alford, the dual nature of Christ while on earth could not be separated and start working on or against each other. It is unthinkable that the Holy God would collaborate with demons, or that human beings and demonic violence could serve a divine, sovereign purpose.

This study does not support the view held by Delitzsch and Westcott, which seems to attribute the death of Jesus to human beings and demonic violence, because it is the researcher's belief that the cross fitted in well with God's eternal, redemptive plan. All the same, as mentioned above, this study agrees with Bruce, Montefiore and Moffat, who appear to sound biblical. One can deduce from their view that it was God Himself who carried out the event of the cross as part of His eternal, redemptive plan, in accordance with His sovereign purpose.

Building upon the previous discussion, this study finds that, in Hebrews 2:9, the writer says that Jesus tasted death "for every one" ($\cdot B\infty\Delta B\forall<9 \bar{H}$). This has challenged scholars in terms of its importance to historic debate over the extent of atonement. Davidson (1882) concluded that the passage has no bearing upon the question. Calvin (1963:24), Owen (1968:361) and Brown (1961:349-350) have taken note of the fact that, in this context, Christ's death is associated with "many sons" (Heb 2:10), "those who are sanctified" (Heb 2:11) and "the seed of Abraham" (Heb 2:16), and concluded that "Christ died for all of the redeemed, that is the elect". Finally, to mention but a few, Delitzsch (1978:115), Alford (1958:41), Lünemann (1979:434), Montefiore (1964:58) and Kent (1972:54) maintain that the writer's pertinent point is that Christ died for all without exception, that is, for every single individual among men (Lünemann, 1979:434). This study supports Delitzsch and his followers' view, because it is not separated from the all-encompassing, divine redemptive purpose for mankind (for detailed information on this, see Breytenbach (2005) above).

In this, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews agrees with other New Testament writers who claim that there was a universal provision in the death of Christ (Jn 3:16; 1Tm 2:6; 1Jn 2:2). The question of the extent of atonement has also been raised in connection with the writer's affirmation in Hebrews 9:28 that Christ carried the sins "of many" ($B\cong 88^{TM}<$). In an attempt to contrast the "men" of Hebrews 9:27, Owen (1968:412) and Brown (1961:430) maintain that the latter group (of "men") refers to all mankind, but the former group ("many") refers to only the elite. Commentators such as Bengel (1971:644), Alford (1958:184) and Westcott (1984:278) have, however, come to the conclusion that the "many" does not exclude mankind in general, the term $B\cong 88^{TM}<$ making a pleasing contact with $\square B\forall>$ ("once"). This study perfectly agrees with Delitzsch, who supports the fact that Jesus died for all mankind. If one is selective here, one would be faced with the big challenge of determining who the elite are and who

they are not, thus accusing God of favouritism and partiality (Breytenbach, 2005 above).

Calvin (1963:131) added that “He says ‘many’ meaning ‘all’”, as in Romans 5:15. With regard to Romans 5:15, Bruce (1980) says that the “many” refers to the “great mass of mankind”, like the twofold ‘all’ in 1Corinthians 15:22. Here, Paul’s reasoning was as follows: “if Adam’s fall had the effect of producing the ruin of many, the grace of God is much more efficacious in benefiting many, since admittedly Christ is much more powerful to save than Adam was to ruin” (1980:131-132). Harrisville (1980) confirms this by arguing that the transgression of Adam resulted in the death of many, but that the free gift of God has abounded for many by the unfathomable grace of God (1980:85, cf. Breytenbach, 2005 above).

It is certain that not all enjoy the fruits of Christ’s death, but this happens because their unbelief hinders them. This “universalism is qualified, of course, by man’s willingness to believe (Heb 4:2), which willingness is ultimately the product of God’s calling” (Heb 3:1). Andrew Fuller’s popular “aphorism” (“sufficient for all, efficient for some”), cited in WPNT 5:346, is true if one means “universal atonement qualified not by the design of the atonement but the doctrine of election”. Darby (*New Translation*) considered $B\forall<9 \bar{H}$ to be neuter, and came up with the translation “everything”. Kelly (1969:34) supported this view. Their interpretation maintained that this referred to the “ultimate reconciling or pacifying influence of Christ’s work in creation”. See Romans 8:19-22 and Revelations 21:1-8 in this regard.

In terms of Romans 8:19-22, Emerton & Cranfield (1985) indicate that these verses suggest the content of Christian believers’ anticipated hope, in contrast to its current “painful context”. Christian believers’ confident expectation can only be viewed by faith now (Emerton & Cranfield, 1985:410-417). Hodge (1975) emphasises that incomparable glory is in the future. Creation also waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, since creation must also share in the glorious redemption (Hodge, 1975:269-275). With regard to Revelations 21:1-8, Krodel (1989) describes the new heaven and earth, as well as the new Jerusalem, as the cleanest and most conducive environment ever, where God and his people shall dwell together for all eternity (Krodel, 1989:342-352).

Greek fathers such as Origen, Theodoret, and Chrysostom also came to the realisation that $B\forall<9 \bar{H}$ was neuter, but they went far beyond that in their interpretation, in order to take into consideration “the idea of Christ dying for all rational creatures, including angels”. See Westcott (1984:46-47) and Moffat (1924:25-26) in this regard. In the researcher’s view, this interpretation cannot hold water for two reasons:

- Elsewhere in Hebrews, the neuter is indicated by a plural form.
- The immediate context is all about the destiny of human beings and, in verse 16, does not specifically include angels in the salvific benefit arising

from Christ's death. In Hebrews 2:5-9, the writer is not interested in the physical nature and change of "the world to come" (v 5) and its rulers (MacLeod, 1989:431). This chapter will now look at the purpose of the sacrifice of Jesus.

10.4 THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS

In this section, the researcher will attempt to show that the purpose of Jesus' death was at least four-fold: to taste death for mankind, to bring sons to glory, to render the devil powerless, and to atone for sins.

10.4.1 To taste death for mankind

In a series of purposeful statements in Hebrews 2:9-17, the writer gives a summary of the reasons for the sacrifice of Jesus. In fact, in Hebrews 2:5-18, the writer is describing in detail the purpose of the incarnation, which he understood to be Christ's death (MacLeod, 1989:432). The particle \textcircled{BTH} with the subjunctive $(\beta\Phi\theta\gamma\forall\lambda)$ ("that He might taste" - see motivation behind the sacrifice of Jesus above) introduces the first purpose of His suffering. Jesus died in the place of sinful men. In other words, He took the curse of death in order to prevent others from experiencing the sting of the second death. In summary, He died as the sinner's substitute (MacLeod, 1989:432), so that He might bring sons to glory.

10.4.2 To bring sons to glory

The next purpose of Jesus' suffering and death is introduced by the aorist participle $\zeta\lambda\theta\bar{\nu}$ ("in order to bring") in Hebrews 2:10, preceded by verse 9 which indicates Jesus' incarnation and humiliation, including His suffering as well as His testing of death for everyone by God's grace, which resulted in Him being crowned in glory. The aorist participle $\zeta\lambda\theta\bar{\nu}$ in Hebrews 2:10 has been perceived in at least five ways:

- As an ingressive aorist, that is, "the heavenly Man in His earthly humiliation has begun to lead many sons to the heavenly *doxa*" (Käsemann, 1984:143-144). This view seems impossible, however, because the ingressive aorist is usually used with verbs whose present "denotes a state or a condition" (MacLeod, 1989:432). It also errs in that the subject of $\zeta\lambda\theta\bar{\nu}$ is God the Father, not Jesus. Circumstantially, Bengel (1971:590) also argued that the subject of $\zeta\lambda\theta\bar{\nu}$ is Jesus, that is, Jesus brings many sons to glory.

Although this view sounds congruent, scholars such as Delitzsch (1978:116), Héring (1970:18), Hughes (1977:102) etc have argued that the accusative participle agrees with the "unexpressed" subject $\zeta\lambda\theta\bar{\nu}$ of $\theta, \delta, 4^{\text{TM}}\Phi\forall\lambda$, and have pointed out that nowhere else in the New Testament are Christian believers called "sons" of Christ.

- As a circumstantial participle of time, that is, “when brought” in accordance with the Vulgate: *qui adduxecerat*. The idea would then be associated with the Old Testament saints who have already been brought to glory. Furthermore, Hebrews 11:39-40 asserts that Old Testament believers cannot reach a state of perfection before the New Testament saints (Montefiore, 1964:60; Hughes, 1977:107).
- As a circumstantial participle of cause, that is, because He brought human sons to glory, not angels, it is incumbent on Jesus to become a man and to suffer (Lührmann, 1974:437).

This study thinks that this view is awkward and seems to make verse 11 tautological.

- As a circumstantial participle of attendant circumstance or coincidental action, that is, in bringing many sons to glory, He was perfected (Westcott, 1984:49). However, this meaning would have been more naturally expressed by the present infinitive $\Xi < \vartheta \zeta \langle \Delta <$ or the present participle $\square (\Xi < \vartheta \forall$ (MacLeod, 1989:433). Furthermore, it does not mean that many sons were brought to glory when Jesus was perfected. This is because the glory implied in Hebrews 2:10 waits for Christ’s return (Lührmann, 1974:337).
- As a circumstantial participle of purpose, that is, “in order to bring”. It would then indicate the divine intention whereby “the end glory precedes the means of Christ’s suffering” (MacLeod, 1989:433). Bruce (1980:96) interprets the participle in a similar fashion, but “calls it a proleptic aorist”.

This view appears to be the best and this study supports it for two reasons:

- It acknowledges the eschatological scope of $* \bar{\zeta} \forall$.
- This way of referring to God’s eternal purpose is “in keeping with the phrases employed to describe His relation to history”, that is, “for whom...through whom are all things” (Bruce, 1980:96). It was an objective purpose or end “to bring many sons to glory” (MacLeod, 1989:433).

The meaning of the concepts “sons” ($\Delta \mathcal{M} \Xi \cdot$) and “glory” ($* \bar{\zeta} \forall$) is provided by the immediate context of Hebrews 2:5-10. The writer uses the term “glory” to convey the meaning of dominion over the created order, that is, man’s destiny in the forthcoming world (Heb 2:5-8). By “sons”, he understands Christian believers who as “brothers” (Heb 2:12) and “companions” (Heb 1:9) of Christ are beneficiaries of His future glory and inheritance (Hodges, 1983:784). The writer says that it was appropriate for God to accomplish this purpose by having Christ suffer (Heb 2:10). $+B, B, < (\square \Delta \forall \beta \vartheta \langle$ (“For it was fitting for Him”: Heb 2:10).

The $\zeta \Delta$ is “illative”, that is, it initiates the ‘why’, which justifies the writer’s comment that Jesus tasted death by God’s grace: his objective here is apologetic. It is possible here that the sufferings of Jesus were a stumbling block to Jewish-Christian readers (Dods, 1970:264). The verb $B \Delta \Xi \vartheta T$ stands for “befitting, be seemly or suitable”. That which is suitable rests “on the person, the

circumstances and the object” (Moffat, 1924:29). In the current context, the object (“bringing many sons to glory”) would not call for any justification, since it is appropriate to the readers’ thoughts concerning the glory and triumph of the Messiah (Bruce, 1980:90-91).

However, what required justification was the instrument used to achieve this objective. The writer therefore most likely has in mind the “fitness” of Christ with regard to two things:

- God’s character as the God of grace (Heb 2:9), and in the death of His Son, an act worthy of that grace is witnessed. Therefore, the following sentence “for whom are all things, and through whom are all things” may indicate that it is “God’s attribute of sovereignty and not His attribute of grace that the writer has in mind”. In other words, the cross “was in harmony with His eternal nature as moral Governor of the world; it vindicated the right of divine government violated by man’s sin” (Hewitt, 1973:69).
- As Hebrews 2:15 indicates, man’s condition constitutes the second reason, that is, it was necessary that Christ suffered because man suffers as a result of sin (Montefiore, 1964:59). In this section, it has been shown how the sacrifice of Jesus was intended to bring sons to glory. In the following section, this study will attempt to show how it was meant to make the devil powerless.

10.4.3 To render the devil powerless

The conjunctive connecting word καὶ , followed by two aorist subjunctives ἵνα ἰσχυρὸν ἔσται (“that He might render powerless”) and ἵνα ἴσθῃς (“that He might deliver”) in Hebrews 2:14-15, initiates the third purpose of Jesus’ sacrificial death (MacLeod, 1989:434). By means of His death, He made the lord of death, the devil, powerless. The devil’s dominion is death, because he initiated sin in the world, which brought about death (Owen, 1968:468-70 - for detailed information about life and death, see 1980: ad loc above). He places men in bondage, and makes them live in fear of death and experience “penal anxiety”, that is, they have a sense of “future misery” (Owen, 1968:442), a fear of “what comes after death” (Moffat, 1924:35). When God’s children understand that Jesus died in their stead, and took up the penalty of their sins, they are set free from the fear of death. By dispossessing the devil of his weapon, that is, man’s fear of death, Christ is triumphant and has doomed the devil to become absolutely void of power (Vine, 1952:28). As discussed in this section, the sacrifice of Jesus was meant to render the devil powerless. In the next section, this study will attempt to show how the sacrifice of Jesus was intended to atone for sins.

10.4.4 To atone for sins

Two objective clauses in Hebrews 2:17 initiate the fourth aim of Christ’s sacrificial offering, that is, “to make atonement for sins”. Here, the word ‘atonement’

includes both expiation and propitiation (NIV, $\bar{\epsilon}H \vartheta \bar{\epsilon}8\zeta\Phi\iota, 2\forall 4 \vartheta \square H \square: \forall \Delta \vartheta. : \forall H$). $\exists < \forall (\bar{\epsilon} < 0 \vartheta \forall 4$ (“that He might become”) introduces the purpose of the incarnation. It “intimates what He should become through assuming our likeness”, that is, a High Priest. $\therefore: H \vartheta \bar{\epsilon} \vartheta 8 \bar{\Phi} \iota, \Phi 2 \forall 4$, (“to make propitiation”, NASB) tells what, as a High Priest, He was ordained to do (Delitzsch, 1978:143). In this, it is God who is propitiated. Later in the Epistle it seems evident that the writer considers the sacrifice of Christ to be the anti-typical accomplishment of the sacrificial ritual of the Day of Atonement (Heb 9:1-14).

On this day, the high priest made atonement (Lv 16:10; LXX, $f > 48 \forall \Phi \iota \bar{\epsilon}: \forall 4$) for the sins of the people. The two goats of the sin offering typified the twofold effect of the work of Christ: the immolated goat signified propitiation, that is, to divert divine wrath from the sinner to the substitute (MacLeod, 1989:436-437) and the scapegoat was a symbol of expiation, that is, the removal of guilt. The term ‘expiation’ should not be regarded as diluting the doctrine of atonement. It is a concept with “hard edges” that involves at least the following three ideas:

- “Doing or suffering something commensurate with the damage done,
- Paying not just a debt, but a penalty, acknowledging both guilt and desert, and
- Payment by the culprit himself in the person of a substitute” (Kidner, 1982:119-200).

The writer’s use of $\bar{\epsilon}8\zeta\Phi\iota \bar{\epsilon}: \forall 4$, like the LXX $f > 48 \zeta\Phi\iota \bar{\epsilon}: \forall 4$, has to do with a single word and one act of atonement (Hill, 1967:38), the two ideas of expiation and propitiation (MacLeod, 1989:437). John Owen (1968:476) reached the conclusion that, by using the term $\bar{\epsilon}8\zeta\Phi\iota: \forall 4$, four things are referred to:

- “An offense, crime, guilt, or debt to be taken away,
- A person offending to be pacified, atoned and reconciled,
- A person offending to be pardoned, accepted, and
- A sacrifice or other means for making atonement”. It should be noted that the writer uses the present infinitive $\bar{\epsilon}8\zeta\Phi\iota, \Phi 2 \forall 4$ (MacLeod, 1989:437). Swetnam (1981:174) pointed out that the present infinitive indicates that “the activity of expiating is continuing”. This appears to conflict, however, with the rest of the Epistle, where the one sacrifice of Christ has put away sin (Heb 7:27; 9:28; 10:12). It is quite possible that the writer of the Epistle to Hebrews did it for the interest of his readers, who seemed to be confused about the benefits of the death of Christ (MacLeod, 1989:437-438).

The present tense indicates the continuous application of the sacrifice of Christ, as in Hebrews 10:12 (Delitzsch, 1978:150). Because of Jesus’ presence with God as the Christian believers’ High Priest, the forgiveness of His people’s sins is enjoyed “from day to day and from hour to hour” (Vaughan, 1891:55). The purposeful aspect of the atonement is also emphasised by the writer in other passages such as Hebrews 1:3 and Hebrews 9:12-15 (MacLeod, 1989:438). At the very beginning of the Epistle, that is, Hebrews 1:3, the writer enjoins that

when the Son of God sat down at God's right hand "He had made purification of sins" ($\iota\upsilon\lambda\upsilon\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\epsilon\kappa$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\epsilon\kappa$ $\beta\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$; $\epsilon\kappa$ $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$). The aorist tense of the participle $\beta\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$; $\epsilon\kappa$ $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ indicates that purification was achieved by a single act in the past. The Latin Vulgate replaces a present participle (faciens, "making atonement"), which supports the Roman Catholic doctrine of substantiation (Bruce, 1964:6-7). The Greek text indicates that purification was achieved "once for all" in the past (Spisc, 1953:10). The middle voice stipulates that it was Christ Himself, through His own person, who accomplished the purification (Westcott, 1984:15).

The writer's thinking is grounded in the presupposition that man is rendered filthy by his sins and cannot, therefore, approach a Holy God. Under the old dispensation, typological provision was made for this kind of defilement on the Day of the Atonement. Therefore because of the sacrifice offered, the Israelites were declared ritually clean (Lv 16:30). At the cross of Christ, necessary supplies were made available for the cancelling of sin and the removal of guilt, that is, a genuine and perfect moral purity (Behm, 1965:426). "The purification in Hebrews 1:3 is objective, that is, the writer is narrating about the objective work of the atonement at the cross. Only in Hebrews 9:14 he does speak of subjective purification, that is, the actual application of the benefit of the cross to the sinner" (Meeter, 1916:157).

Man was eligible for punishment because of his filthiness or impurity. Christ was inflicted with punishment in man's stead, His sacrifice met divine demands, and His blood effaced the filthiness that hindered access to God (Heb 9:22; 10:22 - for detailed information, see 1980: ad loc above on life and death in the New Testament). The verb $\epsilon\kappa$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\epsilon\kappa$ $\beta\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ in classical Greek stands for "to make gracious", "to placate", that is, to propitiate (Büchsel, 1965:314-316). Unlike in the heathens' context, "God is not thought of as being capriciously angry, but, because He is a moral being, His anger is directed toward wrong doing in any shape or form" (Morris, 1986:131). In Hebrews 2:17, the writer says that one aspect of Christ's work was to make "propitiation", that is, to remove divine wrath. It is significant that he does not say "the Father was propitiated concerning our sins through the death of His Son" or "Christ propitiated God through His blood" (Turner, 1982:27).

Such statements are dismissed in order to escape from heathen notions of propitiation. Christ's sacrifice "was not an event that preceded God's grace and extorted it from Him. There is no dichotomy in Hebrews between a merciful Son and a capriciously angry Father who must be bribed into graciousness. As the author later says in Hebrews 10:7-10, "the incarnation and saving work of Christ have their origin in the will of God" (Turner, 1982:27). The objective genitive $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\epsilon\kappa$ $\beta\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ in Hebrews 1:3 has been understood in two ways:

- "The cleansing of a person from sins" (Héring, 1970:6). This would be more likely if the text read $\beta\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\epsilon\kappa$ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\epsilon\kappa$ $\beta\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ (Alford, 1958:10).

- The cleansing of sins, that is, sins are viewed as an impurity to be removed (Delitzsch, 1978:54; Westcott, 1984:15).

In Hebrews 9:12, the writer insinuates that Christ achieved redemption ($\delta\beta\theta\Delta T\Phi\Delta$) through the medium of His death (“blood”). In the papyri of New Testament times, $\delta\beta\theta\Delta T\Phi\Delta H$ was both a legal and commercial concept for freeing someone from bondage or slavery through the payment of a ransom (Deissmann, 1978:327). The view in Hebrews is that man is enslaved in sin - sin is a debt that he owes (Buchanan, 1972:148). The blood of Christ is the ransom paid to God (Davidson, 1882:175) that clears the debt of sin and sets man free from his bondage. It has been argued that no view of a ransom price is referred to in Hebrews 9:12 - only the thought of deliverance seems predominant (Hill, 1967:68-69). The atonement is not simply “a subjective forgiveness in Hebrews; rather, it is an objective transaction” in which Christ paid the price in order to secure man’s deliverance. The benefits of this transaction are subjectively applicable to Christian believers, but the objective side of atonement is not overlooked by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (MacLeod, 1989:440).

In Hebrews 9:15, the writer goes on to say that Christ’s death was also “for the redemption ($\zeta B \cong \delta\beta\theta\Delta T\Phi\Delta H$) of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant” (MacLeod, 1989:440). Tolmie (2005:247-268) provides us with an explanation of the use of “redemption” in Pauline literature. According to him, the metaphors that can be broadly classified as “redemption” metaphors include, among others, the most important examples $\square(\cong \Delta \zeta. \gamma \Delta <$ (1Cor 6:20; 7:23), $f > \forall (\cong \Delta \zeta. \gamma \Delta <$ (Gl 3:13; 4:5); $\square B \cong \delta\beta\theta\Delta T\Phi\Delta H$ (Rm 3:24; 8:23; 1Cor 1:30). He also makes use of $f 8 \gamma \Lambda 2 \gamma \Delta . : \forall f 8 \gamma \Lambda 2 \gamma \Delta \cong \rightarrow \Delta f 8 \gamma \beta 2 \gamma \Delta \cong H$ in several instances in his Epistles. $Y(\cong \Delta \zeta. \gamma \Delta <$ is used by Paul in 1Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23 . In the first place, he warns his readers not to associate with prostitutes (1Cor 6:12-20). In verses 12-14, he goes on to discuss the limits of Christian liberty. Then, in verses 15-18, he makes them aware of the fact that their bodies are part of Christ and cannot therefore become one with that of a prostitute. In verses 19-20, he beseeches them to glorify God through their bodies, which are portrayed as temples of the Holy Spirit. Verse 20 explicitly states: “Because you were bought at a price. Therefore you should praise God in your body!” Here, Paul uses $\square(\cong \Delta \zeta. \gamma \Delta <$, meaning “to buy”. However, here it is used in a metaphorical sense. This basically refers to the buying and selling of people as slaves (Tolmie, 2005:256-257).

Thus, the “focus is not on the change in status but on what the obligations being bought have for Christians”. Again, Paul uses $\square(\cong \Delta \zeta. \gamma \Delta <$ in 1Corinthians 7:23-in a section aptly summed up by Klauck (1984:54) as “Gottes Ruf-befreiend und verpflichtend”. Paul counsels his readers to remain in the state in which they were called to be Christians: “those who were uncircumcised when called should stay uncircumcised, those who were slaves should no let it bother them, because they are freedmen in the Lord, and those who were free should keep in mind that they are slaves to Christ”. Martin (1990:65-66) rightly suggests that Paul’s advice

to the slaves is grounded in the idea of status improvement: although they stand physically as slaves, they are liberated people of Christ. People who are set free possess a higher status and consequently an improvement of condition. Moreover, slaves, as liberated people, are associated with a different family, the household of Christ, which represents a further status improvement. Martin (1990:65) points out that Paul's advice to those who are freed truly represents a lowering of status: they must regard themselves as slaves of Christ.

As Martin correctly states, "the slaves are regarded as free people in Christ's household, whereas the free people are regarded as slaves in Christ's household". Paul shows the use of the $\square(\cong\Delta\zeta.\gamma\mathcal{A}<$ metaphor by saying: $\mathcal{G}\mathcal{A}:\uparrow H \cong(\cong\Delta\zeta\Phi\mathcal{2}\mathcal{O}\mathcal{B}\gamma : \leftarrow (.:<\gamma\Phi\mathcal{2}\gamma * \cong\rightarrow\delta\cong\mathcal{4} \square<\mathcal{2}\Delta\phi\mathcal{B}\mathcal{T}<$. Thus, the metaphor is used in more or less the same way as in 1Corinthians 6:23. In this regard, it means that they are the property of Christ and living under the obligations stemming from being bought. In pursuing an explanation of the use of redemption metaphors by Paul, one should look at $f>\forall(\cong\Delta\zeta.\gamma\mathcal{A}<$ as a metaphor in Galatians. Here, Paul cautions his readers not to follow the advice of his rivals, emphasising that "his" Gospel is approved by God, and therefore should be followed by the Galatians. He uses the above metaphor for the first time in Galatians 3:13, and then in Galatians 4:5. In Galatians 3:6-14, Paul's rhetorical strategy consists of using the example of Abraham, as well as arguments based on the authority of the scripture to impede his opponents. For the purpose of explaining metaphors, the scriptural argument that Paul uses in Galatians 3:10 is very significant. With regard to Deuteronomy 27:26, he infers that those who consider the keeping of the law as the basis of their relationship with God are cursed.

In Galatians 3:13, he goes back to the idea of a curse, and introduces the redemption metaphor: $\mathcal{O}\mathcal{A}\mathcal{4}\Phi\mathcal{B}\in H \cong:\square H f>\mathcal{O}(\cong\Delta\forall\Phi\gamma< f\mathcal{6} \mathcal{B}\uparrow H \mathcal{6}\forall\mathcal{B}\zeta\Delta\forall H \mathcal{B}\cong\rightarrow < :\cong\Lambda (\gamma< :\bar{\gamma}<\cong H \downarrow\mathcal{B}\infty\Delta \cong:\mathcal{T}\mathcal{M}< \mathcal{6}\forall\mathcal{B}\zeta\Delta\forall\dots$. Therefore, in terms of how Paul uses redemption metaphors, the following is significant: perhaps he is using the traditional Christian confession that Christ died in order to redeem "us" (Becker, 1981:381; Betz, 1979:149; Longenecker, 1990:122). However, proving this with certainty and reconstructing the wording of the traditional confession is quite difficult. Without capitalising on the origin of this notion, one can only presume that Paul used it because he agreed with it and considered it to be relevant to his argument at that time. Christ is identified as the subject of the redemption process connected to His death. This is obvious from the fact that the occurrence of redemption is associated with Christ becoming a "curse", which is substantiated by Deuteronomy 21:23, a text which did not normally concern crucifixion, but which, in early Judaism, was interpreted as a sign that a crucified person was cursed by God (Sänger, 1994:283-284).

The object of redemption is "us" – which here needs to be understood as "all of us who believe in Christ" (Smit, 1984:218). The circumstances prompting redemption are portrayed as $f\mathcal{6} \mathcal{B}\uparrow H \mathcal{6}\forall\mathcal{B}\zeta\Delta\forall H \mathcal{B}\cong\rightarrow < :\cong\Lambda$, a statement which refers to the one in verse 10, which asserts that those who are "from" the law are

under a curse because they do not do the things that the law prescribes. Therefore, Paul's use of the metaphor here is against the background of slavery, with the particular understanding that a slave's freedom could be "bought" by someone. Nevertheless, although the metaphor itself might have had an overtone of the manumission from slavery to freedom, it is important to understand that Paul does not focus upon either the aspect of slavery or liberty in this context. On the contrary, he emphasises the effect achieved through the process of redemption, which is portrayed as a shift from being cursed to being blessed. Otherwise, he integrates the metaphor into a wider context, in which the contrast between curses and blessings plays an important role (see vv 8-10 and 14).

Therefore, the underlying idea in Paul's use of $f > \forall (\cong \Delta \zeta \cdot \gamma \mathcal{A} <$ is to show that salvation can be identified as a radical (positive) status reversal. In Galatians 4:1-7, Paul's rhetorical strategy is to use an analogy to establish the difference between spiritual slavery and sonship of God, in order to remind the Galatians that they are sons of God and not spiritual slaves. In verses 1-2, he paints the following picture: the father dies and leaves everything to his son, the heir. Being a minor, the son's inheritance is entrusted to managers and administrators until he reaches maturity. In verse 3, Paul starts applying the analogy. As with the immature heir's situation, "we" were once slaves $\Downarrow B \in \mathcal{G} \square \Phi \mathcal{G} \cong 4 \Pi \gamma \rho \forall$. Usually, this Greek expression had to do with basic elements which were supposed to be the building blocks of the cosmos, namely fire, water, earth and air (see for example Blinzler, 1961:429-443; Rusam, 1992:119-125).

However, Paul uses it in a symbolic sense to denote all religious practices that are basic and restrictive. In short, the inferiority of $\mathcal{G} \square \Phi \mathcal{G} \cong 4 \Pi \gamma \rho \forall$ as similar to faith is the main idea that he wishes to express. He also deliberately chooses a concept which is broad enough to accommodate both Judaism and other forms of religion (Hartman, 1993:146). In verses 4-5, Paul describes the changes brought about by God's initiative. He decided to set "us" free, which He accomplished through His Son, who set free those under the law, "for us" to be adopted as sons. He conveys this idea in the following manner: ... $\zeta < \forall \mathcal{G} \cong H \Downarrow B \in < \cong \zeta < f > \forall (\cong \Delta \zeta \Phi \rightarrow, \zeta < \forall \mathcal{G} \leftarrow \Lambda \cong 2 \gamma \Phi .: \forall < \square B \cong 8 \zeta \exists T : \gamma <$. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the way Paul uses $f > \forall (\cong \Delta \zeta \cdot \gamma \mathcal{A} <$: as in the case of Galatians 3:13, scholars (see for example Hahn, 1963:315; Fuller, 1978:40-42 and Schenke, 1990:39-340) have indicated that a pre-Pauline Christological tradition, or possibly a formula, with regard to verses 4-5, might be detected.

However, given the fact that he places it in his own argument, it is not easy to reconstruct it with absolute certainty. Christ, now known as the "Son", is once again the subject of redemption, perhaps because Paul wants to associate Christ's sonship with the $\Lambda \cong 2 \gamma \Phi .: \forall$ of believers (this may also be the reason why he describes the Spirit as the "Spirit of His Son"). The work of redemption is not specifically connected to the death of Christ, but rather, in a more general sense, to the "sending of the Son". The redemption object singled out as "those

under the law”, which, if read together with $\forall B \in \mathcal{D} \exists \Phi \exists \Delta \Pi \gamma \rho \forall \mathcal{D} \exists \neg \bar{6} \bar{\Phi} \exists \Delta \geq \gamma 2 \forall * \gamma * \exists \Delta 8 T : \bar{\Xi} < \bar{\Xi} 4$ in verse 3, describes the hopeless situation from which people were redeemed, as that of spiritual slavery. Here, Paul specifically uses the metaphor within the context of slavery. However, the change achieved by the redemption is not portrayed in “terms of a contrast between spiritual slavery and spiritual freedom”, but rather as a shift from spiritual slavery to spiritual sonship, an excellent model of what Martin describes as “slavery as upward mobility”.

The basic idea behind the Pauline use of the metaphor to show salvation can once again be seen as radical (positive) status reversal, now not indicated in terms of the move “from being cursed to being blessed, but from spiritual slavery to spiritual sonship. Paul uses $\square B \approx 8 \beta \vartheta \Delta T \Phi 4 H$ in Romans 3:23, 8:23 and 1Corinthians 1:30, including the deutero-Pauline, Colossians 1:14 and Ephesians 1:7, 14; 4:30. In Romans 3:23 and 1Corinthians 1:30, it is used to express a present reality, and an eschatological reality in Romans 8:23. Given the fact that Romans 3:23 has more material for interpreting the metaphor than 1Corinthians 1:30, the discussion will focus on its utilisation in Romans. The word $\square B \approx 8 \beta \vartheta \Delta T \Phi 4 H$ appears for the first time in Romans 3:21-26, a central passage in terms of the development of Paul’s argument. In Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul first describes the desolate situation into which humankind has been thrown. Romans 3:21 (<A<R...) signifies the turning point - the Gospel of what God has done on behalf of humankind, by drawing those who believe in Christ into a relationship with Himself. It seems more likely that Paul employs pre-Pauline information in verses 24-26a (see the discussions by Michel, 1978:150; Stuhlmacher, 1992:290 and Fitzmyer, 1993:342).

Besides $\square B \approx 8 \beta \vartheta \Delta T \Phi 4 H$, Paul uses many other metaphors in verses 24-25: “God justifies humankind through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus whom God set forth as an expiation through faith in His blood “. The fact that various metaphors are used alongside each other to describe the salvation brought about by Christ’s death (“blood”) shows that, in spite of possible overlaps between these metaphors, each of them describes salvation from a certain point of view. Now, which perspective is described by $\forall B \approx 8 \beta \vartheta \Delta T \Phi 4 H$? Originally, the word suggested the “buying back of a slave or captive, thereby making him/her free through payment of a ransom (see Bauer, 1988:193 for more examples). Bauer suggests that the word is used in a more general and figurative sense in the New Testament as a release or redemption. This is argued by Haubeck (1985:363), who points out that no ransom figures in the present context of $\square B \approx 8 \beta \vartheta \Delta T \Phi 4 H$, but refers to 1Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23, in which a price is mentioned, and from which he infers that, in Romans 3, $\square B \approx 8 \beta \vartheta \Delta T \Phi 4 H$ should also be understood as an expression of ransom. Fitzmyer (1993:348) also interprets it as conveying the meaning of “emancipated or ransomed humanity from its bondage to sin”.

However, this study is of the view that the arguments presented by Büchsel (1957b:357) to prove the contrary are convincing. He contends that none of the $\square B \approx 8 \beta \vartheta \Delta T \Phi 4 H$ instances in the New Testament contain any explicit reference to

ransom. Moreover, he argues that it would be unrealistic to propose the idea of ransom in the case of eschatological passages (Lk 21:28; Rm:8-23; Eph 1:14; 4:30). Therefore, it seems to be best to assume that the original sense has been watered down through the use of the Bible, leaving only a general sense of “freedom” or “redemption” (see also Käsemann, 1980:90 & Schmithals, 1988:125).

Given the fact that the ideas of slavery and ransom are not fulfilling any role in the metaphor anymore, a person should classify $\square B \cong 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4H$ as a quiescent metaphor used by Paul to show “spiritual freedom in a general sense”. Nevertheless, even as a quiescent metaphor, it is used to express the radical status reversal effected by Christ. In this instance, he stresses the situation from which Christ freed those who believed. In verse 23, it is expressed as a situation of sin and a lack of God’s glory. In Romans 8: 23, Paul uses $\square B \cong 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4H$, conveying a meaning of freedom, but in an eschatological context. He starts by saying that present sufferings are incomparable to future glory (Rm 3:18). Afterwards, Paul describes the situation of creation: subjection to futility, awaiting with eager anticipation the revelation of the children of God, in order for them to be set free from slavery and decay.

In verse 24, he again emphasises the perspective of believers, now described as “we who have the first fruits of the Spirit”, who also “groan” and look forward, $\Lambda \supseteq 2\gamma\Phi : \forall \square B\gamma 6 * \gamma \Pi : \gamma \leftarrow \cong 4$, $\mathcal{G} \leftarrow \square B \cong 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4 < \mathcal{G} \cong \neg \Phi \phi : \forall \mathcal{G} \cong H \cong : ^{TM} <$. Both $\Lambda \supseteq 2\gamma\Phi : \forall <$ and $\square B \cong 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4H$ have been used earlier in Romans to describe the present aspect of salvation (see Rm 8:15 and 3:23), but are now used to describe eschatological salvation. In the case of $\square B \cong 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4H$, the freedom that Paul looks forward to is described as $\square B \cong 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4H \mathcal{G} \cong \neg \Phi \phi : \forall \mathcal{G} \cong H \cong : ^{TM} <$. This has to do with the “freedom of our bodies”, not “freedom from our bodies”, as Lietzmann (1979:85) suggests. This needs to be understood in the light of the description of the situation of creation in verse 21 ($\cong * \cong \Lambda 8\gamma : \forall \mathcal{G} \uparrow H N 2 \cong \Delta \square H$), as a reference to “freedom from an existence of decay and temptation). Schlier (1979:266) provides a description of the believers’ current situation: “... *dieser Leib als versuchlicher und sterblicher, der immer von seiner Vergangenheit her bedroht ist, gegen den Geist und damit gegen die Gabe des von Gott gerechtfertigten Leben sich zu erheben*”. This study will now look at $f 8\gamma \Lambda 2\gamma \Delta \cong \neg <$ and cognates, before concluding the explanation regarding Pauline uses of redemption metaphors. Paul employs $f 8\gamma \Lambda 2\gamma \Delta \gamma \wp < / f 8\gamma \Lambda 2\gamma \Delta : \forall / f 8\gamma \Lambda 2\gamma \Delta \cong H$ to express the idea of salvation, as well as other contexts. For instance, in Galatians 3:28, the word is used to express social status, and in 1 Corinthians 9:1, 19a to express the idea of financial independence (Vollenweider, 1997:503).

In its use for salvation, it mostly overlaps with what has been discussed above. Therefore, this study will focus on the way in which it is used to express the idea of salvation in Galatians and Romans. In the letter to the Galatians, the idea of freedom is contrasted to that of spiritual slavery. As mentioned above in the discussion of $f > \forall (\cong \Delta \zeta : \gamma 4 <$ in Galatians 4:1-7, Paul looks at the situation of

humankind as spiritual slavery, in particular, as slavery to $\theta \square \Phi \theta \cong 4 \Pi \gamma \rho \forall \theta \cong \neg$
 $\delta \bar{\Phi} : \cong 1$ and the law. From this condition, they have been redeemed by Christ (Gl 4:5). The assertions with regard to freedom in the rest of the letter need to be understood against the same background. For instance, in Galatians 2:4, Paul says: “false brethren” slipped in to “spy our freedom we have in Christ” and wanted to “enslave us”. What he has in mind is freedom from slavery to the law. The same is true of Galatians 5:1, where he reminds his readers that Christ has set them free from slavery. Therefore, whenever Paul uses the idea of freedom in Galatians in connection to salvation, what he has in mind is primarily freedom of slavery to the law (thus, Dunn 1998:435 is correct, in contrast to Jones, 1987:70-109).

It should also be understood that Paul does not view the kind of freedom brought by Christ as freedom in the sense of being one’s own master or doing exactly as one pleases. This is obvious from the way in which he links Christian freedom (from the law) to the leadership of the Holy Spirit: in Galatians 5:13, he starts by reminding his readers that they are free (“you were called to freedom”), almost simultaneously giving them a warning not to abuse their freedom. Instead, he reminds them that, paradoxically, their freedom seems to suggest a new form of slavery: through love, they should become slaves to one another. In the following verses, this is further revealed in the sense of a life under the direction of the Holy Spirit. In the letter to the Romans, Paul employs the contrast “freedom-slavery” frequently as a metaphor. The idea of slavery to/ freedom from the law is also seen here (see Rm 7:3, 6, 14, 25) and, as mentioned above, the idea of freedom from decay/death occurs in Romans 8. Moreover, the significant role that the idea of slavery to/ freedom from sin plays in Romans 6 needs to be pointed out. This is particularly evident in Romans 6:12-23, where sin is described as “trying to rule” (Rm 6:14) and exercising lordship over (Rm 6:14) believers. In Romans 6:16, the possibilities for the believer are summed up as being slaves either of sin (which will lead to death) or of obedience (which will lead to righteousness). In Romans 6:17-18, Paul give thanks to God for the fact that they, who once had been slaves of sin, have been freed from sin and become slaves to righteousness (Tolmie, 2005:265).

In Romans 6:19, he counsels believers to present their members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification, just as they had formerly given their members to impurity. In Romans 6:20, the idea of slavery to sin is repeated, and in Romans 6:22, the fact that they were liberated from sin and enslaved to God is indicated again. Thus, in this section, the metaphor of slavery to/freedom from sin is repeatedly used. What has been said in the case of Galatians is also applicable here: freedom from sin, as such, is not regarded as the ultimate goal in itself, since slavery to sin is replaced by slavery to God. Therefore, the overriding theme is not so much the move from slavery to sin to freedom from sin, but rather from slavery to sin to slavery to God (Rm 6:22)/righteousness (Rm 6:18; see verse 16 as well). Thus, Paul uses the metaphor of freedom here to convey the sense of a new kind of enslavement (Tolmie, 2005:266). After this lengthy

explanation of the Pauline use of the metaphor of redemption, this study needs to continue with the sub-topic of the purpose of the death of Christ, especially with regard to atoning for sin as it relates to Old Testament saints.

In other words, a person could say that the death of Christ had a “retrospective” effect (Davidson, 1882:181-182), that is, the ransom price that constitutes the grounds for release from the “guilt and penalty of the transgressions committed by OT saints” during the legal dispensation (MacLeod, 1989:441). On the basis of Daniel 4:34 (LXX), Büchsel (1967:351) argues that $\zeta B \approx 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4H$ could stand for “release”, without referring to a ransom. He goes on to suggest that scholars such as Deissmann (1978) and others were “reading the secular usage of “ransom in the NT without adequate reason”: in this regard, two observations are worth mentioning:

- Daniel 4:34 refers to Daniel 4:27, where Nebuchadnezzar was told to redeem ($8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi \nabla 4$) “his iniquity with almsgiving” (MacLeod, 1989:440).
- Deissmann (1978) and others sensed that the words of Christ contained in Matthew 20:28, which are equivalent to those in Mark 10:45, are sufficient to indicate the notion of a ransom price $\zeta B \approx 8\beta 9\Delta T\Phi 4H$.

The phrase $fB\emptyset 9\pm B\Delta\phi 9 \rightarrow *4\forall 2Zi0$ (“under the first covenant”) can be interpreted in two ways:

- The εB is causal, that is, the transgressions were committed “in connection with” or “on the basis of” the first covenant (Westcott, 1984:264; Moffat, 1924:126).
- Unlike Moffat (1924) and Westcott (1984), Delitzsch (1978:104-105), Hughes (1977:367) and others say that fB is temporal, that is, the transgressions were committed “in the time of” or “during the period of” the first covenant. This study can easily sympathise with the second interpretation because it is grounded in the very notion of the time during which the Leviticus dispensation was still functioning in full force.

The above statement by the writer of Hebrews provides an answer to a pertinent question with regard to Old Testament soteriology: if the sacrifices of animals were incapable of taking away sin (Heb 10:4), on what grounds were the Old Testament saints forgiven? The writer’s answer can be found in Hebrews 9:15: on the grounds of the sacrifice of Christ. Alford (1958) was erring when he dared to apply the transgressions of Hebrews 9:15 to “all mankind”. The writer’s argument here is that the transgressions of those under the Mosaic covenantal code, that is, trespasses of the Israelites, were provided for by the death of Christ. The writer of Hebrews seems to assert that salvation and forgiveness were implicit in Old Testament times through faith (Heb 4:2; 11:4). In the above section, this study has attempted to discuss the purpose of the sacrifice of Jesus in Hebrews: to taste death for mankind, to bring sons to glory, to render the devil powerless, and finally to atone for sins. The following section will discuss the superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus (see Attridge, 1989 below).

10.5 SUPERIORITY OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS

10.5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, the superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus will be discussed, by pointing out that the sacrifice of the body of Christ accomplished God's will with regard to sacrifices. Jesus' seated posture implies that His sacrificial work had been accomplished once and forever. The ratification of the new covenant and how the bodily sacrifice of Jesus dealt with sin will also be discussed. Therefore, the researcher will begin by showing how the sacrifice of the body of Jesus accomplished God's will with regard to sacrifices.

10.5.1.1 The sacrifice of the body of Jesus accomplished God's will with regard to sacrifices

In a series of three arguments (Davidson, 1882:189-195) in Hebrews 10:5-18, the writer illustrates the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ over Old Testament animal sacrifices. The first argument developed in Hebrews 10:5-10 is a deduction made from the "ineffectiveness" of Leviticus sacrifices (Heb 10:4), initiated by **4* ("therefore", Heb 10:5, NASB): Christ, not the Leviticus priests, offered a sacrifice that was satisfactory to God (MacLeod, 1989:441). In this argument, Hebrews 10:5, 6 are treated together because of their theological and contextual similarity. Psalm 110 and Jeremiah 31 are respectively used to indicate the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the Leviticus priesthood, and the inferiority of the Sinaitic covenant with regard to the new covenant, the better covenant in Jesus' blood. Psalm 40 is now used to prove that the sacrifice of a rational and spiritual being is better than the sacrifices of dumb creatures (Nelson, 2003:254-256). The writer typically applies this to Jesus. In this study's treatment of Hebrews 5-7 and 8-10, material from other sources will be condensed, although the main focus will be on the material of Attridge (1989).

MacDonald (1971) states that in Hebrews 10:5-7, where the writer quotes Psalm 40, he realised that God was not satisfied with the sacrifices and offerings of the old covenant. He had initiated these sacrifices, but they did not constitute His ultimate goal. They were intended to "point forward to the Lamb of God who would bear away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). God was also displeased by those sacrifices, because people misunderstood and misinterpreted the whole system. They thought that going through ceremonial rituals was what pleased God, while their own lives were enslaved to sin and corruption, without repentance, contrition or brokenness of hearts (MacDonald, 1971:144).

Holding onto the quotation from Psalm 40, the Lord Jesus reiterated that God was not happy with burnt and sin offerings, because animals were unwilling victims whose blood lacked the virtue of cleansing (Heb 10:6). It was Christ's willingness to obediently do God's will that thrilled God's soul (MacDonald, 1971:145). He demonstrated His obedience by laying Himself upon the altar of

sacrifice. This was recorded from the “beginning to the end of the OT Scriptures” in a scroll or roll of a book (Heb 10:7).

However, there are debates concerning whether or not Psalm 40 would be considered as directly Messianic or typical. Scholars such as Perowne (1966:338) and Delitzsch (1978:35, 41) argue that the Psalm could not directly assume the Messianic etiquette for the simple reason that the psalmist confesses his sin in Ps 40:12. In referring to Psalm 40:12, Krummacher (1947:109) pointed out that “the Redeemer as Mediator would have been able to suffer the punishment due our sins only by having a consciousness of them. The personal guilt, that worm in the marrow of life, certainly renders punishment what it is, and forms its peculiar essence and focus”.

Murphy (1977:261), Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1967:189), Darby (1971:76-78), Spurgeon (1966:250) and Lewis (1958:127) have applied Psalm 40 to Christ. However, Johnson (1980:63) and Perowne (1966:45-46) have objected to this interpretation by pointing out that neither Jesus nor any New Testament writer “ever applied an OT text to Christ in which the OT writer confesses or deplors his sin”. Waltke has recently said that the Psalms “are ultimately the prayers of Jesus Christ but that elements presenting the king as anything less than ideal, such as the confession of Psalm 40:12, ‘are the historical eggshells from the pre-exilic period when the Psalms were used for Israel’s less than ideal kings” (MacLeod, 1989:442).

In Psalm 40, David inquires how he can show his gratitude to God for saving him from death. Johnson (1980:63) says that it is difficult to determine what the *Sitz im Leben* of Psalm 40 was. Westcott (1978:308) and Montefiore (1964:167) place the Psalm during the time of Saul’s persecution, but Clarke (1949:109) and Kaiser (1978:23) argue that David concluded his Psalm upon the note that God desired obedience, not sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). However, the argument of the writer here is not concerned with comparing animal sacrifices and moral obedience (Bruce, 1980:379-380). Rather, he attempts to contrast animal sacrifices and the rational sacrifice of “One who in His voluntary self-oblation does God’s will” (Weiss, 1974:67). The writer speaks of his delight in God’s will, but David could not consistently and only do God’s will, that is, he could only do God’s will “falteringly” (Hughes, 1977:395). In order to accomplish it perfectly, his words had to wait for his greater son, “on whose lips the words are preeminently appropriate” (Johnson, 1980:63).

The teaching that the writer of Hebrews draws from the Psalm is as follows: God does not delight in animal sacrifices (Heb 10:6), that is, in the offering of dumb, irrational, coerced, unwilling, unknowing creatures (MacLeod, 1989:443). What He wanted was the sacrifice of a rational being who is not “passive in death, but in dying makes the will of God” His own (Denney, 1982:168). The writer could not say, as did the psalmist (Ps 40:6; LXX, 39:7), that God did not demand sacrifices, for he has said (Heb 9:19-20) that He ordered them. Therefore, there is no

contradiction in arguing that “God finds no pleasure” in them (Thomas, 1964:65:314). It is true that, in Psalm 40, animal sacrifices are compared to obedience to God’s will (Johnson, 1980:193).

The writer of Hebrews endeavours to emphasise the fact that animal sacrifices were not the sacrifices that God willed (Moffat, 1924:138; Calvin, 1963:134-135). It appears that the writer of Hebrews undertook an important change in the diction of Psalm 40. In the LXX (Ps 39:9), the words $\vartheta \bar{\alpha}\epsilon\lambda\theta\omicron\varsigma \Phi\Xi\Lambda$ (“your will”) come at the beginning of the verse. The writer then goes to the end of the verse (Heb 10:7). This “alteration” strongly emphasises the passage with regard to the doing of God’s will (Nairne, 1917:98-99 - for detailed information, see Wilson, 1970; Nelson, 2003; Spencer, 1997 and Ladd, 1979).

There are many instances in Hebrews that clearly show that the writer viewed the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as man’s only hope. For example, Jesus became the guarantee of a better covenant and permanent priesthood, as well as His ability to completely save “those who come to God through Him. Unlike the mortal priests of the old covenant, He always lives to intercede for them”. Jesus Christ is the only priest who can adequately meet the needs of His people because “He is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens” (Heb 7:22-26). Hebrews 8:8-13, as well as 10:16-18, where the stipulations of the new covenant are reiterated, also stand as the ultimate hope for God’s people. Therefore, when he says: “sacrifice and offering thou would not”, suggesting that God had no pleasure in burnt and sin offerings, there is no suggestion that sacrifice was abolished in favour of obedience. The writer objects to the replacement of these sacrifices with personal obedience and service (Hewitt, 1973:156). This study is of the view that sacrifices without obedience are useless because obedience is better than sacrifices, and this is what God wanted the Israelites to understand – there should not only be an outward expression while inwardly, hearts are denying and rejecting Him.

1Samuel 15:22 reads:” Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifices, and to heed than the fat of rams” (KJV -see also Is 1:11-14; Am 5:21-22). This goes against what Hewitt says, because sacrifices without obedience to God are useless and unacceptable to Him. The context also seems to suggest that obedience alone can suffice, without the shedding of blood of animals. Given the fact that this is better than sacrifices and the fat of rams, one can infer from this that obedience to God, which implies repentance, contrition, humbleness and brokenness of hearts, can stand as the best substitute for animal sacrifices.

This study agrees with Nelson, who presents God’s sacrificial purpose and the right teaching concerning sacrifices - He wanted His people to know that He had no pleasure in the sacrifices of dumb animals if they were not accompanied by the repentance, faith and dedication of those offering them. In this regard, Morris says: “God takes no delight in the routine performance of the ritual of sacrifice”

(Morris, 1983:91). Vincent (1961-62) says: “The writer’s purpose is not to assert that obedience is better than sacrifice but to claim that, in that it fulfilled the will of God”, “Christ’s sacrifice of Himself surpassed the Leviticus sacrifices” (Nelson, 2003:256). In line with his usual tendencies, the writer prefers to use the LXX rendering: “a body hast thou prepared me” to the Hebrew “ears hast thou dug for me”. Exodus 21:6 and Deuteronomy 15:17 refer to the boring of a slave’s ear after seven years, if he decided to stay with his master permanently (Spencer, 1997:190). The bored ear was a symbol of obedience.

Smith (1984) says that when Jesus was put below an angelic status by partaking of human nature and by sharing in the flesh and the blood (Heb 2:5-18), the writer’s placing of Psalm 40 into the mouth of Jesus as a piece of self-description is very appropriate. The Hebrew manuscript of Psalm 40 is comprised of the phrase “ears thou hast dug for me”, but the Greek version of the Old Testament, with which the writer of Hebrews and his community seem to have been acquainted, reads: “a body hast thou prepared for me” (Ps 40:6). The meaning is essentially the same: God neither wants nor has a delight in animal sacrifices and offerings. He only wants ears that are attentive and obedient, and bodies that do His will. However, it is prodigiously useful and suggestive that the writer retrieves the word “body” from the abovementioned Psalm. He jumps on it and portrays Jesus Himself as singing: “Oh God, a body hast thou prepared for me”. And He committed Himself to surrendering that body to accomplish what all burnt and sin offerings were not able to fulfill (Smith, 1984:122-123, cf. Allen, 1972; Lenski, 1966; Edgcumbe, 1977 and Delitzsch, 1978).

Hebrews 10:5b-7 presents some alterations to Ps 40(39):7-9. These quite clearly show that the LXX is relied on, because the second clause of verse five differs remarkably from the MT. The Hebrews phrase reads: “ears hast thou dug for me”. The LXX rendering is “you fashioned a body for me”, which is probably an interpretative phrase for the obscure Hebrew one. Hebrews differs from the LXX in v 6, where, instead of “you did not seek”, Hebrews reads: “you were not pleased” ($\exists \Leftrightarrow \sigma, \Leftrightarrow * \bar{\sigma} \theta \Phi \forall \lambda$), perhaps being influenced by the other text from the Psalms. This alteration might have been made for the sake of consistency, since through the law, God did require sacrifices (9:19-22), if only a shadow of what was truly pleasing (Attridge, 1989:274).

The conclusion is shortened and rearranged from the LXX: “I wish to do your will, my God” ($\vartheta \cong \neg B \cong 4 \uparrow \Phi \forall 4 \vartheta \in 2 \exists 80 : \zeta \Phi \cong \Lambda, \textcircled{2}, \bar{\lambda} : \cong \langle, f \exists \cong \Lambda 8 Z \langle$). In the above verses, the psalmist compares conventional sacrifices of the temple cult to his own willing service. The list of conventional sacrifices alluded to the whole cultic system. “Sacrifice” ($\Phi \Lambda \Phi : \forall \langle$), like the Hebrew term it translates, is a general name for any animal sacrifice. “Offering” ($B \Lambda \cong \Phi N \cong \Delta \zeta$) only appears in this chapter. “Holocaust” ($\textcircled{8} \cong 6 \forall \beta \vartheta T : \forall$) is the standard technical name for burnt offerings. The phrase “sacrifice for sin” ($B, \vartheta \forall \square : \forall \Delta \vartheta : \forall \lambda$) is the normal technical translation (Attridge, 1989:274).

In contrast with this, Stedman says that these sacrifices stand for the expression of the psalmist's personal response. The vivid image of hollowing out the ears, in the Hebrew original, suggests willing obedience -being ready to hear and execute God's command. This attitude is expressed in non-figurative terms. Hebrews exploits this contrast between sacrifices and willing obedience, although the translation in the LXX of "body" and "ears" also serves the purpose of the argument (Stedman, 1992:104).

According to Christ, conformity to divine will is clearly an act that involves His body (v 10). In the second and less metaphorical expression of the psalmist's willingness to do God's biddings (v 7), there is a difficult parenthetical remark. In Hebrews, "the scroll of the book" probably refers to the law, and in particular to the "law of the king" (Attridge, 1989:274). The psalmist, in the person of the king, accepts the responsibility for complying with the injunctions that were "written for me". The Greek rendering of the first phrase ($\rho\omicron\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \beta\omicron\upsilon\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$) is a simpler equivalent of the Hebrew one. Patristic commentators found a special significance in the term $\rho\omicron\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, and made reference in this regard to the specific pericope of the Old Testament. It primarily refers to the knob of the rod around which a scroll is wound, and is frequently used in the LXX as the scroll itself. Even the writer of Hebrews does not provide an explanation of the phrase, and he may have understood it in a special Christological sense, where the book is the whole of the Old Testament's prophetic work, which in many ways bears testimony to Christ and His ministry (Stedman, 1992:104). The "cosmic" sanctuary was the realm of the flesh and the external, the sacrifice that could not affect the spirit (Spencer, 1997:190). Now, however, the cosmos appears in a different light. This re-evaluation follows the motif of Christ's entry, which has up until now been used for His movement into the heavenly sanctuary, where His sacrifice is consumed (Attridge, 1989:273).

The will of God in Hebrews 10:8-10 is not simply the "general perceptive", that is, His will that men should obey His commands (Westcott, 1984:312). Instead, it is the "gracious will" of God that sinners should be made holy in His sight through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ (Denney, 1982:168). Westcott thus interprets the will of God in Hebrews 10:10 (Ladd, 1979:581) as the accomplishment of a perfect life by Christ "in which each man as a member of humanity finds the fulfillment of his own destiny" (MacLeod, 1989:444). It cannot be refuted, of course, that Christ will fulfill the destiny of man (Heb 2:5-9). However, this is not the focus here. The writer of Hebrews looks at the incarnation from the perspective of atonement. "It is the atonement which explains the incarnation: the incarnation takes place in order that the sins of the world may be put away by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (Denney, 1982:169). The obedient sacrifice of Christ makes the Mosaic covenant with its sacrificial system obsolete, and promulgates a new covenant with its independent self- sacrifice of a rational being, Christ Himself (Heb10:9).

The verb $\square\langle\forall\Delta\Delta\epsilon T$ in Hebrews 10:9 may be translated as “do away with”, or “abolish”. The sacrificial offering of Christ abrogated the first covenant and brought into force the second (Grundmann, 1971:649). By the first ($\varrho \bar{B}\Delta^{TM}\varrho\equiv\langle$, Heb 10:9) the writer is referring to the Mosaic covenant that the sacrifice of Jesus has made “old, antiquated, and outdated” (Michaelis, 1968:866). Hebrews 10:7 stipulates that, when a deeper understanding of the will of God had been attained through divine revelation, and the complete ripeness of time had come, then Christ said “Lo, I come” or “Lo, I have come” (RSV). Christ’s submission to His Father’s will was not only an act of time, but also a process of eternity. Kephalis’ volume refers to the knob at the end of a roller, around which the manuscript roll was wound - in the volume of the book it is therefore better translated as “in the roll of the book”. In Psalm 40, the reference was to divine law, but for Christ the meaning encompasses all the Old Testament Scriptures (Hewitt, 1973:158; cf. Smith, 1984).

As Attridge points out, Hebrews 10:8 shows that an exegetical comment follows the citation. The interpretive method has been compared to the *pesharim* of Qumran, but it is more complex. The exegesis does not aim at finding a prophetic correspondence between an ancient institution or scriptural symbolism and a contemporary event. Rather, the text, construed as a grammatical remark on Christ Himself, is seen to display an opposition between two principles (Attridge, 1989:275).

The first stage of the exegesis gathers and highlights references to the various sacrifices of the old cultic system, which the speaker in the psalm referred to as “first” ($\square\langle\phi\varrho,\Delta\equiv\langle$). The paraphrase makes all references to sacrifices plural, probably in order to emphasise the generality of the condemnation. It then combines the two verbs that express the psalmist’s judgment that God did not approve of these rituals. Although the psalmist was probably familiar with the prophetic criticisms of cult, it did not in fact repudiate cultic activity in general. The writer of Hebrews, by focusing on the opposition between external cultic acts and internal obedience, sets the stage for such repudiation (Attridge, 1989:275).

All of the sacrifices mentioned in the psalm were offered “according to a law” or “legally” ($\phi\forall\varrho\square\langle : \equiv\langle$). Although the phrase is anarthrous, it certainly refers to the torah that foreshadowed the good things of the eschaton (v 1), but in its capacity or character as an external and superficial injunction. This characterisation is familiar from the earlier discussion of the Leviticus priesthood (Attridge, 1989:275). The contrasting principle is found in what the speaker in the Psalms says after the reference to sacrifices, in expressing his readiness to obey God’s will. In commenting on the two opposing principles, the writer of Hebrews again reverts to technical, legal terminology for laws and testaments (Attridge, 1989:276).

The text indicates that the speaker, with his critical remarks, “annuls” ($\square\langle\forall\Delta\Delta,4$) the “first” or former set of cultic principles summarised in verse 8. He does so in

order to “establish” ($\Phi\theta Z\Phi\rightarrow$) the second principle of obedience to God’s will. The removal of the first priesthood and the law built upon it was heralded in the oracle of Psalm 110. The promise of a new covenant in Jeremiah indicated that the old one was antiquated and close to disappearance (Attridge, 1989:276). The actual abrogation of the old, ineffective way of atonement and of incomplete access to God is now seen to have occurred through Christ’s act of obedience. In this remark, both the prophetic exaltation of obedience over external cult and the general, Hellenistic reinterpretation of the cult, will finally lead to important paraenetic implications, as found in Hebrews 13:15 (Attridge, 1989:276).

In Hebrews 10:10, Attridge says that the pericope and whole reflection on the heavenly sacrifice and the new covenant comes to a climax, which resumes and integrates the thematic development of the central expository section. While much of the language is traditional, the verse is not simply, if at all, an inherited formula, but rather the focal point of the writer’s argument. What has taken place in Christ is the accomplishment of the divine “will” ($2,8Z:\forall 94$). The importance of the divine will or plan in determining the course of Christ’s life, death and salvific action is commonplace. However, this divine will is not something extrinsic to Christ’s sacrificial act. Through His ready obedience, He has made that will His own (Attridge, 1989:276).

The connection between the will of God and Christian “sanctification” ($\equiv(4\forall\Phi:\Xi\leq 4)$) is traditional. However, this connection takes on a special and more direct significance in the context of Christ’s self-sacrifice. The sanctification that occurs through the sacrifice of Christ will not only become a regular way of describing the results of His act (Ladd, 1993:628). This motif is another way of referring to the perfection and cleansing of conscience that the sacrifice achieved. Cleansing, in the imagery of the Yom Kippur and purification rituals, had been described in terms of Christ’s “blood”, and “sanctification” will later (10:29) be associated with that same “blood”. The fact that now, the “sanctification” takes place through the divine will that Christ embodied, finally clarifies part of the symbolic significance of the “blood”. It is because of this internal dimension to Christ’s act that is “heavenly” - better than the blood of animals offered according to the law, effective in the spiritual realm of the conscience, and adequate for establishing the new covenant promised by Jeremiah (Lindars, 1991:98).

Equally emphasised is the fact that Christ’s offering is not purely an internal affair. His obedience to the divine will is embodied, and His sacrifice involves His “body” ($\Phi^{TM}:\forall$). References to the salvific effects of Christ’s “body”, that is, His bodily sacrifice, are common in early Christian sources, but this traditional imagery takes on a special significance in this pericope (Lindars, 1991:99-101).

In the “offering” ($BA\cong\Phi N\cong\Delta\zeta$) on Calvary, the heavenly and earthly realms became intersected and inextricably intertwined. This union is reflected in the compound name “Jesus Christ”. Here, the name of Jesus, which can be used

with particular reference to the redeemer in His humanity, and Christ, associated with His exalted heavenly status, are solemnly associated for the first time. The pericope closes with an emphatic affirmation of the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice. The adverb "once for all" (ἅπασι), which has characterised the exposition on Christ's death, appears for the last time. The basis for this is clear, now that the heavenly and earthly have been so closely linked (Attridge, 1989:277, cf. Smith, 1984; Hewitt, 1973). This section has dealt with the sacrifice of the body of Christ, in an attempt to show how the once-and-for-all single sacrifice of the body of Jesus accomplished God's will with regard to sacrificial rituals. The following section will discuss the implications of Jesus' posture after the performance of His priestly sacrifice.

10.5.1.2 Christ's seated posture implies that His sacrificial work has been accomplished once and forever

The writer's second argument in demonstrating the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ is that after He had offered Himself, He "sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb 10:11-14). In Hebrews 10:11-14, the writer reiterates the points mentioned in Hebrews 10:1-4, that is, that the Old Testament sacrifices were repeated again and again, and were ineffective (Dods, 1970:4:344; Westcott, 1978:313; Delitzsch, 1978:160). The Old Testament priests stood daily in the tabernacle, offering the same sacrifices. The very posture of the priest, that is, standing (Kent, 1972:192), as well as the repetitive nature of their sacrifices, indicates their inappropriateness and uselessness, because they "can never take away sin" (Heb 10:11).

The emphatic tone in verses 11-14 is different, however. In verses 1-4, the emphasis is on the inferior nature of animal sacrifices; in verses 11-14, the emphasis is placed on the work of the priests (Dods, 1970:344). The expression "to stand before the Lord" sounds like a technical rendering in the Old Testament of Leviticus service (Nm 16:9; Dt 10:8; 18:7). This was the appropriate position for priests during their ministerial duties (Delitzsch, 1978:2:159; Montefiore, 1964:169). Only the Davidic king was allowed to sit in the court (2Sm 7:18; Delitzsch, 1978:159-160). In Hebrews 10:11, the perfect tense ἵσταται is used. It transmits "a vivid picture". The Old Testament priesthood stood and kept on standing - they are a priesthood that stands (Wuest, 1962:176).

In Hebrews 10:1, the Day of Atonement ("annual, year by year", $\text{שָׁנָה אֶחָדָּה אַחַדְשָׁאֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$) is the focus. In Hebrews 10:11, the argument progressively increases in intensity - the entire package of Jewish sacrifices is included in the argument (see also Heb 7:27). By way of implication, the writer makes it clear that annual sacrifices did not make people holy, even for one year. Daily (כֹּל יוֹמִים) sacrifices were to be performed for sins and were ineffective (Lenski, 1966:334; Montefiore, 1964:169). However, in Hebrews 10:12, Jesus performed one sacrifice and then sat down. The writer's argument is clear: Christ's sacrifice is instrumental and ultimate - it has fulfilled its purpose of taking away sin and drawing men to God.

Christ has taken His seat because His work has been accomplished. Caution should be taken with regard to three devices used by the writer “to drive home” the infinite consummation of Christ’s sacrifice. The first device is all about the utilisation of the aorist participle $BA\equiv\Phi,<\Xi(i\forall H$ of the verb $BA\equiv\Phi NE\Delta T$ (“to offer”). This shows a sharp contrast to his use of the present participle $BA\equiv\Phi NE\Delta T<$ in Hebrews 10:11 for the Old Testament priests. This meticulous use of tenses occurs throughout the Epistle (MacLeod, 1989:446). When he speaks about the Aaronic high priest, he uniformly uses the present tense to emphasise the continuous nature of their sacrifices (Heb 5:1, 3; 8:3a, 4; 9:7; 10:1, 2, 8). On the other hand, when he speaks of Christ’s offering, he uses the aorist participle to emphasise its being unique and having a non-repetitive character - never to be repeated again, as portrayed in Hebrews 8:3b; 9:14, 28; 10:12 (Stott, 1962-63:65).

“That this is the force of the aorist is suggested by the second device”, that is, the use of the adjective $∴∇$ (“one”) in Hebrews 10:12. This, combined with the writer’s use of $\Xi N\zeta B\forall>$ (“once for all”) in Hebrews 7:27; 9:12 and 10:10 and $\square B\forall>$ (“once”) in Hebrews 9:26, 28, stresses even more the once-and-for-all nature of Christ’s high priestly sacrifice (Cullmann, 1959:98-99). The third device is the phrase “for all time” ($∴H\vartheta *40T,1\infty H$) in Hebrews 10:12, which indicates that Christ’s sacrifice remains eternally effective (MacLeod, 1989:446, cf. Smith, 1984).

The phrase $∴H\vartheta\in *40<,1\infty H$ in Hebrews 10:12 has been “punctuated” in two ways: (1) Darby (1971), Delitzsch (1978:160-161), Dods (1970:345), Moffat (1924:140) and Buchanan (1972:169) have joined it to the verb $\Xi i\zeta 24\Phi,<$ (“He sat down in perpetuity”). (2) Other scholars such as Bengel (1971:648), Westcott (1984:314), Bruce (1964:237), Montefiore (1964:169) and Hughes (1977:400) join the phrase to the previous one (“one sacrifice for sins for all time”). This interpretation appears to be the best for this study, because it follows the writer’s usage in Hebrews 7:3; 10:1, 14, where he joins $∴H\vartheta\in *40T,1\infty H$ to what comes before it. The first view obliterates the truth that Christ’s one sacrifice is eternally valid. It also adds a foreign thought to the writer’s use of $i\forall 2∴T$, which stresses the presupposition of the throne, and not the permanent sitting on it (MacLeod, 1989:446, cf. Hewitt, 1973). There are suggestions that “for ever” must be linked to one sacrifice for sins, while “others” connect the one sacrifice to “sat down”. Westcott remarks that “the connection with “sat down” obscures the perpetual efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice; it weakens the contrast with $\spadesuit\Phi 906,<$, standeth; it is a foreign idea of the assumption ($f6\zeta 24\Phi,<$) of the royal Christ” (Westcott, 1984:313-314).

Attridge maintains that the contrast between Christ and the priests of the old covenant is outdated, framed not in terms of the action of the high priests, but more generally in terms of what “every priest” ($B\square\Phi\supseteq,\Delta,\beta\lambda$) does. This is not because of the reference to a “daily” ($6\forall 2\zeta \equiv:\Xi\Delta\forall<$) sacrifice, since the writer of Hebrews understands the priests to be involved there as well. The choice of

“priest”, as much as the plural term of sacrifices in 10:8, indicates the universal nature of all functionaries of the old covenant, high priests included. In “ministering” (8,4911Δ(™<)), the typical priest of old “has stood” (♠Φ906,<), in contrast to Christ, who is seated in glory (Attridge, 1989:279).

As they stand in attendance at the earthly altar, these priests offer the same sacrifices, which are characteristic of what is inferior. The alliterative collocation (B≅88ς64λ BΔΦNΞΔT<) recalls not only the most recent critique of the multiplicity of sacrifices, but also the negative appraisal of multiplicity (B≅8λ.;Δ™λ,B≅8λ9Δ B̄Tλ) suggested in the exordium. That such sacrifices can never have the desired effect of “removing” (B,Δ4,8,ϕ<) sin is a familiar refrain (Attridge, 1989:277). Attridge goes on to claim that in Hebrews 10:12, the contrasting reference to Christ’s sacrifice signifies an even richer mosaic of phrases and themes in Hebrews. The comparison of the many sacrifices of old to the “one” (: : ∇<) offering of Christ once again places the emphasis on the unique “heavenly” sacrifice of the preceding paragraphs. The sequence of the atonement, followed by the heavenly session, recalls the hymn-like language of the exordium (Heb1:3). Similarly, the allusion to Psalm 110 uses the same formula for “at the right hand” (f< *,>4□), found in the exordium and the initial discussion of Christ’s heavenly “liturgy” (Westcott, 1984:315).

The adverbial phrase “in perpetuity” (,9λ 9∈ *40<,6Ξλ) is another typical expression in Hebrews (Heb 10:12). Its position here is ambiguous, and could modify the preceding reference to Christ’s sacrifice, the perpetuity of which would now be in view. The balance of the clause in this verse supports a “construal” of what follows, where the perpetuity of Christ’s exaltation is emphasised (Attridge, 1989:280). The contrast between the priests’ standing and Christ’s session does not serve to suggest anything with regard to Christ’s heavenly ministry, nor does it suggest anything concerning His royal status that contrasts with the non-royal status of the priests of the old covenant. The imagery of the session should be interpreted within the framework of Hebrews. The basic point would then be that once His sacrifice on Calvary was completed, Christ’s atoning work was done, and He entered His glorious rest. The Psalm thus serves here to affirm the decisive finality of Christ’s expiatory act (Gossai, 2001:234; cf. Stedman, 1992).

In terms of Hebrews 10:13, Allen (1972:71) states that the phrase “to wait” suggests that it is as if the author is pointing out that Christ sits, telling Himself with complete confidence: “Now let it work”! The author of Hebrews favourably quotes from Psalm 110:1, where God promised defeat of all the foes and to submit them to Christ. Christ had now fully accomplished all that was necessary for His ultimate victory. He could therefore relax and wait for the time when this shall take place. In approaching Hebrews 10:13, Westcott (1984:314-315) points out that Christ Himself, in His royal, divine nature, “waits” as “the husbandman for the processes of nature (Ja 5:7) and the patriarchs for the divine promise” (Heb 11:10). There is a situation in which the triumphant return of Christ is only known to the Father (Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32; Ac 1:7), and to some extent, external to the

actions of men (Ac 3:19; 2Pt 3:12). The return of Christ seems to occur after the defeat of His foes (1Cor 15:22-28).

Hebrews 10:13 shows that the allusion to Psalm 110 continues as the writer reverts to that text's promise of the eschatological subjection that Christ "henceforth" ($\theta \in \delta \cong 4B \bar{\leftarrow}$) waits for. The reference to Christ's "enemies" ($\int \Pi 2 \Delta \cong . :$) remains vague, as in its first appearance. The paraphrase of the verse, with its expected consummation of Christ's Lordship, identifies the eschatological hint that appeared in Hebrews 9:28, and prepares for the development of an eschatological perspective in what follows (Attridge, 1989:280).

However, Gossai (2001:235) says that Hebrews 10:13 does not refer to the passivity of the Priest. If so, then how does it add to the argument of the writer? Truly speaking, it is more than just an ornamental statement. The context suggests that verse thirteen provides the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of a hiatus on sacrifices in God's program -the contribution of the reference to Psalm 110:1 in Hebrews 10:12-13 is threefold:

- It promotes the superiority of Christ's priesthood in that "no Leviticus priest ever sat in the Holy of holies",
- most significantly, Psalm 110:1 "underscores the finality of Christ's sacrifice". His sitting signalled cessation, not from activity, but from further sacrifices to be made on His part as a High Priest - perhaps no passage of Scripture expresses the completed nature of Christ's sacrificial work better than this (Gossai, 2001:235-236), and
- The sitting of the Priest not only indicated something very significant about His sacrifice (verse 12), but also indicated something very significant concerning the impact of His sacrifice upon His saints. They have been made perfect forever, and sacrifices for sins will be completely discontinued (Gossai, 2001:236).

Hebrews 10:14 suggests that Christ needs only to wait for the final subjection of His foes, because of the decisive finality of His sacrificial act, the effects of which are now summarised. Once again, it is a "single offering" ($: 4 \square B \Delta \cong \Phi N \cong \Delta \square$) that is involved. Christ brought the perfection that the law and its cult could not, and His own act has "perpetual" ($, \mathcal{N} \lambda \theta \in * 40 < , 6 \mathcal{E} \lambda$) effects (Attridge, 1989:280). The description of the recipients of this perfection as those "who are being sanctified" ($\theta \cong \beta \lambda \square (4 \vee . \cong : \mathcal{E} < \cong \lambda \lambda)$), reinforces the connection between perfection and sanctity that was established in the previous pericope. However, the present tense used here nuances the relationship, suggesting that the appropriation of the enduring effects of Christ's act is an ongoing present reality. This note too, like the eschatological allusions of the previous verse, hints at the paraenesis of the following chapters, where the addressees are called upon to live in the faith perfected by Jesus (Heb 12:2), which in turn leads to their own perfection (Heb 11:40). The creative tension between what Christ is understood to have done,

and what remains for His followers to do, begins to emerge with particular clarity (Attridge, 1989:281).

According to Peterson (1982), the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews starts comparing the respective priests in Hebrews 10:11-14. Some ideas already expressed in Hebrews 10:1-4 are reiterated here: the Leviticus priests were preoccupied with daily, repetitive sacrificial performances which were incapable of removing sin (Peterson, 1982:148).

However, Christ performed one sacrifice for sin which possessed everlasting efficacy (*ὅτι ἅμαρτιας ἕνεκα*). The salient emphasis in these verses is the comparison between many priests of Judaism “standing” during their daily sacrificial ministry (*ἵστασθαι*), and Christ “sitting” at the right hand of God. Psalm 110:1 is once more connected to Christ’s priestly ministry (Heb 1:3; 8:1), in order to demonstrate afresh that His sacrifice was ultimate and thoroughly instrumental: “the rest is a sign of perfection”, “the sitting a sign of dominion” (Peterson, 1982:148-149).

The *καὶ* of Hebrews 10:14 brings together the denouement of that verse with the argument that precedes it, and the perfect tense of *ἵστασθαι* again stresses that the sacrifice of Christ has an everlasting benefit for Christian believers. The *ὅτι ἅμαρτιας ἕνεκα* provides a further emphasis with regard to the thought of continuing instrumentality: “the virtue of Christ’s work remains ever available as long as the need of man exists” (Peterson, 1982:149). The medium through which Christ has rendered His people perfect is His sacrificial death (*ἡ ἀποθνήσκουσα* - see verse 12). The perfection that was impossible in the Leviticus priesthood (Heb 7:11), the law and its sacrifices (Heb 7:19; 9:9; 10:1), is here promulgated as an act of Christ, already fulfilled by His single sacrifice for sin (Peterson, 1982:149).

The text of Jeremiah 31:31-34 indicates a once-and-for-all offering for forgiveness, that never requires a further sacrifice for sin (Heb 10:18). Nevertheless, the perfection mentioned here by the writer cannot be merely equated with the forgiveness of sins or the cleansing of the conscience. The promise of forgiveness in Jeremiah 31:31-34 constitutes the grounds for a new “relationship of heart-obedience” to God on the part of His people. The ultimate consecration of men to God which is mentioned in the prophecy of Jeremiah is brought to fruition through the sacrifice of the body of Christ once-and-for-all (Heb 10:10), granting the necessary assurance that God will forgive their sins and misdeeds forever (Peterson, 1982:149). In the above section, this study has discussed the fact that Christ, seated at the right hand of God, spreads the good news that His work is completely done. The following section will attempt to show how the new covenant, ratified through the bodily sacrifice of Jesus, confirms that sin has been removed.

10.5.1.3 The ratification of the new covenant confirms that sin has been removed

The writer finds more support for the supremacy of Christ's sacrificial offering in the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Jeremiah's prophetic new covenant in Hebrews 10:15-18 - see Jeremiah 31:33-34 (Davidson, 1882:195). According to this Old Testament prophetic communication, the Holy Spirit bears witness to the writer's argument that the sacrifice of Christ is ultimate and instrumental. The divine promise that the Lord will completely forgive the sins of His people seems to imply that sin has finally been removed for good, and that there is no longer a need to perform sacrifices for sin (MacLeod, 1989:447). Jeremiah 31 is quoted in Hebrews 8 in order to indicate the cancellation of the old covenant - it is quoted in Hebrews 10:16-17 in order to firmly establish the immutability of the new covenant (Bruce, 1964:242).

The verb $\forall\Delta\theta\Lambda\Delta\epsilon\tau$ was used in the legal procedures of a witness ($:\zeta\Delta\theta\Lambda\theta$) to facts, that is, one "who can speak about them from his own direct knowledge". In Hebrews 10:15, the Holy Spirit is brought in to bear divine witness to the truth of the writer's argument. The idea is that this witnessing gives validity to the writer's words (Strathmann, 1967:475-76, 489-497). There are two interpretations of the dative pronoun $\heartsuit:\rho<$ ("to us") in Hebrews 10:15:

- $\heartsuit:\rho<$ comprises both the writer and the readers, that is, the Holy Spirit testifies the truth to us all (Delitzsch, 1978:2:164; Westcott, 1984:316; Moffat, 1924:141).
- However, Dods (1970:101) and Bruce (1964:241) suggest that $\heartsuit:\rho<$ appears as a literary plural associated with the writer. The Holy Spirit "bears witness to Him", that is, in His favour, in order to substantiate what he has been saying. Consequently, $\heartsuit:\rho<$ may be classified as a dative of advantage.

With regard to Hebrews 10:15-17, Attridge says: "that Christ's sacrifice provides perpetual perfection and sanctification is confirmed by the scriptures", whose author the "Holy Spirit", speaking through Jeremiah, "bears witness" ($:\forall\Delta\theta\Lambda\Delta,\rho$). This reprise of the prophecy cited in chapter eight focuses on two verses. The citation formula "after saying" ($;\theta\sqcap\theta\in, \theta\Delta\theta\epsilon<\forall\Delta$) would seem to introduce the first of these, but there is no resumption before the second. While it might be possible to understand an implicit "he says" before verse seventeen, it is more natural to take the phrase "the Lord says", which is part of the quotation, as introducing its second segment (Attridge, 1989:281).

This indicates that the writer of Hebrews is not simply content to cite his scriptural sources, but, as he often does, manipulates the text to tease from it a meaning particularly suited to his argument. Such manipulation is also evident in the slight differences within the citation to the form of the text used earlier. Instead of a covenant "with the household of Israel" ($\theta(\epsilon\cap\theta\sigma\zeta\Phi\Delta\lambda\theta)$), this citation simply reads "with them" ($B\Delta\epsilon\epsilon\lambda\forall\leftrightarrow\theta\epsilon\beta\lambda$), perhaps because the new covenant is of

more universal scope. The order of “hearts” and “minds” in verse sixteen is the reverse of what it had previously been. This order may give prominence to the “heart” that will figure prominently in what follows (10:22), but otherwise is of little significance. The addition of “and their iniquities” (6 \forall \mathcal{R} 9 TM < \square <:4 TM < \forall \leftrightarrow 9 TM <) and the future :<0 Φ 2 $Z\Phi$ Ξ : \forall 4 for the subjunctive :<0 Φ 2 TM make this promise more vivid and emphatic (Attridge, 1989:281).

The major alteration of the quotation is caused by the close association of the promise to “write the law” in the heart and to permanently forgive sins. Both are essential and mutually implicit features of the new covenant promised in Jeremiah, as this is understood in Hebrews. It is clear that the law written on the heart is not the old fleshy law that has been superseded, but the “law” of willing obedience that Christ embodied, and that serves as a model for Christians. It is by virtue of Christ’s internal or spiritual act of conformity to God’s will that the covenant is initially introduced and sin effectively forgiven (Attridge, 1989:281). At the same time, it is by virtue of the effective forgiveness of sin that an intimate covenantal relationship with God is made possible. The quotation from Jeremiah, now illuminated by the exposition of chapters nine and ten, thus not only confirms the permanence of the “perfection” that Christ has wrought for His followers. It also helps to define that perfection and “the sanctification” that it involves (Attridge, 1989:281).

In Hebrews 10:18, Attridge points out that the quotation from Jeremiah is rounded off with a brief comment that highlights the decisive significance of Christ’s sacrifice. The promise in Jeremiah not to “remember” sins and iniquities is rephrased in terms of their “remission” (\square N , Φ 4 λ). Where such remission has taken place, there is no longer any need for a sin offering. The phrase, in effect, reiterates the insight derived from the exegesis of Psalm 40:8-9, that the old cultic system has been abrogated. What this system aimed at has been replaced by the unique and everlasting sacrifice of Christ, and the ratification of the new covenant resulting from it (Attridge, 1989:281-282; Westcott, 1984). See also Zimmermann (1977:176-188); Laub (1980:113-143) and Vanhoye (1980:136-141) in this regard.

First of all, something unusual about the terminology must be mentioned. The usual Greek word for “covenant” is *4 \forall 2 Z 10<, which does not appear in the New Testament. The word *4 \forall 2 Z 10 constitutes the ordinary term for a last will and testament (Morris, 1986:307). It is uniformly used in this manner, both in the Bible and outside. The thought in connection with the covenant that God made with Israel, of course, *4 \forall 2 Z 10< constitutes the main concepts of the Old Testament. It is quite plausible that translators thought that with its connotation of two parties engaged in establishing the terms of an agreement and adhering to it, it did not represent a proper term that would accurately describe what transpired when God made a covenant, since there was no merchandise involved (Morris, 1986:307). God worked out the terms that He presented to Israel, and all that Israel had to do was to agree to those terms. Whether this might be the reason or

not, the fact seems clear: translators preferred **4V2Zi0*, the usual word for ‘will’, as their term for the Hebrew “covenant”, which they used not occasionally but 277 times (Morris, 1986:307).

The New Testament therefore inherited a major problem. Do New Testament writers and the writer of Hebrews in particular use the word **4V2Zi0* in keeping with its original usage in Greek writings in general, that is, as a “testament” or “will”, or in the manner it is used in their Holy Scripture as a “covenant”? In a traditional sense, it has been perceived as a “testament” and results in our Bible’s title page bearing the inscriptions “The Old Testament” and “The New Testament” (Morris, 1986:307). This study thinks that the term “covenant” best expresses what God has entrusted His people with in terms of the legal system. However, in a case such as Hebrews 9:17, the Hebrew word “covenant” may be perceived as “testament”. The first two times that the writer of Hebrews uses it, he portrays Jesus as the mediator of a “better covenant” (Heb 7:22; 8:6), specifying the second time that it is grounded in “better promises” (Heb 8:6).

The writer quotes the prophecy in Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 10:16-17. He goes directly to statements regarding forgiveness which constitute his favourite area. Jesus introduced a new way to God which was no longer dependent on obedience to an external code. God’s law is inscribed upon the hearts of His people. The end results stipulate that salvation is not a product of their merits, but of the forgiveness graciously wrought about through Jesus’ shedding of His blood. Sacrifices performed under the old covenant were incapable of removing sin - they would only constitute a reminder of it (Heb 10:3). However, Christ has completely dealt with sin (Heb 9:26), declaring the old covenant, which the readers of Hebrews were seemingly still clinging to, as obsolete (Heb 8:13). The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus’ death empowers the called ones to receive “the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15).

He goes on to specify that it is actually this death that grants redemption for sins committed during the old covenant dispensation, since the Leviticus sacrifices were inept at removing sin. Old Testament believers were therefore genuinely saved, because Jesus’ sacrifice took away their sins as well as those of the people who would come to Him later. At the denouement of the Epistle, the writer speaks of “the blood of the eternal covenant” (Heb 13:20). It is clearly understood that Jesus’ priesthood is perpetual, and that it will never be superseded, like the Leviticus priesthood was. This is also applicable to the old covenant. After fulfilling its goal, it has been discontinued by the new covenant that was established through the blood of Christ: the new covenant is everlasting - it cannot be done away with (Morris, 1986:309).

10.5.1.4 How the bodily sacrifice of Jesus dealt with Sin

An amazing feature of Hebrews is the diverse manner in which the writer portrays the meaning of Jesus’ redemptive work. In his introductory sentence, he

claims that Jesus “made a cleansing of sins” (Heb 1:3). Sin renders one filthy. However, Jesus has removed this filthiness. He is exceedingly merciful and faithful regarding matters related to God “so that He may make propitiation for the sins of His people” (Heb 2:17). Many translations use “expiation” here, which usually deals with the appeasing of wrath. The death of Christ has appeased the wrath of God. Sometimes, sin is spoken of as being borne. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Christ was offered in order to “bear the sins of many” (Heb 9:28). The idea of “bearing” sins signifies the Old Testament notion, which meant bearing the consequences or penalties of sins (Nm 14:33-34; Ezk 18:20). Therefore, Jesus carried upon Himself what sinners ought to have carried (Morris, 1986:308).

The writer uses sacrificial terminology and indicates that Christ offered “a sacrifice for ($\downarrow B\infty\Delta \square: \forall \Delta 94^{TM} <$) sins for ever” (Heb 10:12) - he uses “sacrifice” again in Hebrews 9:26 and Hebrews 10:26. In the last passage, “for” is $B, \Delta 9$, not $\downarrow B\infty\Delta$ as, as in verse 12 - another small change is the manner of viewing sacrifice. The writer may also speak of Jesus’ “offering” ($B\Delta \equiv \Phi N \equiv \Delta \forall$) of Himself (Heb 10:10, 14, 18). At other times, he chooses to use the terminology of forgiveness (Heb 10:18; 9:22). Sin is rendered “null and void” by Christ’s sacrifice - it is cancelled (Heb 9:26), and Jesus accomplishes redemption (Heb 9:15). The quotation of the new covenant in Hebrews 8:12 and 10:17 emphasises the fact that God no longer remembers the sins of those protected by the new covenant (Peterson, 1982:137).

Further reflection shows one that Hebrews often describes what the old way failed to achieve, implying that Christ improved the deficiencies of the past. This refers to the sacrifice for sin (Heb 5:3), the meeting of the need of the worshippers’ consciences (Heb 10:2) with offerings of gifts and sacrifices (Heb 5:1), with removing of sins ($\square N \forall \Delta \Delta, \rho <$ Heb 10:4, $B, \Delta 4, 8, \rho <$ Heb 10:11, and with burnt and sin offerings (Heb 10:6). The Leviticus sacrificial system failed to resolve the problem of sin, but Christ has cancelled it completely and forever (Morris, 1986:308). The different ways of describing Christ’s work indicate the writer’s profound conviction that this work was multi-faceted and that it was “the thoroughly effective, divine way of meeting our deepest need” (Gossai, 2001:236).

In the above section, this study has attempted to clarify how the bodily sacrifice of Jesus dealt with sin. Before drawing any conclusions with regard to the superiority of the bodily sacrifice of Jesus, the researcher would like to show, based on the fact that the full sacrifice of Jesus was composed of both body and blood, that the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus sanctions the superiority of His bodily sacrifice, that is, His sacrifice as a whole.

10.6 JESUS’ BLOOD-LIFE SACRIFICE SANCTIONS THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS SACRIFICE

10.6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous sections have mainly discussed the sacrifice of Jesus and its absolute superiority over Leviticus animal sacrifices. In the following paragraphs, this study will endeavour to show the absolute superiority of Jesus' blood-life sacrifice over the animal blood-life of the old order, by emphasising how the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus endorses the superiority of His bodily sacrifice. Blood-life will be used in this section to mean blood, and blood-life sacrifice to mean sacrificial blood, blood for sacrifice or sacrificed blood. Therefore, this study will discuss the Leviticus high priests' entrance into the earthly sanctuary through animal blood-life sacrifice, the significance of animal blood-life sacrifices in the old order, the benefits of animal blood-life sacrifices in the symbolic, earthly sanctuary, and animal blood-life sacrifices and the red heifer's ashes purification significance.

The researcher will go on to discuss the fact that Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary through His blood-life sacrifice emphasises His sacrifice's superiority by indicating the following: Jesus' blood-life sacrifice secured eternal redemption; Jesus' blood-life sacrifice was a ransom price for redemption; Jesus' blood-life sacrifice made eternal atonement for sins; Jesus' blood-life sacrifice cleansed the worshippers' consciences; Jesus' blood-life sacrifice was performed through the Eternal Spirit; and Jesus' blood-life sacrifice sanctioned the superiority of His bodily sacrifice because it was the sacrifice of Himself.

10.6.1.1 The Leviticus high priests' entrance into the earthly sanctuary through animal blood-life sacrifice

In this regard, Hebrews 9:7 indicates that once a year, the high priest had to enter the inner sanctuary (Lv 16:32-33). He was not to do so arbitrarily, only once a year (Lv 2), and then only under strictly prescribed conditions (Lv 16:3-17). The one condition that the writer specifies is $\Leftrightarrow \text{PTA}^{\text{H}} \forall \text{Z}:\forall \text{g}\exists \text{H}$, "never without blood", which the high priest offered for his own sins and for those committed in ignorance by the people (Lane, 1991:222). This entrance into the Holy of holies once a year through the blood of animals signifies its inadequacy and inability to effect perfection (Owen, 1968:163).

It was prescribed that the blood of a slaughtered bull had to be sprinkled onto the cover of the ark of the covenant and in front of it, for the high priest's own sins, and that this action had to be repeated with the blood of a slaughtered goat, as the sin-offering of the people (Lv 16:14-17). In this way, atonement was made "for the most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and the rebellion of the Israelites" (Lv 16:16). The formulation of Leviticus 16:16 is significant, because it describes sin as defilement, and specifies that blood may act as the purging agent. In fact, blood was used to cleanse both compartments of the sanctuary and all its furnishings (Lane, 1991:222).

Wilson (1987:151) and Delitsch (1978:77) support this idea, although Delitsch adds that, in Hebrews 9:19; 10:4; Leviticus 16:3; Hebrews 9:19, the plurals for the names of animal victims are generically used (Delitsch, 1978:77). The use of plurals can be accounted for in many ways: it might have been caused by generalisation or inclusion of all the sacrifices immolated in the Temple, or it might have been occasioned by the annual repetition of sacrificial rituals (Wilson, 1987:152).

Over the course of many centuries, a multitude of goats and bulls have been slaughtered as sacrifices - this multiplicity stands in drastic contrast to the single sacrifice made by the Great High Priest of the new covenant (Wilson, 1987:152). The recurrence of blood has to do with the widespread belief regarding blood in the ancient world, and particularly in the Old Testament and Israel's worship (Wilson, 1987:152). In this section, this study has attempted to indicate that the Leviticus high priest gained entrance into the Holy of Holies of the earthly sanctuary through animal blood-life sacrifices. This blood served as atonement, as well as a purging agent of the most Holy Place and its furnishings. The following paragraphs will discuss the significance of animal blood-life sacrifices in the old order.

10.6.1.2 Significance of the animal blood-life sacrifice in the old order

According to Leviticus 17:14, "the life of every creature is its blood" – thus, the rulings concerning the killing of animals early in the chapter, and the interdiction of eating the blood, become very significant, both among Old Testament and New Testament (Ac 15:29) worshippers (Wilson, 1987:152). The blood was understood to contain a mysterious power that made it an adequate means for the following: "sacrifices of expiation, rites of purification or for acts of consecration" (Wilson, 1987:152).

The writer of Hebrews points out that "under the law almost everything is purified with the blood, and without the shedding of the blood there is no forgiveness of sin" (Heb 9:22). Nevertheless, one must remember that the Old Testament has been compiled over more than a thousand years of history, during which a change of ideas and their development occurred, even where ceremonial rituals continued to be performed (Wilson, 1987:152). Hosea 6:6 criticises the Old Testament sacrificial system in the following way: "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifices, the knowledge of God than burnt offerings"; "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand of rivers of oil" (Mi 6:7)? There was an increasing awareness that what God was interested in was "to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Wilson, 1987:152)

This understanding of defilement and purging is crucial to the argument in Hebrews 9: 9-10. The reference to blood ($\forall\subseteq\text{:}\forall$), which occurs for the first time in a cultic sense in verse seven, is in preparation for the repeated introduction of this term in a cultic context in the ensuing sections (Heb 9:12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21,

22; 10:4, 19, 29; cf. 11:28; 12:24; 13:11, 12, 20). Moreover, the writer drives home his point by repeating, with only slight variation, the significant phrase *ΠΤΑΡΗ* $\forall\zeta:\forall\theta\cong H$ “without blood”, in Heb 9:18 and 9:22. His point is that blood is the medium of approach to God, and this fact emphasises the importance of the reference to Christ’s blood in the ensuing argument (Lane, 1991:222-223).

...”The high priest of the earthly tabernacle and of the still veiled sanctuary” was impaired in order to secure, for either individual worshippers or the entire congregation, the satisfactory possession of those good things of the future through material and animal sacrifices, including animal blood - but Christ now appeared as a High Priest to obtain and bestow them (Delitzsch, 1978:77).

The writer’s departure from the language of the LXX to describe the action of the high priest is striking. The singular use of the verb *ΒΑΞΦΝΕΔ,4<* “to offer”, in reference to the application of the blood in the most Holy place, is without parallel in biblical cultic material. The translation of the LXX used the verbs *Π∇.:<,4<* “to strike” and *ΕΒ4942Ε<∇4* “to apply”, in order to signify the act of aspersion. The subsequent use of *ΒΑΞΦΝΕΔ,4<* in reference to Christ’s death (9:14, 25, 28; 10:12) suggests that the writer has described the annual sprinkling of blood in the inner sanctuary in this way, in order to prepare his readers for recognising the typological parallel between the high point of the atonement ritual in the old covenant, and the self-sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Lane, 1991:223).

This inference finds support when the writer applies the Day of Atonement ritual to Christ in Hebrews 9:25-28. The annual entrance of the high priest for blood aspersion in the most Holy Place finds its eschatological fulfillment in Christ’s death (*ΒΑΞΦΝΞΔζ*, “offering”; Heb 10:10, 14). The creative use of unusual terminology to describe the atonement ritual in Hebrews 9:7 is indicative of the fact that the writer’s interpretation of the Leviticus rite is controlled by Christ’s event (Lane, 1991:223). Delitzsch and Lane both agree on this, as does this study.

In the above section, this study has attempted to briefly discuss the significance of the blood-life sacrifice in the old order, by focusing on the defilement, purification and forgiveness aspects of it. In the following paragraphs, the benefits of animal blood-life sacrifices in the symbolic earthly sanctuary will be discussed.

10.6.1.3 The benefits of animal blood-life sacrifices in the symbolic earthly sanctuary

With regard to Hebrews 9:9, Hewitt (1973:144) claims that the tabernacle, subsequently the temple, was a symbol (until the new covenant was established). The suggestion is that *σ∇4Δε<*, time, meaning “crisis” in this instance, is preferred to the generic terms *chronos*, “time” and *∇0φ<*, “age”. Therefore, the earthly tabernacle would be a figure, until the crisis at the time of

the writing reached its climax in AD 70. The sacrifices offered within the precincts of the tabernacle provided worshippers with ceremonial purity, but they were unable to grant internal cleansing, from which the peace of conscience is derived. The limitation of this sacrificial provision is that external observances served as a covering for sin, but could not remove the guilt of sin. They were imperfect through their connection to the flesh, and were imposed until the “more excellent” covenant in Christ’s blood, based upon “better promises”, was introduced.

Attridge (1989) agrees with Hewitt with regard to the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of all the sacrifices performed in the symbolic tabernacle. However, Attridge suggests that the line of thought in this verse is complex, due to the various interpretations of the first “tabernacle” and the ambiguity of the present time, which has led to a variety of interpretations (Attridge, 1989:241). The first outer portion of the Mosaic tabernacle is symbolic of the present time of the salvific order instituted by Christ. It is, however, symbolic as a negative or inverse image of the present. The first or outer tabernacle as an image or “symbol” (*BVAΔVΔE≅8Z*) in itself presents a problem. A difficulty occurs when identifying the reference of the symbol and the relationship between the symbol and the referent. These problems arise due to the ambiguity of the “present time” (*θ€ < 6V4Δ€ < θ€ < f<, Φθ06 θV*), which must be “now” and the “time once present”. The present time is identical to the “time of correction”, when salvation and effective sacrifice exist (Attridge, 1989:241).

In addition to *θ€ V<:V θ™ < :≅ΦIII<*, “the blood of bulls”, the writer refers to other traditional purgatives such as water, crimson, wool and the sprigs of a hyssop, possibly because of the influence of Leviticus 14:4-7 and 15-52 or Numbers 19:6. He may be inferring that the procedure described in Exodus 24 implies the use of a sprinkling instrument consisting of a stick to which sprigs of the hyssop were tied with crimson wool, which was dipped in blood diluted with water (Ex 12:22; LV 4:4; Nm 19:18). This method of sprinkling was common. The story of Moses sprinkling the book from which he read the law of the Lord, as well as sprinkling all the people, is not attested to elsewhere (Lane, 1991:244).

The writer’s formulation emphasized, in a symbolic manner, that the sacrificial blood linked the people, who pledged themselves to be faithful, to the Lord, who was represented by His written word. The further statement that Moses also sprinkled the tabernacle and all the cultic vessels with the blood (Heb 9:21), may draw upon an independent Jewish tradition to which Josephus also had access. According to Exodus 40:9, 16 and Leviticus 8:11, Moses anointed the tabernacle and its implements with oil during its dedication. However, Josephus speaks of the use of both oil and blood (Lane, 1991:244).

Therefore, one can see that the importance of blood is repeatedly emphasised in these verses. The writer’s intention is to show that the former covenant had been ratified by sacrificial blood, just as the new covenant was. The comparison

between the blood by which the old covenant of Sinai was ratified to that of Christ clearly assumes that the blood sprinkled by Moses had an expiatory value. This point of view is reflected in later Jewish teachings on sacrifice, according to which all sacrifices, including the blood of the peace offering, were expiatory in nature (Lane, 1991:245).

The blood of all immolated animals in the symbolic sanctuary is now relevant, and this is perceived as both offered to God and having a positive impact on individuals, taking away their defilement and making them holy. Animal sacrifices, as well as animal blood, which were offered according to God's ceremonial ordinances, provided outward cleansing, leaving the worshippers' consciences in a terrible condition. The expiatory cleansing by the blood of Christ, however, liberated the conscience from "dead works" and lethal guilt of all evil works or sins, something which is more severe, dangerous and heinous than outward ceremonial filth (Brown, 1982:156-157).

This section has shown that sacrificial animal blood grants worshippers ceremonial purity, although the conscience is left in a deplorable condition. This indicates that outward rituals only served as sin covering. Sacrificial blood in the symbolic sanctuary united people who professed faithfulness to the Lord, and it also ratified the old covenant. In the next section, this study will examine animal blood-life sacrifices and the purification significance of the red heifer's ashes. The heifer was a sacrifice that was completely burnt outside the camp, and the significance of the remains after burning, that is, the ashes, had the power of purification.

10.6.1.4 Animal blood-life sacrifices and the purification significance of the red heifer's ashes

Edgcumbe (1977) stipulates that, in Hebrews 9:13, the author hints at two typical rites of the old sacrificial system: "the sprinkling ...with the blood of goats and bulls" on the Day of Atonement, a sacrifice for the priest's own sins and those of the congregation (Edgcumbe, 1977:354-355). Secondly, the "sprinkling with ... the ashes of a heifer", which was a provision of the ceremonial cleansing of people defiled by touching a dead body (Edgcumbe, 1977:355).

The rite consisted of choosing an unblemished red heifer which had never served under the yoke, and which was then immolated outside the camp (Edgcumbe, 1977: 355). The priest would plunge his finger into the heifer's blood and sprinkle it seven times in the direction of the tabernacle – afterwards, the carcass was completely burnt in the presence of the priest, who, while it was burning, threw "cedar wood, hyssop or marjoram, and scarlet wool into the flame" (Edgcumbe, 1977:355). The ashes of the heifer were assembled outside the camp, where they were used for the preparation of the "water for impurity", used for the sprinkling of people and objects that had been defiled through contact with a dead body (Edgcumbe, 1977:355).

However, MacDonald (1971) says that the writer turns to the ritual of the red heifer in order to show the difference between the sacrifice of Christ and the ceremonial rituals of the law. He goes on to point out that during the Leviticus dispensation, bodily contact with a dead man resulted in a seven-day ceremonial uncleanness. The cure for this was secured by mixing the ashes of a red heifer with limpid spring water, and by sprinkling it onto the contaminated person on the third and seventh day, so that he might be clean (MacDonald, 1971:130).

...."The ashes were regarded as a concentration of the essential properties of the sin offering, and could be resorted to at all times with comparatively little trouble and no loss of time. One red heifer availed for centuries. Only six are said to have been required during the whole Jewish history; for the smallest quantity of ashes availed to impart the cleansing virtue of the pure spring water" (MacDonald, 1971:130).

Morris (1983:84) and Smith (1984:111) agree with Edgcumbe (1977) and MacDonald, although Morris goes on to assert that although it is somewhat true that water is a purifier, in this case, however, it serves as a carrier of a true purifying agent, or the red heifer's ashes intensifies the water's cleansing power. After the sanctuary was established in Jerusalem, the red heifer was burnt on a special altar constructed on the Mount of Olive, linked to the temple by a temporary bridge built across the Kidron for that purpose. Therefore, given the durability of the heifer's ashes, the first was burnt during the time of Moses, and the next during the time of Ezra. Since that time, up to A.D.70, the time of the demolition of the temple, only about five or seven heifers were slaughtered and burnt. A number of dispositions under the old covenant have already been portrayed as obsolete, weak and unable to make worshippers perfect (Heb 7:18-19; 8:13). In addition to this, Wilson (1970) says that "the spiritual Israelite derived, in these legal rites, spiritual blessings not flowing from them, but from the antitype. Ceremonial sacrifices released from temporal penalties and ceremonial disqualifications: Christ's sacrifice releases from everlasting penalties (V 12) and moral impurities of conscience disqualifying access to God" (Wilson, 1970:109).

The sprinkling initiated by the old covenant simply sanctified the outward cleansing. It had both "cathartic and restorative power. It cleanses away ritual filthiness and ceremonial impurities and renders a person once more fit for the community". However, all these water cleansings were only operational on the level of the flesh. "They have validity on earth, in this transient age, in a human community which is bound by ancient but provisional traditions and rules" (Smith, 1984:111).

In this section, it has been shown that both the blood of goats and bulls, as well as the blood of the unblemished red heifer, were sprinkled respectively upon the furnishings of the Holy of holies and in the direction of the sanctuary for cleansing

or purification purposes. The ashes of the red heifer were used to prepare the cleansing water used to cleanse those defiled by touching a corpse. In the following section, this study will discuss how Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary with His blood-life sacrifice emphasises His sacrifice's superiority.

10.6.1.5 Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary with His blood-life sacrifice emphasises His sacrifice's superiority

The phrase "but when Christ appeared" in Hebrews 9:11 suggests the idea of the Great High Priest's flamboyant arrival onto the scene. In order to enter into the presence of God, He had to go through the upper heavens, and not through a sanctuary made by human hands. The "good things that have come" refers to Christ's current priesthood. He is our true sanctuary, the very presence of God. Fundamentally speaking, all that is significant in life is God, oneself and a person's neighbour in an intimate relationship (Allen, 1972:65).

Contrary to the priest of the old covenant, our High Priest went into the Holy Place "once only", a complete confirmation that His single sacrifice propitiated the sins of the Church (Owen, 1968:163). This study disagrees with Owen here, because the biblical teaching with regard to the extent of atonement achieved through the sacrifice of Jesus includes all people. The rendering of John 3:16 is universal - it only becomes exclusive through individual appropriation, but the phrase "whoever believes" appears to be critical.

Lindars (1991:93) distances himself from Owen's opinion concerning the extent of the propitiation of sin through Jesus' sacrifice, and emphasises the fact that Jesus is portrayed as bearing the sins of all people. It can therefore be inferred from this that sin propitiation was not just a matter applicable to the church, but rather an opportunity provided to whoever believed and went to Jesus for mercy and forgiveness. Unlike the Old Testament high priests, Christ did not enter through the blood of goats and calves, that is, by merit of the sacrifice of their blood that he had offered upon the altar. There is therefore a connection between all things, both the type and the antitype (Owen, 1968:164).

With regard to Hebrews 9:11, Smith (1984:108) says that the first word *but* is related to the *now* of Hebrews 9:1. They are associated in the following way: "Now ...the first covenant had a sanctuary and worship (Heb 9:1)...*but* on the other hand a better liturgy". The phrase "Christ appeared" in Hebrews keeps complete silence about Mary, Joseph, Bethlehem and Nazareth, although it insists on Jesus' "humanity and vulnerability"(Heb 2:5-18). The writer of Hebrews seems to overlook the fact that Jesus was born, and only emphasises His "revelation or manifestation in the world".

Christ arrived on the scene as "suddenly and mysteriously" as Melchizedek did, as "a High Priest of the good things that have come". In the previous section, the writer spoke of "the world to come" (Heb 2:5), and he will envision "the city which

is to come” (Heb 13:14) and a better country, that is, a heavenly country (Hebrews 11:16). The “good things God has intended for His people are in majority yet to come from both “chronological and spatial perspectives”, and not yet fully given in this time and space” (Smith, 1984:108).

However, some of those good things to come that belong to the world and city to come, to the country of heaven, “are already mediated to His people by Christ the High Priest”. His people’s eyes are already opened in this world to the heavenly light, and have already tasted of the heavenly gift. They have been given the Holy Spirit and have even tasted the powers of the coming age (Heb 6:5).

Thompson (1979:569) alleges that the $\ast\mathcal{E}$ in Hebrews 9:11 corresponds with the $\ast\mathcal{E}<$ in Hebrews 9:1, showing that the material coming after it displays certain differences between the sacrifice and sanctuary of Christ and the old system. This affirmation comprises two long sentences, in which the first (Heb 9:11-12) portrays an event ($\ast\mathcal{E}\hat{8}2,<$ Heb 9:12), and the second portrays the importance of the event to salvation: $\square(4\zeta,4$, Hebrews 9:13; and $\delta\forall2\forall\Delta4,\rho$, Hebrews 9:14 (Thompson, 1979:569).

The text of Hebrews 9:11-14, in contrast to Hebrews 9:1-10, is thus intended to distinguish the new event from those which occurred during the Leviticus sacrificial dispensation. The event, as the main proposition in Hebrews 9:11-12, shows that $(\Pi\Delta4\Phi9\in H \ast\infty B\forall\Delta\forall(< ;<\mathcal{E}H \dots\square\Delta\Pi4,\Delta,\beta H\dots,\mathcal{E}\hat{8}2,<\dots,\mathcal{E}H 9\square \square(4\forall)$ is the exaltation of Christ (Thompson, 1979:569). $A\forall\Delta\forall(< ;<\mathcal{E}H$ is “reminiscent” of $(< ;<\mathcal{E}H$ in other instances in Hebrews: for instance, Hebrews 1:4; 2:7; 5:5, 9 for the event of Christ’s “exaltation and installation” as High Priest (Thompson, 1979:569). Christ, as a High Priest, gained entrance into the eternal sanctuary by sacrificing Himself and offering His own blood, surpassing by far the cost, scope, value and validity of that of the Leviticus high priest, just as the genuine “place” of the divine presence surpasses in holiness the earthly Holy of holies; for the blood was His own, as Hebrews 13:12 and Acts 22:28 reveal (Delitzsch, 1978:81-82).

According to Hebrews 6:19-20; 9:24-25, the exaltation is usually portrayed as the entrance into the heavenly sanctuary - the event is further portrayed by the “chiastic balancing of the positive and negative statements in Hebrews 9:11-12” (Thompson, 1979:569). With regard to Hebrews 9:12, Smith (1984) goes on to say that Jesus became High Priest when He entered into the Heavenly sanctuary, that is, when He “passed through the greater and more perfect tent , one not made with hands”, not designed by any “human architects and planners”, not constructed by “human craftsmen and builders”, not of “this creation, not earthly, not material, not provisional, but true and eternal” (Heb 8:2; Mk 14:58). He went through “all the heavenly spheres that exist (2Cor 12:2), and He got into the Holy place, into the perfect sanctuary of heaven itself (Heb 9:24). He has entered the heavenly sanctuary once and for all –“not twice daily, not annually,

like Leviticus priests” -and removed sins once and for all, that is, “fully, finally and forever” (Smith, 1984:109).

Hebrews 9:12 states that “Christ entered once into the Holy place” - that is, heaven itself, as the writer shows in Hebrews 9:24. Christ entered “the glorious place, the residence of the presence or majesty of God. At His ascension He entered into heaven in worshipful glory and victory after conquering Satan, the world, death and Hell and all power entrusted to Him, He entered heaven victoriously and “sacerdotally” after making peace and reconciliation through His blood on the cross, confirming the covenant and eternal redemption promulgated” (Owen, 1968:163). As our High Priest, He went into the Holy Place, the heavenly sanctuary or the Temple of God, to render His sacrifice operational unto the church and to make its benefits applicable thereunto - this He did “once”, solely, once and for all (Owen, 1968:163).

Unlike Owen, this study assumes that, after His victory, Jesus’ sacrifice was operational and the entire created order could enjoy the benefits of Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice. This may be deduced from Ladd (1993:621-629), who says: ...”Christ’s entrance into the Holy place sprinkling of His blood to effect cleansing and eternal salvation occurred when “He appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb 9:26). Christ offered Himself on the cross to purify His people (Heb 9:14). By dying, He offered for all time a single sacrifice for sin (Heb 10:12). By way of implication, the researcher thinks that the benefit of God’s eternal salvation may be available for all to enjoy - not just for the church, because it comes from the world, but because Jesus died for all people.

Christ went into the heavenly sanctuary with “His own blood”, that is, by merit of His own blood when it was shed, at which time He surrendered Himself to God. This granted Him the right to administer His priestly office in heaven. This constitutes the heart of all Gospel mysteries, the end of the bewilderment of angels and men for all eternity (Owen, 1968:164). “What heart can conceive, what tongue can tell, the wisdom, grace, and love that are contained therein”? This alone is the foundation of faith in our access to God (Owen, 1968:164).

Two things are worth noting here:

- The unutterable love of Christ, who gave Himself and His own blood for us. Since there was no other way in which our sins could be atoned for, He, out of His incommensurable love and grace, deigned unto this way so that God might be exalted and His church made holy and redeemed (Owen, 1968:164).
- The supremacy and instrumentality of the sacrifice of Christ here indicated that, through Him, our faith and hope should be in God (Stedman, 1992:98). He who gave this sacrifice was “the only begotten of the Father” – the everlasting Son of God who offered His own blood to purchase the church - “how unquestionable how perfect must the atonement be that

was thus made! How glorious the redemption thus procured” (Owen, 1968:164). This study is of the opinion that the perpetual nature of the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ dictates the indisputable fact that all people will enjoy the benefits of His redemptive work.

This includes those who were living during the Calvary crisis, as well as before and after it, up to the time that the divine, eternal, redemptive plan will be consummated. This is in agreement with Morris (1983:84-86), especially in terms of the fact that he explains that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews “makes a most important point when he says that it is the death of Jesus that avails for “the sins committed under the first covenant”. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin (Heb 10:3). However, the faithful people in the Old Testament were saved. Why? Because the death of Jesus works backwards and forwards - His death puts away all the sins of those who are redeemed, whenever and wherever their lives have ran their course (Morris, 1983:86). This, according to this study, renders the sacrifice of Jesus extremely contemplative and the blood of Jesus as a ransom price that secures eternal redemption.

In this context, the writer of Hebrews is constructing his argument based upon the description in the Pentateuch, and by drawing this parallel: the blood that the high priest offered granted him the right to access the inner room of the sanctuary; likewise, Jesus was granted access to the heavenly sanctuary, “not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood”. Therefore, given the fact that “the life of every creature is its blood”, the whole idea clearly refers to His death. This argument is entirely built on its Old Testament text, since “there is no thought of metaphors of cleansing and purification developed in other New Testament writings like 1John 1:7 and Revelations 7:14 (Wilson, 1987:152).

According to this study, the assertion that “Christ gained access to the heavenly sanctuary through His blood” may result in some practical and doctrinal difficulties: according to Hebrews 3:1-5:10, the Son is the High Priest (Marshall, 2004:606). Gossai (2001:230-231) portrays Christ as the Davidic King-Priest, and Lindars (1991:77-79) describes the eternal priesthood of Jesus in the essence and likeness of Melchizedek, the High Priest of the Most High God and King of Salem (Heb 7:11-28). In presenting the Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Ladd (1979:577-583) specifies that Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe (Heb 1:2), He upholds the universe by the word of His power, reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature (Heb 1:3).

He is the “Son of God” (Heb 1:2, 5; 4:14; 5:5; 6:6; 7:3 etc)...”Jesus abides as a High Priest forever” (Ladd, 1979:582). He is our sanctuary and the very presence of God (Deltzsch, 1978), His body is the tent (Peterson, 1982:141). This study is of the view that one should picture the entire activity of the everlasting High Priest as not just an interception of eternity in human history, but rather as a historical event that fits well into God’s eternal redemptive plan. Therefore, as the Son of God and a High Priest with an eternal priesthood, Christ always had, and still has, access to the heavenly sanctuary. The difference occurs with His

incarnation, during the climax of which He had to go behind the veil that was His own body, both the incarnated body of Christ and the glorified body of Christ (Heb 10:20).

However, although the discussion of the above two views is not part of the purpose of this dissertation, there is a need to clarify the following: this study notes that the body of Christ is called a Temple (Jn 2:19-22); His incarnation is also portrayed as the “pitching of a tent” (Jn 1:14). Bengel (1971:638-639) and Owen (1968:18-23) claim that the great tabernacle in Hebrews 9:11 stands for the Human body of Christ, because through the same body, Christ fulfilled His priestly sacrifice, and men have access to God who dwells in it (Swetnam, 1981:93; Heb 10:5).

Hughes (1977:284-286) and Swetnam (1981:93) state that this raises three problems:

- It is not easy to reconcile it with the writer’s phrase “not of this creation” in Hebrews 9:11, given the fact that it would seem to bring into question the true humanity of Christ (Calvin, 1963:120).
- Even though other New Testament books mention that Jesus’ body is a tabernacle or a Temple, the Epistle to the Hebrews does not.
- The view is incongruent with the immediate context for the discussion involving Christ’s localised ministry (Heb 8:1; 9:11), and not the means of His sacrifice, that is, His body (MacLeod, 1989:450).

The second view that considers the tabernacle to be the glorified body of Christ appears as a variant of the first view, and renders null and void the objection based upon Hebrews 9:11: “not of this creation”. Milligran (1977) argues, on the grounds of Hebrews 10:19-20, that the instruments of access to God are the blood of Jesus and His risen, bodily life (“a new and living way”). It seems as though the second and third views stand as objections to the first, which would appear to undermine this theory. Furthermore, it might be asked in what context it can be said that Christ went through His glorified body (Bruce, 1980:330). Therefore, coming back to Wilson’s metaphor of cleansing and purification, this study can state with certainty that everything appears to support Jesus Christ’s achievement as the greatest High Priest ever, through His sacrifice and His blood.

Kent and Homer stipulate that the heavenly sanctuary in which Christ conducted His priestly activity is a more ideal environment than that of the Old Testament priests (Kent & Horner, 1974:171). This is also true of His offering. Christ went into the heavenly sanctuary once and for all (*ephapax*). Jesus’ sacrifice and shed blood resulted in eternal redemption for its guarantees, unlike the yearly, repetitive and temporary atonement that was required by the old covenantal system (Kent & Homer, 1974:171).

Hebrews 9:24 seems to be very close to Hebrews 9:23 and Hebrews 9:25-26, and it would therefore be very difficult to leave it out without causing harm to this exegesis. The writer returns to the imagery of the Yom Kippur ritual in order to explain how the heavenly cleansing took place. He makes an elaborate comparison between the image and the reality. What Christ entered into as High Priest was not the earthly sanctuary ($\square(4\forall)$), pejoratively characterised by the epithet “manufactured” ($\Pi,4\Delta B\cong:.0\theta\forall$), familiar from its use in Hebrews 9:11 (Attridge, 1989:262).

The earthly sanctuary is just a “copy” ($\square<g.:g1g\forall$) of the heavenly sanctuary, which is “real” or “true” ($\square8024<TM<$). This language explicitly recalls the initial, platonising contrast between heavenly and earthly tabernacles (Heb 8:2-6), where the former, the “true” tabernacle, is $g\beta B\cong H$ for the earthly tabernacle. The designation of the sanctuary as “heaven itself” ($\forall\leftrightarrow g\in< g\in< \cong\leftrightarrow\Delta\forall< \bar{<}$) continues the platonising motif.

The phrase may, on the level of the image of the heavenly tabernacle, also suggest a distinction between the innermost and uppermost heavens where God is enthroned - the heavenly inner sanctuary and the outer or lower heavens that correspond to the portion of the tabernacle outside the veil (Attridge, 1989:262-263). Christ “entered” ($,\emptyset\Phi\uparrow 82,<$) this realm with a specific purpose, to “appear” ($f:N\forall<4\Phi 2\uparrow<\forall 4$) before God. The verb in the active can simply mean to “clear or indicate”. It may also be used intransitively in a technical, legal sense, in this case meaning to appear before a magistrate with a complaint, but this idea is just the opposite of what is involved here.

The verb can also be used in a pregnant sense, in the active and the passive, for the appearance of a divine or spiritual being. However, here Jesus is not appearing to the world. The language of appearing before the “face of God” ($g(B\Delta\cong\Phi\phi B\Sigma g\cong\rightarrow 2,\cong\rightarrow)$) is cultic, and what Christ achieves by the “appearance” that consummates His sacrifice is true access to the presence of God (Attridge, 1989:263). Christ’s appearance is not for His own sake, but “for us” ($\Downarrow B\infty\Delta \cong:TM<$). This perspective is reinforced by the adverb “now” ($<\rightarrow<$), suggesting the contemporary relevance of Christ’s singular act of entry into the realm of eternity. What He does before God is not precisely specified anymore (Attridge, 1989:263).

The following verse indicates quite clearly that He does not conduct an ongoing heavenly liturgy, since His sacrifice is a unique event. Nor does the writer of Hebrews continue with the imagery of the Yom Kippur ritual, and suggests that Christ, in the heavenly realm, sprinkles His blood, even in a metaphorical sense, as an act independent of His death on the cross. At this point, the analogy between Yom Kippur and Calvary begins to break down, and attempts to force too literal a relationship between image and reality are misguided. What Christ does is to “appear for us”, and this appearance is to be associated with the

intercessory function that has been regularly seen as part of His heavenly priesthood (Attridge, 1989:263).

Christ's entry into the heavenly sanctuary thus unites, in a complex way, the two aspects of His priestly ministry. This entry indicates that His sacrifice has its results in the ideal or spiritual realm, where it effects the cleansing of the spiritual reality (conscience) for which the cult of the old covenant could only provide a physical or worldly image. At the same time, His entry into God's presence makes Christ's intercessory function possible. The reference to the latter activity, in this context, suggests that while the two functions are distinct, they are also intimately connected (Johnson, 1978b: 169-187).

There also seems to be a further difficulty in the rendering "greater and more perfect tabernacle". There is a perception with regard to Jesus' humanity, namely that Jesus' incarnation in human form brought about "good things". It appears to be more likely that the words should be perceived as referring to Christ's ministration in the heavenly sanctuary in the very presence of God (Heb 9:24). The redemption provided by our Great High Priest takes effect in heaven. It has not been produced or secured by any such sacrifices as those performed by the Leviticus priests. The writer emphatically states that Christ's work was accomplished in the tabernacle "that was not man-made" and "not part of this creation" (Morris, 1983:83). "It was not simply an earthly bound activity as the Leviticus sacrifices were. There was no earthly sanctuary in which Christ offered Himself".

This study disagrees with Morris to some extent, since the meaning of a temple is broader than a building structure. For instance, 1Corinthians 6:19 says: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own". During the wilderness journey and before worship was centralised at Jerusalem, one sees that the tabernacle was a temporary and movable structure. It served as a tent of meeting between God and His chosen people (Ex 26). After their settlement in the land, they had high places on top of hills where they would build altars and offer sacrifice on them (Freedman, 1997). The researcher deduces from the above considerations that the Calvary hill was a shrine for sacrifice, and that the cross upon which Jesus was hanged was an altar. All this added to the awful and most disgraceful death that Jesus suffered outside the camp. MacLeod says that "the great tabernacle is the incarnate body of Christ...as well as the glorified body of Christ" (MacLeod, 1989:449-450; Jn 2:19-22). Therefore, both interpretations can hold water, and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Morris says that the translation: "taking with Him not the blood of goats and bull calves, but His own blood" in Hebrews 9:12 is not accurate, since the Greek simply renders it as "through the blood" (the verb "taking" is not present). There is also a theological error that leaps into the face of the writer's basic thoughts - that Christ's death on the cross is the ultimate sacrifice that takes away sin (Morris,

1983:84). To initiate the idea that He took His blood into heaven and therefore continued His redemptive work there appears to be at odds with the writer's emphasis on the "once for all" characteristic of Christ's redemptive work on the cross. He "entered heaven through His blood". According to Morris, "He did not take His blood there to do something that His sacrifice on the cross could not have done" (Morris, 1983:84).

This study is of the view that to say that "Jesus entered heaven through His blood" might be very misleading - it might give the impression that Jesus Christ is denied deity and His essential quality of being sinless. In other words, that only His blood gave Him access and that without His blood, He had no access. Morris fails to understand the sacrificial symbolism being used here. Leviticus priests were sinful, just like their fellow human beings. They had to sacrifice for their own sins, and then for the sins of their fellow men. Therefore, the blood of animals gave them access to the Holy of holies of the earthly sanctuary. With Jesus, it was completely different. He was at the same time the sacrifice and the priest sacrificing Himself. He shed His own blood to secure redemption.

The researcher can truly see no error in turning the typological practices of the priests of the Old Testament into Christ's reality of taking His own blood, because there was no other blood that could accomplish His grandiose work, apart from His own blood. The Leviticus priests' practical and pictorial activities in both words and deeds found their fulfillment in the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the equivalence in symbolism between this and the Leviticus priests' taking of blood into the presence of God in the Holy of holies of the earthly sanctuary presents no difficulty at all, given the dynamism of words.

It seems to be clear that Delitzsch (1978), Smith (1984), Thompson (1977), Hewitt (1973), Linski (1966) and Owen (1968) agree in principle on the importance of Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary and its unique and immeasurable outcomes. In the above section, this study has attempted to indicate how Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary through His blood-life sacrifice emphasises His sacrifice's superiority. In the next paragraphs, the way in which Jesus' blood-life sacrifice secures eternal redemption will be discussed.

10.6.1.6 Jesus' blood-Life sacrifice secures eternal redemption

The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus' death in two ways:

- As the consummation of suffering and trials or temptations at the close of the days of His humanity (Heb 5:7-8); and
- As His entering into the heavenly tent as a High Priest. His death is synchronous contemptuousness, as well as the highest magnification. His death differs from just one extra action of molestation (Heb 11:35-38).

The eye of faith contemplates it as more - as His ministerial activity in the heavenly sanctuary (Smith, 1984:110). The offering of His blood-life granted

eternal redemption as well as entrance into the “true eternal Holy of holies. He did achieve eternal redemption”. Because He is the eternal Son of God (Heb 1:2, 5; 4:14), the self-sacrifice of His blood-life possesses everlasting validity and value, as well as a once-and-for-all effectiveness for all eternity (Smith, 1984:110).

Redemption therefore stands for an expensive liberation (Lk 1:68; 2:38). It can be described as the liberation of captives or slaves at a high price, and the subsequent happy entrance into a glorious freedom, dearly purchased (Mk 10:45; 1Pt 1:18; Tt 2:14). Sin renders people filthy and separates them from the community of God’s people and communion with God Himself. The old covenant contained many provisions that dealt with sin, not to forget the offerings on the Day of Atonement, which excluded the sprinkling of the blood of goats and bulls onto people. Sacrificial blood was smeared on the mercy seat and horns of the altar of incense (Lv 16). Normally, sin offerings comported the sprinkling of the blood before the veil of the inner sanctuary, and upon the horns of the altar of burnt offerings, and onto the base of the latter (Lv 4).

This blood, though not sprinkled on the people, was seemingly still sprinkled for them. It is important, in order to understand the passage, to know that the writer views sin as a potential defilement and its removal as a cleansing (Marshall, 2004:608-609). Through this, Christ achieved eternal redemption. Redemption is a pictorial word which refers to the liberating of a war prisoner by means of the payment of a ransom. It was also used to liberate a slave in the same way, and sometimes the freeing of someone facing a death sentence (Morris, 1983:84; Ex 21:29-30). This redemption is eternal (Morris, 1983:84).

The benefit of Christ’s blood-life sacrifice was that He “obtained eternal redemption”: He instrumentally secured redemption by the price of His blood-life. Usually, a state of bondage and captivity requires a redemption that necessitates a price to pay and a power to deliver (Owen, 1968:164). The redemption price is verbalised in two ways:

- By what gives it its value and worth, so that it might be a satisfactory ransom for all;
- By its peculiar nature (Owen, 1968:164). With regard to the first, it refers to the person of Christ Himself. He surrendered Himself, He offered Himself to God - “He gave Himself a ransom for all”.

His essence naturally granted the ransom with an immeasurable value, fit to redeem the whole church (Nelson, 2003:260). As mentioned in the above section, redemption in God’s mind is of universal concern, not just for the church or a preferential group of people.

With regard to the second, it refers to the peculiar nature of redemption, which was accomplished through His blood and was a ransom, a price for redemption, partly due to the profitability of the obedience that He displayed towards His

Father in the shedding of His blood, and partly because His blood, as a ransom, was also an atonement, since it was given to God as a sacrifice - for it is only with blood that atonement can be made (Owen, 1968:164). Why all this? Sin or original apostasy constitutes the “meritorious cause” for our need for redemption. According to Owen (1968: 164), the “supreme efficient cause is God Himself”, the Ruler and Judge of all men put us all into a state of bondage and captivity, the instrumental cause is the curse of the law, and the external cause is “the power of Satan over the souls and consciences of men” (Owen, 1968:164).

The fact that Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice provided mankind with eternal redemption constitutes our heartbeat, and this study agrees with the above claims by Smith (1984), Marshall (2004), Morris (1983) and Nelson (2003). In the following paragraphs, this study will endeavour to show how Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice was a ransom price for redemption.

10.6.1.7 Jesus’ blood-Life sacrifice was a ransom price for redemption

In order for redemption to be operational, it requires the payment of a ransom price whereby “the guilt of sin is expiated”. There must be satisfactory atonement to divine justice, the removal of the curse of the law, and the destruction of the power of Satan. Christ achieved all this by entering into the heavenly sanctuary with His blood. This deliverance or salvation is everlasting in its instrumentality, and results or benefits - it remains valid forever more. Therefore, He whose faith was the greatest and most impressive would be the most submissive and most productive Christian (Lenski, 1966:297-300).

The final clause reveals the result of all this: “thus securing eternal redemption”. Hebrews 5:9 describes Jesus as “the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”. Here, the message conveyed sounds the same – it is only that a different word is used: “salvation” may refer to wealth and well-being, as well as deliverance, and seems to be more generic, but “redemption” is more connected to the ransoming of captives and slaves’ liberation - it is therefore adequate in the current context to express the idea of a costly deliverance. The eternal redemption is contrasted to the temporary atonement achieved by earthly priests: they had to give their offerings yearly, but Jesus made His sacrifice once and for all (Wilson, 1987:153).

In his exegesis of Hebrews 9:13, Lenski (1966) points out the following: Christ’s sacrifice is not through the medium of animal blood, but the medium of His own blood. The blood of sacrifice is evaluated in accordance with the victim that is immolated and the consequence of the value - Christ’s blood delivers. “For” reiterates and thus clarifies the measuring of value, as well as the measuring of value of the result. However, it shows the value, in a broader sense, as far as animal sacrifices are concerned, and in a more complete manner as far as Christ’s sacrifice is concerned, as well as in a personal manner as far as the worshipper or recipient of the effect and benefit of the sacrificial blood is

concerned (Lenski, 1966:295). Morris (1983) claims that the main idea is that of paying a price in order to obtain freedom. For instance, sinners are slaves, but Jesus paid the price by shedding His precious blood in order to set them free (Morris, 1983:84; cf. Tolmie, 2005).

This study agrees with Lenski (1966), Wilson (1987) and Morris (1983) in support of the view that Jesus' blood-life sacrifice was a redemption price, because there is no other price that can ever equal an incommensurable price such as that of the creator and owner of the universe giving Himself as a supernatural price for the liberation of the world (Jn 3:16). The following paragraphs will discuss how the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus makes eternal atonement for sins.

10.6.1.8 Jesus' blood-life sacrifice makes eternal atonement for sins

The instrumentality of the sacrifice of Christ is further emphasised. The sacrificial rituals of the Day of Atonement seem to have constituted the main thrust of the argument up to this point, with a focus on the reference to "goats and calves" and to "the Most Holy place". Jesus made atonement through His own blood, not through animal blood. The superior quality of His sacrifice is further highlighted by the phrase "once for all". The absolute finality of Christ's sacrifice is here in mind (Morris, 1983:84).

With regard to Hebrews 9:14, Smith claims that the writer once again makes a proposal, as he does with Hebrews 1:4. He allocates limited validity and effectiveness to the old order, due to all its inappropriateness. The red heifer and animal sacrificial victims were to be unblemished, that is, without lameness or blindness. In the same manner, Christ was also without any defect. However, the researcher here is pondering the phrase "how much more". Christ was not merely without any physical deficiency. He was identical to us in every way, but sinless (Heb 4:15). It was not only His limbs, bones and eyes, but also His soul and spirit and heart were unblemished (Heb 7:26). Jesus' sacrifice of Himself was performed on earth, but not "as part of an earthly cult or ritual, not upon an earthly altar, and not for the sake of an earthly temporary benefit. His blood was not carried through a material tent and smeared on a physical ark" (Smith, 1984:112).

Jesus' offering was of the highest spiritual order, valid and highly effective in the "realm" of the eternal Spirit. His death outside the camp was an event once for all in the "eternal order of heaven". It took place "in the transcendent heart of the universe and therefore its potency is universal in space and in time, unrepeatable and enduring" (Smith, 1984:112).

It is precisely the innermost soul that must "be reached and touched" (Heb 7:10) If we are not to be merely purified from the pollution of contact with a human bone or a house in which a person has died, but to be cleansed from dead works (Heb 6:1; Mk 7:1-23) and turn to the living God with spiritual worship (Smith,

1984:112; Jn 4:23-24), people may therefore be said to have arrived at the state of maturity or perfection that Christ has attained, if they come before God with purity of heart, sanctified by the work of Christ, with every barrier removed (Smith, 1984:113; see also Heb 2:10; 6:1; 7:11, 19; 9:9). In terms of Hebrews 9:14, MacDonald hypothetically states that if the heifer's ashes were endowed with the power to cleanse such a severe form of flesh contamination, how tremendously powerful is the blood of Jesus in cleansing from "inward sins of the deepest dye" (MacDonald, 1971:130).

This bit of proverbial wisdom seems somewhat out of context, but, like several earlier remarks, it aids materially in the development of imagery in this passage. The fact that human beings die but "once" ($\square B \nabla >$) reinforces the *reductio ad absurdum* of verse 26. Christ's sacrifice can also only take place once. At the same time, the parallel between human death and Christ's offering in the next clause further emphasizes the unity of Christ's atoning act (Attridge, 1989:265). In Hebrews 9:28, the second half of the concluding comparison returns to explicitly cultic language. Whereas verse 26 associated Christ's "appearance" with the remission of sin, it is now His singular offering ($\square B \nabla > B \Delta \equiv \Phi, <, \Pi 2, 4H$) that is again in view. The reference to its atoning function, "to take away the sins of many" ($\bar{\rho} H \vartheta \bar{B} \equiv 88^{TM} < \square <, <, (6, \rho < \square: \nabla \Delta \vartheta.: \nabla)$), is reminiscent of the language of the servant songs in Isaiah, no doubt because that language had been appropriated in early Christian liturgical traditions (Attridge, 1989:266).

Christ, who had made this singular atoning sacrifice, will "appear once again" ($f6 * \Lambda \vartheta \Xi \Delta \equiv < \dots \notin N 2 Z \Phi, \vartheta \nabla 4$). The adverbial phrase clearly indicates that the parousia is involved, and the verb is often also associated with the second coming. The verb is framed by two further phrases that characterise Christ's return. The first, "without sin" ($\Pi \Pi \Delta \vartheta H \square: \nabla \Delta \vartheta.: \nabla H$), recalls Hebrews' frequent description of Christ's own sinless nature, but it does not primarily point, if at all, to that quality. Instead, the phrase indicates that Christ's second coming will not have the atoning purpose of the first - it will be apart from sin in its aims and effects. The positive counterpart to this is the suggestion that Christ will appear for "salvation" ($\bar{\rho} H \Phi T \vartheta \Delta.: \nabla <$). While salvation has been introduced by the activity of Christ, it has yet to be consummated. The eschatological overtones are continuing for those who "wait for" Christ, since $\square B, 6 * \Xi \Pi, \Phi 2 \nabla 4$ is a common term for such an expectation (Attridge, 1989:266).

Morris (1983), Smith (1984), MacDonald (1971) and Attridge (1989) are unanimous concerning the fact that the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus Christ made eternal atonement for sins, impacting the whole being, both externally and internally, liberating the soul, mind, heart and body, and making forgiveness of sins an eternally acquired, living reality. This study agrees with them in that the super-mega, once and for all blood-life sacrifice of Jesus spread the Gospel that there is no longer a sacrifice for sins, because Jesus' blood-life sacrifice is final (Heb 10:18). This section has shown how the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus made

Christ which destroys all stains must necessarily intervene” (Wilson, 1970:110-111, cf. Guthrie, 1983, Morris, 1983 and Lane, 1991).

The parallel with Hebrews 9:14 also emphasises the weakness of the interpretation of this verse in highly mythological or abstract terms. If a person assumes that the writer is alluding to the apocalyptic notion of the expulsion of Satan from heaven, and if there is no hint of this myth in Hebrews, but only the writer knows of it, it is not an explicit part of his repertoire of images. A person may prefer to see the cleansing of heaven as the removal of the cosmic reality of sin (Attridge, 1989:161-162). However, while sin is certainly a defilement to be cleansed, the object of the cleansings in these interpretations is much too general. They deal with the paradoxical notion that heaven is in need of cleansing, and miss the specific symbolic value of ἁγία Ἐβραϊστικῶς . A person may insist that the “heavenly realities” are symbolic of eschatological events or institutions, but this approach does not shed much light on what it means for these eschatological entities to be cleansed (Attridge, 1989:262).

Attridge maintains that what these symbolic readings frequently ignore is the way in which the presentation of imagery suggests a philosophical framework or set of associations that is crucial for delivering the existential meaning of the image. In fact, the meaning is hardly in doubt. As the reflection on spirit and conscience in 9:14 suggests, the heavenly or ideal realities cleansed by Christ’s sacrifice are none other than the consciences of the members of the new covenant, the inheritors of eternal salvation (Attridge, 1989:262).

While the writer of Hebrews uses imagery of a heavenly temple with roots in Jewish apocalyptic traditions, he does not develop this imagery in a crude, literal way. In Hebrews, as with platonically inspired Jews such as Philo, the language of cosmic transcendence is a way of speaking about human inferiority. What is ontologically ideal and most real is the realm of the human spirit. The writer of Hebrews thus recognises, as do contemporary Jews of various persuasions, that true cultic cleansing is a matter of the heart and mind. He presents this insight by means of a metaphysical interpretation of a traditional apocalyptic image. This image and its interpretation also display his fundamental Christian beliefs, since cleansing of the mind and heart takes place not through human effort, but through God’s act in Christ (Hurst, 1984:41-74).

If one assumes a zeugma, it is possible, as some suggest, to change the verb “purified” in order for it to mean “consecrated” or “dedicated”. However, as Westcott (1984) suggests, ἁγία Ἐβραϊστικῶς is deliberately used to signify not so much heaven itself but rather the spiritual sphere in which atonement becomes a reality to the believer. Hewitt goes on to say that Tasker proposes a similar view, saying: “By entering heaven the sacrificed Savior transfers from an earthly localized realm into a spiritual universal sphere the benefits of His passion”. Consequently, His blood can be said to be sprinkled on the hearts and

consciences of Christian believers, enabling them to draw near to God through Him (Hewitt, 1973:152).

The above discussion reveals the fact that scholars such as Lane (1991), MacDonald (1971), Wilson (1970), Hewitt (1973), Attridge (1989) and Hurst (1984) generally emphasise the effects and benefits of Jesus' blood-life sacrifice's supernatural power in reaching the consciences of worshippers. However, Lane (1991) and Attridge (1989) associate the cleansing of worshippers' consciences with that of the heavenly realities which, according to them, are symbolic of eschatological events. This section has indicated how the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus cleanses worshippers' consciences. The following section will examine how the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus was performed through the Eternal Spirit.

10.6.1.10 Jesus' blood-life sacrifice was performed through the Eternal Spirit

Christ's sacrifice was "through the eternal Spirit". This phrase is understood differently by different people. The following are the different interpretations attributed to it: "Through an eternal spirit" refers to "the willing spirit in which He made His sacrifice in contrast to the involuntary character of animal offerings". The other interpretation is "Through His eternal spirit" (MacDonald, 1971:130). This study is of the view that the Holy Spirit is in perspective here, and that Jesus offered His sacrifice under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Another factual phrase concerning the offering of Christ is that it is "through the eternal spirit". This is indeed a vast departure from the Leviticus animal offerings. Christ offered His sacrifice with a complete and deliberate awareness of what He was doing, which is completely impossible for animals (Guthrie, 1983:188). More significantly, the term "eternal spirit" has no article in Greek, and must therefore initially be related to the spirit of Jesus, in contrast to His flesh (Guthrie, 1983:188). However, the Holy Spirit is certainly also being referred to here, since Jesus was working hand-in-hand with the Holy Spirit. It is only of Jesus that it would be said that His spirit was eternal, a "fact which even sacrificial death could not affect. Since the redemption to be secured was eternal (Heb 9:12), it was necessary for the offering to be made by one endowed with eternal spirit" (Guthrie, 1983:188-189).

There is a problem in Hebrews 9:14 which has to do with the determination of what "the eternal Spirit" actually represents: whether a person should understand it to mean Jesus' own spirit, since the Holy Spirit is nowhere else known as the "eternal Spirit" (Morris, 1983:85). This causes some people to prefer the usage that relates it to Jesus' own spirit. The words include His whole nature, as well as His spirit - all active in His saving work. Thus, it can be said that Jesus "offered Himself in His essential nature which is spirit". However, it seems more likely that it is the Holy Spirit that is being referred to here, thus implying that the Holy Spirit

was involved in the atonement act, just as the heavenly Father was (e.g. Jn 3:16). Therefore, it was with the full participation of the Holy Spirit that Jesus offered Himself as an “unblemished” sacrifice (Morris, 1983:85).

The sinless High Priest (Heb 4:15; 7:26) was also a spotless victim. The free offering of Himself to God was the culmination of a life of perfect obedience (see Heb 5:8-9; 10:5-10). The fact that His offering was made $\nu\theta\tau\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$, that is, “through the eternal Spirit”, implies that He had been divinely empowered and sustained in His office. The formulation does not occur anywhere in the New Testament or early Christian literature, but may be understood as a name for the Holy Spirit. An appropriate reference to the Spirit is found in Isaiah 42:1 and 61:1, where the servant of the Lord is qualified for the task by the Spirit of God (Lane, 1991:229; Spicq, 1982:429-435).

Unlike MacDonald, Wilson suggests that the phrase “who through the eternal spirit” ... “does not refer to the Holy Spirit, but to the spirit which was His own, that is, to Christ’s nature. Also, the word “eternal” here means “heavenly”. Therefore, the meaning is: through the heavenly aspect of His deity Christ makes the offering” (Wilson, 1970:110). This is also seen in the opening words of the Epistle: “...the Son, after he had made propitiation of sins in Himself”. The verb here is in the middle voice, which is important, according to Wilson, as an expression of what is taking place or happening within Christ’s person (Wilson, 1970:110).

The above discussion leads this study to conclude that MacDonald (1971), Gutthrie (1983), Morris (1983), Lane (1991) and Wilson (1970) stand together in support of the view that the Eternal Spirit represents the Holy Spirit, unlike the assertion that it refers to Jesus’ own spirit. They support the fact that the Holy Spirit was the empowering agent when Jesus was offering His blood-life sacrifice. This study agrees with them because the members of the Godhead always work together in the fulfillment of God’s eternal redemptive plan. This section has shown how Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice was performed through the Eternal Spirit, and the next section will discuss the fact that Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice sanctions the superiority of His sacrifice, because it was the sacrifice of Himself.

10.6.1.11 Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice sanctioned His sacrifice’s superiority because it was the sacrifice of Himself

Allen (1972) points out two things that render the sacrifice of Jesus absolutely superior to those of the Old Testament:

- Jesus sacrificed His own life and His own blood - God’s life is immeasurably superior to animals’ lives, therefore Jesus’ sacrifice is immeasurably superior to animal sacrifices. His sacrifice signalled finality,

as it was offered once for all (Allen, 1972:66). See Hebrews 9:25-26 in this regard.

- Jesus' sacrifice achieved eternal redemption for mankind (Heb 9:28). There is a powerful assertion that: "without the shedding of the blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Heb 9:22). The blood bore the mysterious matter through which God brought life into existence (Allen, 1972:66).

Since life is seen to be in the blood (see explanation of blood in chapter 9), a part of the power of God lodges in the blood. To offer blood was therefore to offer the "ultimate gift of life itself" - the sacrifice was not a "superstitious, magical ritual", but the giving of the best in sacrificing blood to God (Allen, 1972:66). Blood is very costly, since once it is shed, life is gone (1Pt 1:18-19). The shedding of blood signifies the dangerousness of sin and the inexpressible difficulty with which sin was absolved or forgiven (Allen, 1972:66). It was not God's anger that was appeased. The sacrificial blood, instead, was "God's own perfect love that made sin so difficult to forgive" (Allen, 1972:66).

The more one loves, the tougher it becomes to forgive those who hurt those that one loves. In the same manner, God cannot easily forgive our sins. A cheap or easy forgiveness is no forgiveness at all, because it fails to visualise the dangerousness of sin, which causes others to experience terrible pain. "For God to forgive He must not only love, He must maintain His moral integrity". He has to be wounded and experience the most acute pain for our transgressions (Is 53:5). God accomplished this through the ultimate and final sacrifice offered for our sins by His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (Allen, 1972:66). It can be inferred from this that, since some of the power of God is in the blood, this power is released through sacrificial performances in order to accomplish a specific task during or after the sacrifice.

Christ's act of atonement was accomplished by "offering Himself" (ἑαυτὸν προσέφερεν, προσφέρω). For the first time in the text, the sacrificial act of the heavenly High Priest is explicitly mentioned. The notion that Christ's death was an act of self-sacrifice for sins is certainly traditional. The natural inference that the sacrificial act a priest performs was not explicitly drawn by those numerous Christian writers who deploy this motif (Attridge, 1989:214). The writer of Hebrews now proceeds to make that inference, possibly inspired by the title of High Priest, traditionally applied to Christ in virtue of His role as the heavenly intercessor, a role that has dominated the development of the priestly motif up till now. The high priestly sacrificial action of Christ will now be explored through an elaboration of the imagery of the Yom Kippur ritual, to which the writer alluded with the emphatic "once for all" (ἅπασι) (Attridge, 1989:214).

The phrase "offered Himself" means that the living God, who appeared in the human form, became both the High Priest and sacrificial victim, and deprecated His own glory for the propitiation of our sins, both with the priestly act and ransom paid (Wilson, 1970:110). "Without spot to God" points to the fact that the

instrumentality of the Leviticus sacrifices resided in the external perfection or beauty of the sacrifice, but Jesus offered Himself to God as an unblemished sacrifice, exempt from any moral corruption or impurity (Wilson, 1970:110).

The phrase “He offered Himself” reveals the fact that it was both willful and predetermined, and “without blemish” elevates it to the highest moral level. The perfect distinctiveness of Jesus lies in His accomplishment of God’s will. It goes without saying that, from a superbly infinite sacrifice, infinite results must be expected. Its purification reaches consciences and removes sin and guilt from worshippers’ consciences (Guthrie, 1983:189). The reference in the expression $\theta \in \forall \underline{\zeta} : \forall \theta \xi \neg \text{O}\Delta\Delta\Phi\theta \xi \neg$, “the blood of Christ”, is not to the material substance but to the action of Christ, who offered Himself to God as an unblemished sacrifice, as the relative clause of verse fourteen makes clear (Lane, 1991:228).

The formulation is entirely appropriate to the immediate context as a graphic synonym for the death of Christ and its sacrificial significance. This understanding is confirmed when Heb 9:11-14 are retrospectively summarised in Hebrews 9:15b by the phrase “a death having occurred for the redemption from transgressions committed under the former covenant”. The self-sacrifice of Christ on Calvary qualifies Him to enter the heavenly sanctuary, and to consummate His redemptive task in the presence of God (Lane, 1991:228).

The relative clause $\text{O}H *4 \square B < \beta : \forall \theta \xi \cong H \forall \text{O}T < . : \cong \Lambda \text{E} \forall \Lambda \theta \in < B \Delta \cong \Phi Z < , (6 , < \square : T : \cong < \theta (2$, used in a clausal sense (“seeing that He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit as an unblemished sacrifice to God”), shows what makes Christ’s sacrifice absolute and final. The word $\square : T : \cong <$ has a ring of sacrificial terminology. In the LXX and elsewhere in Jewish Hellenistic sources, this term denotes the absence of defects in a sacrificial animal (e.g., Nm 6:14). It was chosen to emphasise the perfection of Christ’s sacrifice (Lane, 1991:228).

Desilva (2000) sees in this the effective removal of every impediment to the worship of God. The reference in the expression $\theta \in \forall \underline{\zeta} : \forall \theta \xi \neg \text{O}\Delta\Delta\Phi\theta \xi \neg$, “the blood of Christ”, is not to the material substance but to the action of Christ, who offered Himself to God as an unblemished sacrifice, as the relative clause of verse fourteen makes clear (Lane, 1991:228). Allen (1972), Attridge (1989), Wilson (1970), Guthrie (1983), Lane (1991) and Desilva (2000) agree on the fact that Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice sanctions the superiority of His sacrifice, since it is the sacrifice of God, of Immanuel, for His own people. Therefore, there is no sacrifice that can be greater than this.

In this section, the researcher has attempted to show that Jesus’ entrance into the heavenly sanctuary with His own blood-life sacrifice accomplished the following: it secured eternal redemption, functioned as a ransom price for redemption, made eternal atonement for sins, and cleansed the worshippers’ consciences because it was performed through the Eternal Spirit. The fact that Jesus’ blood-life sacrifice was the sacrifice of Himself sanctions the superiority of

His sacrifice over and beyond all Leviticus sacrificial typologies. In the following section, this study will show how Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for various types of benefits.

10.7 JESUS' BLOOD-LIFE SACRIFICE COMMUNICATES POWER FOR MANIFOLD BENEFIT

10.7.1 INTRODUCTION

Jesus did not desire to be the recipient of the benefits provided by His sacrificial act. He was a spotless sacrificial victim (Heb 9:14), not in the external meaning of ceremonial law, but as the sinless one (Heb 4:15; 7:26). In this way, Jesus distinguished Himself from all casual priests whose sinful conditions obligated them to first sacrifice for their own sins (Heb 5:3; 7:27; 9:7). This was a peculiar sacrifice - the Priest was at the same time the victim and the sacrifice performer (Nelson, 2003:258). However, the sacrifice performer was not among the beneficiaries of the sacrifice's results. In this fashion, Hebrews fosters a "Christology from above" in terms of the exalted Son and heavenly High Priest, and a "Christology from below", describing one who was willfully and obediently inflicted with terrible pain and shame while in the flesh (Nelson, 2003:258).

The description of Jesus' sacrifice in the Epistle to the Hebrews emphasises the positive aspects of Christ's atoning sacrifice. It communicates power for soteriological benefits through atonement, cleansing and sanctification, and permanent access to God is possible for Christians. It brings psychological benefits through the cancellation of guilt, removal of sin and cleansing of worshippers' consciences, and finally, it communicates power for sociological benefits through impacting on the lives of Christian believers and building a community of worshippers (Nelson, 2003:259).

10.7.1.1 Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for soteriological benefits

The Epistle to the Hebrews uses a broad scope of Old Testament language concerning the results of sacrifice, in order to portray the soteriological benefits of Jesus' sacrificial work (Marshall, 2004:611-615). The sacrifice of Jesus primarily makes its beneficiaries holy (Heb 2:11; 10:14; 13:12) through the sacrificial apparatus of His body and blood (Heb 10:10, 29). Therefore, Hebrews can afford to call Christian believers "holy ones" (Heb 3:1; 6:10). It has to be well understood here that "holiness" must be perceived as a moral and ethical category that transforms people's lives into lives of people of the holy God, rather than just a ritual category. This developmental process already exists in Leviticus 11:44-45 and Leviticus 17-26 (Morris, 1983:88-89).

Secondly, Christ's sacrifice changes Christian believers from a state of impurity to one of purity (Heb 1:3; 9:14). The Old Testament relegates this concept to the

ceremonial cleanliness required in order to be involved in the worship of God (Lv 16:30). Hebrews, however, distorted the initially distinct ideas of purifying and making holy (Heb 9:13), a gauging of different ideas which sometimes exist in the Old Testament (Lv 16:19). Given the fact that the guise of holiness calls for purity, the two concepts normally become interwoven (Lindars, 1991:93).

Thirdly, Christ's sacrificial work takes away sin (Heb 9:26, 28). It was performed because of sin and for the removal from sin. As an action that cancelled the hindrance to the relationship between God and His people, it was a work of atonement made at "the cover of the ark", the "mercy seat", like on the Day of Atonement (Peterson, 1982:148-155). Other benefits acquired through the power communicated by the sacrifice of Jesus can be viewed as redemption (Heb 9:12, 15), salvation (Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:25) and forgiveness (Heb 9:22). His was an all-encompassing sacrifice, made for many and for all time (Nelson, 2003:260).

Hebrews emphasises Christ's sacrifice's "once for all" instrumentality and uniqueness. In a similar theological way, the writer of Hebrews remembers the fact that the sacrificial ritual of Exodus 24 used the binding power of blood to launch the covenant (Heb 9:19-22). The redemptive benefits of this new covenant are portrayed in Hebrews 9:8-12 and 10:16-17, 29 (Jr 31:31): the law ascribed upon human hearts, sins forgiven and sanctification attained (Nelson, 2003:260). Ultimately, one can say that the sacrifice of Jesus has granted believers an unclouded access to God's presence. The Leviticus sacrificial ritual created some hindrances and shortcomings to such access (Heb 9:2-7). Consequently, access to what is really holy was denied insofar as the ritual procedures of that time were still operational (Heb 9:8-10). The right of drawing closer to God, which was reserved for priests, has now been extended to all Christian believers (Ladd, 1979:576).

Christ's appearance in God's presence established a path for us to follow. He went in "on our behalf" (Heb 9:24), and the process of coming closer is "through Him" (Heb 7:25). Hope has gone behind the curtain, in a similar way to Jesus' entry, "a forerunner in our behalf: (Heb 6:19-20), making a way to God" (Heb 7:19; 10:19-20). This drawing near to God is a question of faith (Heb 11:6). Furthermore, secure communication with the terrible holiness of God calls for holiness and purity (Nelson, 2003:260). Holiness is a condition *sine quoi non* in order to see God (Heb 12:14), and Christ's holiness and purity renders the coming close in worship a reality (Heb 9:14; 10:19-20).

Drawing near to God is something that Hebrews 4:16 and 10:22 encourages its readers to do, in order to obtain mercy and grace (Nelson, 2003:260). This study has attempted, in the above paragraphs, to highlight some of the benefits enjoyed by Christian believers as a result of the power communicated through the blood-life sacrifice of Jesus. It makes them holy and brings them into a state of purity by taking away sin and establishing a permanent relationship between God and them. It also provides them with eternal redemption, salvation and

forgiveness of sins, including an unclouded access to the presence of God, into which Jesus entered on our behalf, making the drawing near to God through Him in order to obtain grace and mercy a living reality. In the next section, this study will indicate how Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for psychological benefits.

10.7.1.2 Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for psychological benefits

The Epistle to the Hebrews deals with the "perfection" of the Christian as the result of Christ's work (Heb 10:14; 11:40; 12:2). It is not only a question of objective atonement that removes all the hindrances to a "divine-human" relationship, but also one of metamorphosis, which transforms the Christian believer in a radical way (Nelson, 2003:261). Christ's sacrifice is the antitype of Leviticus sacrifices, which could not perfect worshippers or purify their consciences from feelings of sin and guilt (Heb 7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1-2). In other words, there is a psychological benefit, including the conscience (Heb 9:14), heart (Heb 10:22) and a "perfecting of faith" (Heb 12:2). Perfection signifies the removal of all traces of remembrance of sin on God's part (Heb 10:14, 17-18), but also the removal of the painful consciousness of sin on the part of Christian believers (Smith, 1984:112-113). See Hebrews 9:14; 9:9 and 10:2-3 in this regard.

The old sacrificial system was inappropriate for taking care of such "internal feelings of remorse" –that is, a guilty conscience. The writer of Hebrews seems to extend the symbolic dualism of the earthly and heavenly processes of cultic cleansing with the dichotomy of flesh and conscience. Old Testament sacrifices dealt with the external, but could not cleanse the worshippers' consciences of the burden of sin and its guilt (Heb 9:9-10). They were founded on typological laws and regulations (Heb 7:16, 18; 10:1). This means that the blood of animals was sufficient for the purification of the external aspect, but the blood of Christ purifies the conscience (Wilson, 1987:153-154). See Hebrews 9:13-14 in this regard.

Given the repetitive nature of Israel's sacrifices, they were psychologically inadequate (Heb 9:25-26; 10:1-2; 10:11). They do not efface "the consciousness of sin" or the "feeling of being guilty". Contrary to this, Christ's "once for all" sacrifice is psychologically satisfactory and appropriate for all time. Beneficiaries are elevated from "bad conscience" to "good conscience". The blood of Jesus cleanses the conscience from "dead works" (Heb 9:14), that is, "deeds that lead to death". See Hebrews 6:1 in this regard (Nelson, 2003:262).

The psychological benefits of Christ's sacrifice can be seen in terms of ratification and inauguration of the new covenant, which stipulates that divine laws are written on the hearts and minds of God's people, and that their iniquities shall be remembered no more (Heb 10:16-18). Old Testament sacrifices constituted a yearly "reminder of sin" (Heb 10:3; generalising LXX Nm 5:15), but the new

covenant declares that God forgets sins (Heb 8:12; 10:17). The Christian believer's "heart" is washed clean and it becomes "true" (Heb 10:22), which has to do with a person's inner life and awareness. Christ's sacrifice fulfilled this, as He was willfully determined to do God's will (Heb 10:7-10). Christian believers have now acquired soft, flexible and obedient hearts, hearts empowered through the grace of God to shun false doctrines (Brown, 1982:178-181). See Psalm 95:8, Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 8:6; 10:16 and 13:9.

There is also some drama-like language in the Epistle to the Hebrews in connection with the phrases "fearful prospects of judgment" (Heb 10:27), "the hands of the living God" (10:31), and "living God" (12:18-24). This God is indeed the "judge of all". However, this should not cause us to panic and lose heart, because Jesus, our mediator, is also there, and His second coming at the end of time will signify salvation for believing Christians (Heb 9:28; 10:39). Christ's death removed the source of death, as well as human beings' psychological bondage to the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). The virtue of faith, intensely shown in Hebrews 11:4, 5, 7, 12, 19, 28 and 35, defeats death.

The "dramatic, albeit confused, language of Hebrews 6:18-19 comforts those "who have taken refuge" to seize the hope set before us" (Nelson, 2003:262). In this section, the researcher has briefly discussed how Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for psychological benefits: it communicates the power to heal the conscience and the heart, granting perfection of faith. It takes care of internal feelings of remorse or guilt, and initiates the ratification and inauguration of the new covenant. Christian believers' hearts are washed clean and rendered soft and obedient. Therefore, they can stand before the Judge of all (God) without panic, because Jesus, their Mediator, is there - He who has removed the psychological bondage of fear of death.

10.7.1.3 Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for sociological benefits

The Epistle to the Hebrews recommends "full participation" in the Christian congregation's worship, substantiating a pastoral role in communal worship (Heb 4:16; 10:23-25). This communal worship results from the fact that Jesus' blood-life sacrifice has liberated Christian believers from the danger of "dead works". Consequently, recipients of the benefits of Christ's sacrifice express their undivided gratitude through metaphorical sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, including the confession of His name (Heb 12:28; 15), as well as generous deeds of compassion and love (Heb 13:16). The mysterious rendering "we have an altar" in Hebrews 13:10 seems to refer to Christ's eternal and all-encompassing sacrificial act. The cross of Jesus constitutes a paradigm of the writer's emphasis of the fact that disparaging evaluations by the outside world are worthless (Nelson, 2003:264).

The shame of the cross is granted supreme value (Heb 6:6), and the shock-provoking and lamentable, shameful cross became outstanding as a pattern for Christian believers' own efforts (Heb 12:1-3). God vindicated and magnificently exalted Christ to the supreme position of kingly honour (Heb 5:7-10; 12:2). In contrast to sacrificial remains of the Day of Atonement that were burnt outside the camp, Hebrews compares this to the crucifixion of Jesus "outside the gates", and encourages Christian believers to meet Jesus "outside the camp", "a place where disgrace and shameful abuse, suffering and loss are experienced, where obedience, service, and faithfulness must be practiced" (Nelson, 2003:265). It is quite clear from this that Jesus' blood-life sacrifice established a community of worshippers, a society of liberated people who are set apart to gather together, and to serve and worship the living God.

In this regard, Johnson commented that: "the anthropology of Hebrews cannot be separated from its ecclesiology. The individual per se is never in view in the pamphlet: it is always man as the worshipper as a member of a cultic community" (Johnson, 2001:119). Believers are motivated to assemble together (Heb 10:25). Ultimately, "the goal of the pilgrimage of the faithful is communicated not in terms of 'private, individual salvation or reward but in terms of membership in a city, a kingdom, the assembly of the first born who have been enrolled in heaven'".

10.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to provide an exegesis of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Even though the theme of sacrifice is described in almost every book of the New Testament, given the fact that the field is very broad, this study decided to focus on the sacrifice of Jesus in Hebrews. The researcher has discussed the nature of the sacrifice of Jesus, showing that it was representative, substitutionary and penal. Thereafter, this chapter discussed the motivation behind the sacrifice of Jesus and its purpose, arguing that it was to taste death for mankind, bring sons to glory, make atonement for sin and render the devil powerless. The superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus was then discussed, and the view was that the sacrifice of Jesus accomplished God's will with regard to sacrifices. Christ's seated posture implies that His sacrificial work is accomplished once and forever, and the ratification of the new covenant confirms that sin has been removed. The way in which the bodily sacrifice of Jesus dealt with sin is also significant here.

Based on the fact that both the sacrificial victim's body and blood may be offered separately as sacrifices, that is, the blood of Jesus as a sacrifice and the body of Jesus as a sacrifice, and given the fact that both sacrificial aspects overlap or complementarily respond to the entirety of the common understanding of sacrifice, this chapter endeavoured to use blood-life for a sacrifice. This is because the life of every living creature is in the blood, and blood-life sacrifice can be viewed as a blood sacrifice or sacrificial blood. In this lengthy section, the following topics were discussed: firstly, Jesus' blood-life sacrifice sanctions His

sacrifice's superiority. Here, the entrance of the Leviticus high priest into the earthly sanctuary through an animal blood-life sacrifice was discussed - this was a prerequisite for his entrance in order to atone for his own sins and those of the people.

Secondly, the significance of the blood-life sacrifice in the old order was discussed, which is mainly characterised by external, ceremonial purification, granting sins covering and forgiveness. The benefits of animal blood-life sacrifices in the symbolic earthly sanctuary featured as a means to foster a relationship and fellowship between God and His people, according to His legal precepts, as these were typologies pointing to Christ's event. Animal blood-life sacrifices and the purification significance of the red heifer's ashes were also discussed, and this dealt mainly with the sprinkling of the blood of goats and bulls upon the furnishings of the most Holy place, and the sprinkling of the red heifer's blood seven times in the direction of the Temple, as well as the sprinkling of water mixed with the heifer's ashes upon those defiled by touching or coming into contact with a dead body, all of which was done for the purification of these defiled people.

This chapter went on to discuss the fact that Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary through His own blood-life sacrifice emphasises His sacrifice's superiority. His entrance into the presence of God for us brought about tremendous results with regard to sacrificial rituals: Jesus' blood-life sacrifice secures eternal redemption, is the ransom price for redemption, makes eternal atonement for sins, and cleanses worshippers' consciences, removing sin and guilt. Jesus' blood-life sacrifice was performed through the Eternal Spirit - it emphasises the incomparable superiority of Jesus' sacrifice, because it was the sacrifice of Himself. All this seems to reveal something peculiar to the blood - life is in the blood, or blood is life.

Therefore, a mysterious power resides in the blood, and when blood is being shed, it communicates some power that affects the lives of worshippers. Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for soteriological benefits: it makes worshippers holy and places them in a state of purity and a continuous relationship with God. It grants them redemption, salvation and full forgiveness of their sins, including an unclouded access to God through Jesus Christ. Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for psychological benefits: consciences and hearts are cleansed, sin and guilt are removed, internal feelings of remorse are taken care of, and worshippers are delivered from the psychological bondage of the fear of death, since Jesus' blood-life sacrifice and resurrection overcame death. It thus communicated power for sociological benefits, because the power of Jesus' blood-life sacrifice achieves complete and total liberation from dead works, in order to worship the living God. Christian believers are united as a worshipping community, a society of liberated, saved, redeemed people who socialise and gather together to worship and serve the living God. They express their gratitude to Him as they confess His name, and show compassion through

sharing and mutual support. All this information will be used in this study's comparison with African material.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: COMPARISON WITH MATERIAL FROM AFRICA

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The analyses on blood sacrifices in chapters three to ten have indicated that the importance of blood sacrificial rituals in both South Africa (among Xhosas, Zulus, Tsongas and elsewhere in Africa) and in the Bible (Israel's communities), as found in the Old Testament, has displayed such an astonishing congruity. This study's attempt to succinctly describe blood sacrificial rituals among modern Xhosas, which has been generalised to the rest of the Bantu people of South Africa, has shown some paradigm shifts between Xhosa traditional sacrifices and Xhosa modern sacrificial rituals. There is also a paradigm shift between Old Testament and New Testament sacrifices, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, including the Christian Church today. One can view African traditional religions and the congregation of Hebrews as two families with remarkable similarities and a few differences. It appears that these two families could even merge if they ironed out their insignificant differences in an appropriate manner. Therefore, given the insignificant differences between these two close families, this study has decided not to capitalise on them in its comparison of biblical material and material from African traditional religions.

The whole nature of this comparison is not to say that one rules the other or that one influences the other, but rather to place the one next to the other and see where they overlap, so that one can understand that, in these areas, one can approach biblical material from the perspective of African religions. In such a way, a dialectical discussion can take place. The issue of intra- or interaction between Euro-American missionaries and the African traditional worldview has been dealt with in this study's heuristic framework, which also includes recent scientific theories on sacrificial rituals (see chapter two of this dissertation). This will serve as a basis for the comparison of biblical material and material from Africa.

In terms of this study, these theories are useful in that they are scientifically approved, and serve as explanatory mechanisms for the creation, maintenance and perpetuation of human communities through blood sacrificial rituals, which constitute a special medium of communication. According to these theories, blood sacrifices ensure peace, reconciliation and forgiveness in a temporary manner. This may be applicable to both African traditional religion and Old and New Testament situations, in that sacrificial victims' blood could have served as a medium through which the wishes of worshippers were communicated to deities, who in turn responded to their communication signals by bestowing anticipated blessings: the effects were reversible between the sender and receiver of the message.

The expected gifts were spiritual, material and physical - peace and harmony in the community, reconciliation and forgiveness. Sacrificial victims' blood also dealt

inappropriately with the communities' fear and guilt, and this is why blood sacrificial rituals had to be performed all the time and everywhere (see Burkert, 1987; Girard, 1987 and Smith, 1987 in chapter two of this dissertation). It was also believed that blood sacrifices were useful in ending epidemics and natural calamities, and creating a viable atmosphere for the supplicants and the deity in African traditional beliefs (Parrinder, 1976). The Epistle to the Hebrews also shows that Old Testament blood sacrifices, as revelatory or God's provision for Israel, were ineffective in healing disrupted relationships between Yahweh and His treasured people, as well as in covering sins and achieving a kind of typological redemption, in addition to various purifications or cleansings. They were also unable to completely remove sin and to cleanse the consciences of Israel worshippers (Heb 9:9; 10:11). The book of Hebrews accounts for one single sacrifice offered by a human being, Jesus Christ, which once and for all solved mankind's problem, as has been seen in this study's exegesis of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews (see chapter ten of this dissertation). This has pronounced the discontinuity of animal blood sacrifices and stands as a remarkable comparison between African traditional religions' blood sacrificial rituals, which are still being performed, and biblical blood sacrificial rituals, which have already been abolished.

In this chapter, after a discussion of the material on various similarities between the Old Testament, African traditional religion and New Testament sacrifices, which constitutes the main focus here (given the overwhelming nature of similarities and the notable insignificance of differences), the researcher will attempt to comparatively integrate the information gathered during the qualitative empirical research by means of focus group interviews conducted with grassroot respondents in Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and North West provinces for the project "Reading the Bible in Africa". This qualitative investigation was conducted according to the theoretical guidelines found in the work of de Vos. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions, among which the following were selected as being the most relevant to the research topic of this dissertation, namely:

- God: If you must tell somebody who does not know God who He is, what would you say?
- Mediation: Explain who the ancestors are and what people expect from them?
- Who is Jesus and what does He do?
- Cult: Is it necessary to make sacrifices?
- What is the role of blood?

From the outset, these questions seem appropriate to the discussion in this dissertation for the following reasons: generally speaking, animal sacrifices are addressed to a deity or to God, according to the teaching of the Bible (see chapter nine of this dissertation). The blood of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament served as a means for the mediation and ratification of the old covenant (see Heb 9:18-23; 10:4; Ex 24:3-8; 29:12, 36; Lv 14:4, 7; 17:11). Jesus

became the mediator of a new covenant through His sacrificial blood, to which better promises were attached. By ratifying and mediating a better, new covenant by means of His own blood, He declared the old covenant to be obsolete, taking away the sins of many people and bringing salvation to those waiting for Him (Heb 8:1-13; 9:24-28). Ancestors as spirits of dead relatives, together with other unspecified spirits, including lesser gods, according to African traditional religious beliefs, are believed to be mediators between a deity, presumably the Supreme Being, and the worshippers. They are the object of all the sacrifices performed in terms of African traditional beliefs (see chapters 4-6 of this dissertation). Therefore, this chapter will briefly discuss each of the above questions and provide the answer to each. After this, conclusions will be drawn.

In order to begin the comparison between sacrifice in the Bible and the material from Africa, it is important to note that of all the New Testament books, the Epistle to the Hebrews is the only one which gives a brief description of Old Testament animal sacrifices, as well as their use of blood in terms of bulls and goats (Heb 9:12, 13) as a means for determining the viability of a harmonious relationship between Israel's worshippers and their God. Animal sacrifices were communication and communion facilitators between God, the Creator of the universe, gods, ancestors and men, depending on the specific context. A careful examination of sacrificial rituals among the Xhosas, Zulus, Tsongas and other Bantu tribes in Africa reveals strong similarities to those described in the Old and New Testament, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This study finds it difficult and very controversial to account for the origin of these similarities. Whether or not they may be attributed to the fact that the fall did not completely mar or eradicate the image of God in man is also difficult to account for. This cannot be investigated here, given the scope of this dissertation and the time allowed for its completion. It could probably, however, form the basis for further investigations.

As seen throughout this study's discussions on sacrifices, both from the biblical and African perspectives, the fact that there are similarities that are intriguing and not easy to refute remains difficult to account for when it comes to the question of their origin. Do both African traditional religion and Old Testament blood sacrifices originate from the God of the Bible? This is a pertinent and interesting question, which cannot be extensively dealt with here. In the case of an affirmative answer, this would call Christianity to a reversal and reconsideration of its standpoint in terms of religious beliefs.

It must also be said here that, from the perspective of sources outside the Bible, this would not be easy to prove. If one denies, based on what the Bible teaches, that African sacrifices originate from God (the God of the Bible), this would not be easy to account for. The same would also be true of biblical sacrifices, if one seeks to prove that they originate from God. When consideration is given to sources that are external to the Bible, the controversy is then even greater. The similarities between blood sacrifices in the Bible and those in African traditional

religions are essentially in terms of their nature, types, purpose, as well as similarities of functions and ways and places of execution, not to forget the similarities in terms of the objects of sacrificial worship. It is quite interesting to note these similarities, although in the minds of people, they are not believed to have the same origin. Therefore, before going into any more detail, this issue can be illustrated by a few figures. The figure below indicates the objects of blood sacrifices.

Fig.13 Objects of animal blood sacrifices: reversible effects- both the sender and receiver release power and are affected by power

Sender of the power signal stimulus message	Receiver of the power signal stimulus message	Moved addressee sends back power signal stimulus response
ATR worshippers(in SA: Xhosas, Zulus, Tsongas) & elsewhere in Africa	Supreme Being, lesser gods, spirits and ancestors	Spiritual, material and physical wellbeing, prosperity, protection, fertility, cattle and good crops etc
OT worshippers: Israel	The God of the Bible: Creator of the universe	Covenantal blessings: both spiritual, material and physical prosperity, fertility, good harvest and cattle etc
NT: Hebrews congregants and Jesus	The God of the Bible: Creator of the universe	Spiritual, material and physical prosperity, redemption, salvation, eternal atonement, forgiveness of sin and cleansing of consciences

In this table, one see that in African traditional religions, worshippers send their power signal stimulus message through the medium of blood sacrifice to several objects or deities: the Supreme-Being may be equivalent to the God of the Bible (Christianity), lesser gods, spirits and ancestors (polytheism). In the New Testament (Hebrews), the congregation (Christians), as well as Jesus, address their sacrifices to only one object: God, the creator of heaven and earth. In return, the appeased or pleased deities communicate back through power signal stimulus responses by bestowing various miraculous or supernatural blessings. The main idea here is that in both contexts, worshippers and deities are involved in a power-ignited two-way communication. Through their diverse blood sacrifices, either animal or human, power is released which moves the deity to respond. The worshippers stimulate the deity for a favourable response, and in turn the deity, through supernatural feedback, stimulates the worshipper to perform continuous sacrifices. The following table indicates the power-releasing media in blood sacrifices.

Fig.14 Nature of blood sacrifices or power-releasing media of communication

Religious Context	Power-releasing media of communication	Anticipated out come
ATR (S A: Xhosas, Zulus and Tsongas) & elsewhere in Africa	Animal flesh eaten by people Animal flesh burnt upon the altar Burnt fat produces smoke Blood sprinkled, poured or eaten Human sacrifices in times of crisis	Enhances community cohesion and communion with deities Direction of smoke shows acceptance or denial of sacrifice by deity Good smelling aroma for deity Sacrifice feeds deity Temporal cleansing virtue Pacifies deities Stops epidemics and natural calamities
OT: Israel	Fire Animal flesh eaten by the people Animal flesh and fat burnt Smoke Human sacrifices: prohibited in the Old Testament Animal blood (prohibition on eating animal blood)	Sign of divine manifestation, wrath and judgment, and of acceptance of sacrifice Enhance community communion and fellowship with deity Good smelling aroma for God Smoke direction shows sacrifice acceptance or denial Sprinkled or poured down Cleansing, atonement for sin, forgiveness and reconciliation
NT: Hebrews	Fire: sacrifice not through fire, but cross- spiritualised Animal sacrifices: discontinued Human sacrifices: self-sacrifice of the God-Man, Jesus Christ Blood of Jesus	Symbol of the Holy Spirit Redemption, eternal atonement and forgiveness of sin, eternal salvation and permanent access to God Cleansing: sin and guilt and worshippers' minds: soteriological, psychological and sociological benefits.

The above table is all about the communicative power through various media. In both African and Old Testament contexts, there are many similarities in the treatment of animal sacrifices and their outcomes. One can see the significance of animal flesh eaten in a communal meal, fire, burnt flesh, fat, smoke and blood. In the Bible (Israel), fire constitutes the manifestation of God's wrath and judgment as far as the communication in blood sacrifices is concerned. However, human sacrifices were prohibited in Israel, as well as the eating of animal blood. Animal sacrifices in the Old Testament temporarily effected atonement and, as with African traditional religions, they had to be continually repeated. In the New Testament, animal sacrifices were valueless and non-existent, fire only became a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the wrath of God, and there was a remarkable shift from animal sacrifices, which were typological, to the sacrifice of a rational, self-willed human being, Jesus Christ, who offered Himself once and for all and met the real needs of mankind forever. He accomplished what animal sacrifices have failed to do in both African traditional religion and the Old Testament (Israel), by removing sin and guilt, liberating peoples' consciences, and providing them with

eternal redemption, atonement, salvation, forgiveness of sins and permanent access to God, all through the power communicated by His one and only sacrifice. However, one should not forget that African traditional religious believers still hold onto animal and human sacrifices. The following table compares human carriers or scapegoats in both African traditional religion and the New Testament (Hebrews).

Fig.15 Communicative power of sacrifices: significance of carriers or scapegoats

Religious context	Human scapegoats	Time-space	Frequency	Quantity	Extension-validity	Distinctiveness
ATR (Xhosas, Zulus, Tsongas & elsewhere in Africa)	Iden, Molemi and Eleguru (see chapter 7)	Localised according to situation	Once for each person, several persons according to situation	Numerous human carriers or scapegoats, depending on the situation	Short, temporary, according to the duration of the crisis or situation	Lay down their lives for a group of people or locally limited communities
NT: Hebrews	Jesus Christ	The whole universe for all time	Once for all to meet the real needs of all mankind	One single act of carrying the sins of many for all time	Eternal validity	Laid down His own life once for all for all mankind, past, present and future, fulfilling God's will

In African traditional religion, there were courageous people such as Eleguru (see chapter 7 of this dissertation) who laid down their lives for the sake of their respective communities. However, the effect of his work was so limited in time and space, as well as in validity, because it was removed with the end of the crisis, necessitating many other carriers as the need arose. Jesus' work of carrying the sins of the whole world, however, knows no boundaries of time and space. It fulfilled God's will and brought about eternal redemption, atonement, salvation, removal of sin and guilt, and liberation of worshippers' consciences, in order for them to serve the living God (Heb 9: 11-14). The following paragraphs will elaborate on the similarities and differences displayed in the above tables.

In the view of this study, the mutually influencing blood sacrifice communications and exchanges that exist between deities and worshippers can be best understood in terms of Neyrey's benefactor-client model of God (deity), the Benefactor and Patron. Although it is a cultural model for interpreting the deity in Greco-Roman antiquity, it can still be applicable to both African traditional religion and biblical sacrificial systems (Old and New Testament) in terms of the reciprocity of communication motives, exchanges and expectations, and the increased commitment to deities by worshippers and vice-versa. Neyrey uses power, commitment, inducement and influence as media of both exchange and general symbolism. God, as the Benefactor and Patron, receives benefactions

from the supplicants, and in return, He bestows benefactions that enhance the commitment of worshippers (Neyrey, 2005: 467-489). Therefore, this study will now look at the similarities between biblical and African traditional religion blood sacrificial rituals, starting with the similarities in the nature of sacrifices.

11.1.1 Similarities and differences in the nature of sacrifices

Both biblical and African traditional religious contexts acknowledge the existence of animal sacrifices in the form of domesticated and non-domesticated animals. They also both perform human sacrifices during critical times (Awolalu, 1973:87). In Xhosa, the word *idini* stands for an animal sacrifice (Kropf, 1915:77; McClaren, 1923:43). *Umunikelo* and *umbingelelo* are used in a similar sense (Fischer, 1985:550). A sacrifice is also known as *Um-Bingeleli* (Kropf, 1915:36). Xhosa people recognise two categories of sacrifices that comprise fourteen types (Bigalke, 1969; Lamla, 1972).

Sacrificial animals in both biblical and African traditional religious contexts include goats, sheep, oxen or bulls, and calves and inkomo or cows for Zulu people (Lv 1-7; Belglund, 1975:54-66; De Heuch, 1985:56-57), as well as doves as a provision of sacrifices for the poor. Africans also recognise chickens as sacrifices (Ukpong, 1982:185). However, unclean animals are not accepted as sacrificial animals or offerings in the biblical context of Leviticus, but one finds that they are used as sacrificial victims in African traditional religious beliefs. Leviticus 22:17-33 provides a list of unacceptable animal sacrifices. Sacrificial animals are to be without blemish or defect. For example, Zulu people offer the hornbill, python, pangolin, eagle etc (Strauss, 1971:600-603; Belglund, 1975:57). There is a whole range of identical sacrificial animals used in both biblical and African sacrificial rituals, which seems to be predictive of the similarity of types. However, before discussing this, something should be mentioned with regard to human sacrifices.

The Bible and African sacrificial rituals both have human sacrifices. However, when the Leviticus sacrificial system was first given to the Israelites, it was prohibited for them to sacrifice a human being. In Exodus 13:13b, God tells Moses to command the Israelites to redeem every first-born of their sons. Leviticus 18:21 reads: "Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God". See also Leviticus 27:1-8, which reiterates the fact that persons dedicated to God must be redeemed by offering something of an equivalent value, to be determined by the priest. Deuteronomy 18:9-13 reads: "...Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in fire...". However, before the passing of this law, God told Abraham to give his only begotten son, Isaac, to Him as a human sacrifice.

One may wonder here whether or not God is versatile. The researcher thinks that what happened here was more of a typological play, as well as a test of

Abraham's obedience, love for God and faith in Him. It was not a self-contradiction on behalf of God. The case of Jephthah's story in Judges 1:34-40 fills one with wonder. In this, he sacrificed his one and only child, a daughter, to God. One wonders here whether or not he was knowledgeable about Old Testament sacrificial law, as a judge in Israel. Why is it that the Israelites did not persuade him against committing such an abomination before God? Could a person say that Israel's religion had become so formalistic that, for a period of two months, nobody could dissuade Jephthah from offering his daughter as a sacrifice to God in fulfillment of a vow made to Him before fighting the Ammonites? The New Testament describes Jesus Christ, the God Man, as a human sacrifice. The shift from prohibition in terms of Leviticus sacrificial law to the introduction of human sacrifices needs to be reconsidered.

Why is God playing out such a drama? How come what was declared abominable to Him in the Leviticus sacrificial dispensation is now fully acceptable before the same awesome God? Why is it now that God in heaven and man in his traditional religious setting seem to have the same resolve in terms of matters connected to human sacrifice? There seems to be no easy answer to this, but this study is of the view that the Leviticus sacrificial system was typological and its validity was for a set period of time. Therefore, typologies signify that something better than that which they represent is awaited (Heb 10:1). Although it might sound somewhat hasty at this stage, God's eternal plan was also to completely eradicate men's traditional religious and offensive sacrificial conventions by presenting the God-Man as a human sacrifice. There is of course something metaphorical about this, since Jesus was not burnt or eaten, and did not die on an altar. Thus, the idea of sacrifice is used for Jesus but not its physical elements, which points to a metaphorical application. The death of Jesus is therefore viewed and interpreted as a metaphorical sacrifice, rather than being a physical one. The meanings that sacrifice had are projected onto Jesus, and this made ordinary sacrifices redundant, because they were now without meaning. A human sacrifice is the most precious and treasured sacrifice in African traditional religious settings, which is also true from the biblical point of view. Both the Bible and African traditional sacrificial systems include scapegoatism (Awolalu, 1973:87-88). This study will now consider the similarities in the types of sacrifices.

11.1.2 Similarities in types of sacrifices

11.1.2.1 Initiation sacrifices

Xhosa people recognise two categories of sacrifices that comprise fourteen types (Bigalke, 1969; Lamla, 1972 and Olivier, 1976). There are sacrifices linked to God and ancestors, initiation sacrifices, sacrifices related to economic activities, and sacrifices linked to other events such as rainmaking and war. Birth sacrifices (*ukufuthwa*) consist of a repetitive swinging of the baby over a special fire that the mother has made (Lamla, 1972:24). This repeated swinging of the newborn

baby over the fire is unknown within the biblical sacrificial system. There is also the initiation sacrifice. This comprises the *ukwaluka*, or circumcision of boys, and *intonjane*, or circumcision of girls (Raum, 1972:187). In Luke 1:58-64, one reads about John the Baptist's birth-naming ceremony and circumcision, but no sacrificial ritual or offering is mentioned. In Luke 2: 21-24, one reads about Jesus' birth-naming and circumcision, as well as his dedication within the temple, which occur together with the presentation of a redemptive sacrificial offering. The tangible difference between this and Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga males' naming and circumcision rituals is that in the above example, God was actively involved. The angel Gabriel told Mary: "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, His kingdom will never end" (Lk 1:31-33; Mt 1:21-23). The appearance of the heavenly hosts praising God in Luke 2:13-14 also indicates divine involvement (see also Lk 2:25-38).

The circumcision of girls was not practised in Israel because it was not part of the covenant stipulations which read: "This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised", "including those born or those bought with money from a foreigner-those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant" (Gn 17:10-14).

This similarity between the circumcision covenant made between God and Abraham and the African circumcision of males is quite amazing. Who copied from the other? Who was in the mind of the other? Was God in the heart of the African man, or the African man in the heart of God? It could also be by chance that both did this. Circumcision was required as a token, and was as such a law, but it was not on the same level as the Ten Commandments. In Romans 2:14-15, Paul says: "indeed, when Gentiles who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law...The requirements of the law are written on their heart, their consciences also bearing witness...". However, in this case the law had not yet been given. According to Paul, this seems to apply to the Last Judgment, and does not refer to any revelation whatsoever. Even if this coincidences with African circumcision, it is easy to attribute a revelatory tone to it. However, this is perhaps a natural thing, a blind discovery out of a blind search or chance, this being accentuated by the African circumcision of girls, which is not included in the biblical (Old Testament) covenantal stipulations regarding circumcision. What about Paul's statement that if Gentiles naturally do what the law requires, it shows that they have become a law unto themselves?

From this, it can be inferred that because Africans naturally did what Old Testament sacrificial law required, it becomes covenantal and revelatory for them. It is, however, not a revelation from God because, even though there are strong similarities, one finds that the African man either adds some extras or reduces something, because he is guided by his fallen nature in his blind search. Could it be that the image of God in the African man is not completely marred, and that it may serve as a contact point for him to receive a revelation of some kind from God? This is speculated about in African circles when considering these matters. The above two types of circumcisions among the Xhosa people are preceded by the *ojisa* sacrifice, and the *ukubuya* sacrifice concludes the initiation. The Xhosa marriage ceremony comprises seven sacrificial rituals (Hunter, 1979:200-201). Xhosa people have another category of sacrifices known as contingent sacrifices. Contingent sacrifices include propitiatory sacrifices, substitutionary sacrifices, thanksgiving sacrifices and ostracism sacrifices. These sacrifices, found in the African context, are similar to those described in the book of Leviticus 1-7, as mentioned earlier in this dissertation (burnt offering, grain offering, fellowship offering, sin offering, guilt offering etc.).

Elsewhere in Africa, the same types of sacrifices as biblical ones are found, but with some regional particularities. However, they all seem to be technically, functionally and institutionally the same. For instance, one can mention the Yoruba people of Nigeria, where every single stage of life is associated with overwhelming sacrificial rituals (Awolalu, 1973:4-92). The Ibibio people of Nigeria perform agricultural sacrifices, end-of -year and New Year sacrifices, initiation sacrifices offered at important stages of life, as well as installation sacrifices, expiation, propitiation and substitutionary sacrifices (Ukpong, 1982:163-178).

11.1.3 Similarities in purpose and function

Among the Xhosa people, birth sacrifices ensure mental vigour, wisdom, strategy and eloquence in a child (Lamla, 1971:14). Thus, the *Imbeleko* or *umbingeleko* is meant to express gratitude to the ancestors for the birth of a child, and to beg them for good health on behalf of a baby, as well as to grant a lisling for the carrying of the baby on the mother's back (Bigalke, 1969:148; Olivier, 1976:30). The *Inqithi* sacrifice illustrates the principle of compensation or a gift intended for the ancestors (Lamla, 1971:14). The infant offers a healthy part of its being in order to receive health (Laubscher, 1937:73).

The circumcision of both boys and girls includes *ingcamisa*, involving the slaughtering of a goat to implore the ancestors for blessings and protection of both boys and girls during the period of initiation (Raum, 1972:187). Marriage sacrificial rituals are mainly to inform the ancestors what is taking place in the families of those to be married, are a means to ask for protection and good health, and also serve as a marriage seal (Olivier, 1976:33; Pauw, 1994:29).

Contingent sacrifices are performed in order to deal with sickness, misfortune and death. Positive contingent sacrifices grant feelings of gratitude, communion, thanksgiving and generosity. In negative ones, they raise awareness about impending disharmony between the living and the dead. Propitiatory sacrifices include diviner initiation sacrifices (Olivier, 1976:55), supplication sacrifices, consisting of petitions for material goods to higher spiritual beings, rain, fertility, land and crops, and protection of the country against lightening and hail, as well as strengthening of the chief army (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:549), and communion sacrifices, which promote good relationships and harmony with ancestors, health, fertility, mealies, cattle, and pacify totemic animals (Bigalke, 1969:80; Olivier, 1940:40).

Thanksgiving sacrifices are associated with harvest celebrations, journey mercies, acknowledgement in the case of safe return from war, and protection from danger (Pauw, 1994:108). Ostracism sacrifices serve as a means to dispossess and expel a rebellious son. This type of sacrifice safeguards kinship cohesion, and reveals the significance of kinship dynamics (Laubscher, 1937:84-85). Death sacrifices accompany the deceased to the ancestors' world, and reintegrate him into the community of the living. Mortuary rituals indicate a change in the status of the individual (Pauw, 1994:120). *Ukungula* sacrifices are invocatory petitions for deliverance from misfortune, as well as health, well-being and fertility supplications (Olivier, 1976:48). There is also an offering that is consumed by fire, causing a smell that is attractive to the ancestors (Pauw, 1994:120).

Xhosa sacrifices are meant to maintain solidarity, cement the unity bond, as well as enforce members' behavioural norms (Bigalke, 1969:104). Xhosa people's general objectives in sacrifices include consumption, exchange and substitution (Chiester, 1992:12). Substitution refers to the transference of sins of people onto the sacrificial victim (Olivier, 1976:40). Xhosa sacrificial rituals have the value of communicating with ancestors through invocation and the bellowing of the substitutionary victim (Sipuka, 2000:169).

Zulu people sacrifice the calao to the rainbow princess in order to force her to provide rain. The immolation of the hornbill threatens her, and in case of an excessive drought, they sacrifice a domestic animal, a black sheep or a goat, in honour of the python (Berglund, 1975:60). In communicating with the supernatural, prayer, divination and sacrifice cannot be easily separated (Mcktschhoff, 1996:189-191). Sacrifice refers to non-verbal communication, and sacrificial objects become symbolic mediums of communication (Mcktschhoff, 1996:193-194). Zulu people communicate with ancestors through the sacrifice of a bull or a cow called *inkomo yamandlozi* (De Heusch, 1985:57). The animal victim's chyme is a substance with purifying virtue or power (Ngubane, 1977:124-130). The sheep's black sub-species plays the role of ending the drought and warding off malefic effects of sorcery (De Heusch, 1985:62-63). Sacrifices are used to expel pathogenic spirits in the case of possession (De Heusch, 1985:83).

Among the Tsonga people, the sacrifice of an ox reinforces the marriage bond and also purifies warriors returning from the battlefield (De Heusch, 1985:93).

Elsewhere in Africa, especially among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, sacrifices are performed in order to gain the favour of spirit beings: to maintain communication and good relationships with these spiritual powers for material prosperity, good health, increase in crops and cattle and in the family, as well as to express gratitude to them (Awolalu, 1973:81). Sacrifices play the role of establishing, renewing and maintaining communication with supernatural beings, and enjoying communication with them in a positive sense. They also serve to ward off malevolent attacks from destructive powers, and to prevent imminent danger (Awolalu, 1973:32).

Therefore, it is quite understandable that Yoruba people purposely made sacrifices in order to appease powerful residential spirits during the erection of a house, to appease witches, to propitiate the powerful divinity of peace and war, to ward off affliction from witches, to acquire favours from the divinity controlling fate, and to bestow good fortune. Yoruba people also sacrificed to the ancestors as an affirmation of their existence and power. The sacrificial ritual functions as an invocation and supplication. The votive sacrifice tended to take more or less the covenantal form, where a bargaining trade with the gods was witnessed. Sacrifices were also a means of purification and communion between the supernatural world and men (Awolalu, 1973:84-85).

Human sacrifices were the best, highest and most costly. They were substitutionary and propitiatory, just as in almost all other African sacrificial religious contexts, including South Africa. Yoruba people believed that one life was to be sacrificed for the rest in a time of national crisis or disaster, in order to propitiate divinities and purify the community (Awolalu, 1973:87). They acted as scapegoats, carrying the sins of the community. This was also a repetitive exercise within the African sacrificial dispensation. It was similar to Jesus' sacrifice in dealing once and for all with the sins of many, and discontinuing all animal sacrifices made possible in the Leviticus sacrificial system, because of their inability to remove sin and deal with guilt (Heb 9:26-28; cf. Heb 10:1-14 in chapter 10 of this dissertation).

One notable difference between Jesus, the God Man, and other traditional human sacrifices is that, unlike other human sacrificial victims, who were taken by force, well-fed and bribed with all good things but deprived of their liberty and their lives, Jesus' self-sacrifice was willful, volitional and conscious. Jesus did not have to have His face smeared with ashes and chalk to hide His identity (Awolalu, 1973:87). This points to the fact that Jesus' sacrifice was remarkable in comparison with African human sacrifices for the following reason: No great precautions were taken to hinder Him from cursing those who were executing Him - on the contrary, He forgave them and prayed for them, saying "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). And to the

repentant criminal who cried: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Lk 23:40-43), Jesus answered him: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in the paradise”, giving him an assurance of a better life after death. This study believes that all these characteristics, and many others that have not been included in this dissertation, qualify Jesus as the true redeemer of mankind, and His sacrifice as the final one. Before approaching the section on the similarities in the object of sacrifices, the similarities and differences in terms of sacrificial functionaries (priests) and places of ministration will be discussed.

11.1.4 Similarities in functionaries and places of ministration

Both religious sacrificial contexts contain religious functionaries or priests whose task it is to perform sacrifices on behalf of the people and to dispose of them. In the Leviticus sacrificial context, only men were priests, but in the African sacrificial context, religious functionaries included men and women, heads of families or clans (De Heusch, 1985), and they were installed through divination, a practice condemned by God in Deuteronomy 18:10, and which renders this type of appointment doubtful as a God-given practice, if looked at from a Christian perspective. The books of Exodus 40:12-15 and Leviticus 9:1-24 show that Old Testament priesthood was a divine institution. The Epistle to the Hebrews (5:1-5) substantiates the fact that biblical priests were chosen and ordained by God. Jesus is also the unique sacrifice, and at the same time the unique priest in the order of Melchizedek, who was appointed by God (Heb 7:11-28).

Jesus is the High priest, a self-willed sacrificial victim who voluntarily surrenders Himself. Before Him and after Him there has been no other sacrificial victim that has ever accomplished the dual task of ministering at the divine altar and at the same time being the sacrifice, willingly laid down upon the altar of God the Father. He is different from all His predecessors within the Aaronic line of ministration, and His sacrificial love compelled self-sacrifice, and He became outstanding among all others as the only one who has the virtue and power to take away the sins of the people and heal their consciences of the heavy and lethal burden of guilt, turning it into true freedom and salvation. What about the places of ministration? In African religious beliefs, the shrine constitutes the basic place of ministration and encounter with the invisible world, and where lesser gods and spirits are used for communication through reunion offerings and sacrifices. This could also be anywhere on the homestead or outside (Mcktschhoff, 1996:184-186).

Before Deuteronomy, places of ministration for worship and sacrifices were chaotic, as in African traditional religion, but the reforms in Deuteronomy concentrated worship in Jerusalem and in the temple (Dt 12:1-32). The books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, as well as the Epistle to the Hebrews, reveal the fact that the biblical sacrificial system was a revelation from God, and that it entailed that its material temple priests and their garments and utensils were covenantal. The stipulations of the Old Testament sacrificial system constituted the content of

the old covenant ratified between God and Israel in order to regulate the relationship between Him and His chosen people (see Lv and Dt). In the whole of the New Testament, and especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the temple in Jerusalem remains the central place of ministration for the worship of God's people, and also for sacrificial performances.

Hebrews 8:1-13 shows that the New Testament describes the introduction of a new and better covenant mediated by the powerful High Priest in the person of Jesus Christ, through His own blood. Hebrews 9:1-10 stipulates that the earthly sanctuary was erected according to the blueprint of the heavenly sanctuary. It was therefore a revelation from God. Everything in this earthly tabernacle was according to the covenant's stipulations. This indeed signifies a big difference between African traditional religious places of ministration and those which were chosen by God, besides all the similarities in sacrifices, especially in terms of their materials and disposal methods (see also Mbiti, 1999). This study will now mention something about the receptors of sacrifices in the biblical system and the African (South African) religious sacrificial system. Are there some similarities and differences here?

11.1.5 Similarities in the object of sacrifice

Xhosa people offer all their sacrifices to the ancestors, that is, home or river ancestors (Metuh, 1987:27). Some African scholars claim that, although Africans use lesser gods, spirits and ancestors as intermediaries, their sacrifices are addressed to God. The Leviticus sacrificial system was given by God, and all sacrifices were addressed to Him alone (Lv 17:11). Priests were chosen by God and installed in accordance with the covenant's stipulations (Lv 8-9, Heb 5:1-5). There has been a great controversy in connection with which extra-biblical sacrifices, including those performed within the African traditional religious context, were addressed. Therefore, before mentioning O' Donovan's (1996) view concerning ancestors, it is necessary to gain some insights from what other biblical scholars have to say concerning African traditional objects of worship, as well as their claims regarding ancestors.

Setiloane (1978), a South African theologian scholar, claims that authentic African beliefs and practices unanimously substantiate the fact that, from time immemorial, the idea of a Supreme Being (God) as the originator of all things was not foreign to African people. Quoting an old Tswana woman, he says: "Missionaries did not bring to us anything new about God. They only brought *thlabologo* or civilization, or progress in the style of the West" (Setiloane, 1978:402). Confessing his emotional attachment to his ancestors, Setiloane says: "...To take the ancestors away from an African is robbing him of his personality ..." (Setiloane, 1978:406).

He refers to one incident while boarding a fully packed train in Johannesburg on his way to lead a church service, when a pick-pocket tried to steal his wallet, but

it fell down, and then those close to him said: “*hadimo bagagu bana le vena*” (your ancestors are by your side). Then he says that the people did not say: ‘your God, or your Christ’. “Ah...yes...It is true. They (ancestors) are very present with us...The dead are not dead, they are ever near us, approving and disapproving all our actions, they chide us when we go wrong and they bless us and sustain us for good done, for kindness shown and for strangers made to feel at home” (Setiloane, 1978:407).

In this study’s view, Setiloane’s glorification of his ancestors is not only incompatible with biblical teaching, but is also a tacit and dangerous abnegation of Christian faith. African people worship the gods of nature, reptiles, animals, trees, mountains and rocks, the sun, moon and stars. Their acknowledgement of God as the creator, provider and protector is tainted by much skeptical denial of the same, and this accentuates African confusion concerning the choice of their object of worship, as well as that of their sacrifices. In summary, this African acquaintance with God can either be there or be distanced from biblical knowledge, depending on the evaluator’s attitude. If African people were confident about their true object of worship, they would rid themselves of their so-called aid-gods or idolatrous intermediaries, when viewed from a biblical perspective. Likewise, they would sensibly discontinue their sacrificial holocaust, and appreciate God’s self-offering through Jesus’ once-and-for-all atoning sacrifice.

It is true that the substitutionary sacrifices performed all over Africa can help people to understand Jesus’ supreme sacrifice, as well as the Christian message (Ubrurhe, 1996:13-14). However, in order to make the Christian message fully relevant to Africans “requires a thorough understanding of the symbolism expressed by the carrier or the scapegoat. The typological symbolism behind scapegoatism shows how a person connected himself or herself with the “yearning aspirations” of the community, especially in dealing with the removal of ritual dirt that impairs the anthropic relationship (God and man). Scapegoatism finds its inroads mostly in times of great and endemic calamities that make evident the people’s sense of guilt. In those specific instances, a human sacrifice was considered to be supreme and most appropriate” (Ubruhe, 1996:17).

Besides African ancestors, there are two types of pervasive spiritual elements in the invisible world that influence African people’s lives, and with which they constantly have to deal. The first group comprises spirits of dead people or ghosts, the spirits of non-initiated children and people who were not honoured through a proper burial at death. The second group is composed of non-human spirits whose existence has never been anything else but that of spirits (Magesa, 1997:53). The interrelation with these spiritual entities requires constant shedding and drinking of blood among Africans. However, its significance remains inferior to the precious sacrificial blood of Jesus.

Gehman cautions that Satan, also known as Lucifer, the morning star, and 'Beelzebub', prince of demons and 'prince of the air', caused a multitude of angelic beings to rebel against God. A multitude of angelic beings are said to be "evil spirits active in the world today, deceiving and leading men astray...Demonic spirits provide dynamism in heathen worship..." (Gehman, 1990:47). What is the origin of non-Christian religions? According to O' Donovan, the origin of non-Christian religions involves superstition and ignorance. In addition to this, there seems to be fallen angels (1Tm 4:1; Col 2:18) who seek the worship of people and to control their lives (Mt 4:8-9). As many Africans know, evil spirits threaten men with sickness, tragedy and other punishments if they do not obey them. Such demons are very clever in their deception. They deceive people, pretending to be spirits of divinities or dead ancestors (O' Donovan, 1996:193).

It may be inferred from this that sacrificial rituals in traditional religions probably also originate from demonic deception. However, given the strong similarities mentioned above, there is no easy way to completely discard traditional sacrificial rituals as originating from a source other than the God of the Bible. But, as was mentioned in the case of circumcision, the addition and subtraction within those strong similarities constitute a sheer denial of God the creator, and are condemned by the Bible as abominations. They are therefore not a revelation from God if viewed from sources other than extra-biblical ones. If African sacrificial rituals were equivalent to those generated by biblical sacrificial law, why is it that non-Christian religions did not cling to the One Supreme Being they claim to know, and worship Him alone, offering all their sacrifices to Him without making themselves polytheistic? This is a practical choice with which the God of the Bible does not seem to sympathise. "Missionaries entering groups of people who have had no contact with Christ often report severe conflicts with demons, especially in the early days of their ministries" (O' Donovan, 1996:193).

Traditional people know that certain spirits demand practices of ritual worship and obedience from the people under their influence. Sometimes, these spirits have visually appeared to them with such demands, sometimes they have appeared in dreams, and in other instances they have communicated these demands through a possessed person or diviner. The evidence points to the same fact: that non-Christian religions involve contact with the satanic power of darkness, if understood from a Christian perspective (O' Donovan, 1996:193). The direct implication would therefore be that although similarities between African traditional religious and biblical blood sacrifices are a reality, they are nevertheless surrounded by lots of doubt with regard to their link with divine revelation. In view of the similarities, it would not be an easy task here to account for their true origins. This cannot be exhausted in this dissertation, and will thus necessitate further investigation.

In Israel, sacrifices were intended to make worship possible (Ryken et al, 2000). The mystical connection of blood to life and death makes it a powerful and

ominous symbol of violence and wrongdoing. The shedding of human blood in the Old Testament received a capital sentence, but animal blood was allowed in a ritual slaughter, where it was treated with great respect and functioned as an essential element in the sacrificial cultus, and was brought into contact with the Holy of holies (Ryken, 2000). In the Old Testament, sacrifices were intended to atone for worshippers' sins and to restore lost or disrupted fellowship with God (Packer et al, 1997). Leviticus 11:1-2 emphasises the fact that Israel's sacrificial rituals were a revelation from God. Ancient Near Eastern people's ritual procedures were prescribed through divination. Available documents preserving such rituals do not appear as a divine revelation, as in Leviticus (Shavala & Walton, 2000). Initially, sacrifices originated as opportunities for sharing meat with the deity and to obtain animal entrails, believed to be a good omen (Shavala & Walton, 2000).

Sacrificial offerings contributed to the sustaining of priests, except for the holocausts (Lv 10:12-19). The aromatic smoke from the holocaust which is directed heavenwards, when inhaled, causes the deity to accept the offering (Freedman, 1997). The blood libation was intended to appease chthonic deities by offering them lifeblood to increase their power. In Israel, blood symbolised life. The sacrificial manipulation of blood was viewed as a substitute for the lives of worshippers (Lv 17:11-12). The blood functioned to ward off evil and impurity, and to shield sacred appurtenances or furnishings and sacred places from demonic infestation (Lv 4:6-7, 17-18, 25, 30; Lv 16 for the Day of Atonement). In summary, one can say that each occasion specified the type of offering or sacrifice judged to be most suitable.

The historical development of sacrifices and offerings in the Old Testament is extensive. Sacrifices and offering have played a significant role in Jewish religion. Many parallels exist between Old Testament Israelite practices and those of African traditional religions. However, there are some insignificant differences that this study has chosen not to focus on. Old Testament sacrifices were specifically prescribed by God, and received their meaning from the Lord's covenantal relationship with Israel - whatever their superficial resemblances to pagan sacrifices. They included the idea of a gift, but other valuable ingredients such as dedication, communion, propitiation (appeasing God's judicial wrath against sin) and restitution accompanied it (The NIV Study Bible, 1995:145).

With regard to sacrifices and offerings, it can be said that the religious life and certain religious practices of Jews and Africans were similar. The areas in which parallels can be drawn are:

- Sacrifices; and
- Religious festivals and sacred days.

The Jewish religious festivals and calendar are related to the worship of God, and are found mainly in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Types of Old Testament sacrifices discussed earlier in this dissertation are in contrast to

traditional sacrifices. It is important to understand that the various types of sacrifices found in the Old Testament were given as a substitute to the Canaanites and their surrounding religion and forms of sacrifices, rituals, ceremonies, feasts, festivals and worship. The children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan and all forms of their religion. They were not to copy what was abominable to, and forbidden by, their God, Yahweh. The covenant of the Lord their God, Yahweh, forbade them from copying the religious beliefs and practices of the Canaanites. These injunctions are given in the Old Testament books of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Similarities between God's prescribed sacrificial system in the Old Testament and African traditional religious ones are so similar that one would be tempted to say that God was involved in the development of the African religious sacrificial moulds, and that the African traditional religious man was in the heart of God, spying on all His thoughts and sacrificial intentions.

The picture becomes even more complex when an African enters his shrine. The death of a family head is commemorated through the *ubkubuyisa* ceremonial rite, in which sacrificial activities play a major role. Beer-brewing and slaughtering of animals assures the people that the deceased person's spirit has been brought back. The neglect of this ritual causes misfortune and sickness to be cast upon the negligent family members as a reminder from the neglected spirit. Variations in interactions that involve a lot of animal sacrifices become realisable, according to places, cultures and societies (Mfusi, 1996:186-187).

Moreover, African spirituality and the cult of ancestors reveal that in African society, each newborn baby carries an ancestor. Therefore, during the birth celebrations, the pouring of libations for ancestors is done before blood sacrifices are performed. These sacrifices generally involve white animal victims. For an African with a sense of traditional values, the reason behind this is clear. Libations constitute the introduction to trade with ancestors, and making sacrifices is the highest point of this trade, which engages the living in a radical fashion - in their quest and wait, and the dead in their obligation to reply favourably (Olupona, 2000:42).

Ancestors' spirits manifest themselves at various rites of passage: at birth, when they delay manifesting themselves, the Zulu family head gathers the cattle in front of the mother's hut, and when a person urinates, the ancestors complain about this and people must deal with the complaint by slaughtering an animal in order to appease the angry ancestors. There is no homogeneity, only similarities and dissimilarities (Van der Walt, 1982:80).

One thing worth noting here is that the complex image conveyed by an African walking into his ancestral shrine is that ritual ceremonials seldom directly involve God. In African traditional religion, salvation is to be accepted by the community. This is as a result of the fact that sin is committed against the community, not against God, the creator of heaven and earth. In this regard, Mugambi said: "The

concept of 'sin' is lent to Africans; among the Africans you are born sinless and have to live in harmony with ancestors complying with their needs" (Mugambi, 1989:64-66).

In the view of this study, the concept of sin in Africa, and in South Africa in particular, is foreign to the biblical one. In addition, the distorted understanding of sin has a very serious impact on African communities today in terms of social evils and political governance. Consequently, the living community has the authority to punish the sinner, and more so the ancestors, who are custodians of the community. Consequences resulting from offending the community include sudden death, weight loss and deformity of limbs. They also include childlessness, sickness, accidents, short lives and madness (Nyirango, 1997:64).

In addition, they are also spells and curses against the offender. Therefore, the complex picture that falls under the eyes of the African devotee in his ancestral shrine is more one of complex sacrificial activities involving worshippers, both living and living dead, which are meant to correct the offender and restore him to order. Sacrifices as a means of mediation by the religious functionary, whose role it is to stand between the community of the living and the ancestral or spirit world, immolates animals and fetches their blood, which appeases angry ancestors, heals the accursed offender, and restores him once again to normal community life (Nyirango, 1997:64).

Heathen nations performed human sacrifices. The peculiar high priest voluntarily laid his life upon the altar, without resorting to suicide, while the executioners, his own family members, worked on him to accomplish the task of slaughtering. This agrees with the findings of this study's qualitative research (Tesch, 1990:154-156) and also presents some similarities and dissimilarities to human sacrifices that are occasionally found in some ancestral shrines in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa. In this regard, Parrinder says: "During ancestral rites, human victims were killed on the occasion of royal funeral and of their anniversaries" (Parrinder, 1976:62).

In South Africa, a human sacrifice was offered in times of national calamity, drought and the like, whereby a virgin was taken by force and sacrificed. This is in agreement with the qualitative research which reveals the fact that in South Africa, some tribes connected to *Sangomism* are still sacrificing human beings even today (Ubrurhe, 1998:207). Human sacrifices in Africa were coerced. During sacrificial rituals, the victims' mouths were hermetically closed so that they could not curse anybody. Here, when an African enters his shrine, he sees a variety of altars and sacrifices, the community of the living and the dead, traditional religious functionaries and sacrificial victims composed of men and women, albinos and a variety of animals for the holocaust (Ubrurhe, 1998).

Therefore, one can see that within African traditional religion, there is still the existence and co-existence of animal and human sacrifices being performed side

by side. These sacrifices do not deal with individual family members' sins against God, but rather with offences against the community and ancestors. When compared with the role and purpose of sacrifice within the Hebrews' congregation, one finds that this constitutes a point of contrast. The main thrust is the fact that this New Testament community of faith has abrogated animal sacrifices because they failed to appropriately deal with sin. The whole scenario seems to convey the understanding that the Hebrews congregation was probably still caught up in some Old Testament sacrificial beliefs. Hebrews 9:13 makes a somewhat positive evaluation of animal sacrifices: "The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who were ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean". With reference to Moses, the congregation of the Epistle to the Hebrews is reminded of the fact that during the old dispensation, "when Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the Law to all the people, he took the blood (sacrifice) of calves together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll, and all the people and he said, 'This is the blood (sacrifice) of the covenant which God has commanded you to keep'. In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact the Law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood (sacrifice), and without the blood (sacrifice) there is no forgiveness of sin" (Heb 9:19-22). This implies forgiveness of the sins of the individual, as well as those of the community, which is clearly differentiated from the purpose and function of sacrifice within African traditional religions, where family members are born "holy". Unlike the members of African traditional religions, the congregation of Hebrews is being pointed to a more powerful sacrifice by a man, one of their family members, which dealt with sin convincingly and for all time.

Hebrews 1:3b reads: "After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven". "Jesus appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people. He will appear the second time, to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him" (Heb 9:26b-28). As this study is tempted to reiterate the fact that sacrifices were meant to deal with the problems of sin/evil, it can just say that African traditional religion abnegates sin and salvation. The concepts of sin and salvation in African traditional beliefs, including South Africa, do not coincide with the biblical understanding of these concepts. In African traditional religions, salvation is to be accepted by the community in order to have a prosperous and healthy life and to be protected against evil. This results from the fact that sin is against the community, not God, the creator of heaven and earth. Consequently, it is only the community that has the authority to punish the sinner and sacrifice an animal or offer a gift to appease the ancestral spirits. It goes without saying therefore, that African traditional religion's acceptance of sacrifice is a proof of forgiveness and amounts to salvation (Nyirango, 1997:64).

Therefore, one can see that, while the Hebrews' worshippers were being grounded in sacrificial discontinuity and transformed into a community of sanctified people who could worship the living God, African traditional religions continue to brandish the flag of animal and human sacrifices, without displaying any association whatsoever with the God of the Bible and His eternal redemptive plan for mankind. With regard to discontinuity, Karl Bath says: "All human religious efforts to seek God are futile". Then he adds: "Jesus Christ does not complete or improve all the different attempts of man to think of God and to represent Him according to his own standard. But, as the self-offering and the self-manifestation of God, He replaces and completely outbids those attempts, putting them in the shadows where they belong" (Bath, 1980:40). As was mentioned above, African traditional religion accepts salvation within the community. Sin is against the community. Within the Hebrews congregation, salvation is redemption from sin: it is past, present and future. In African traditional religion, the emphasis is on "good life here and now". It equates sin/evil with anti-social acts. From this, one can logically infer that, viewed from a Christian perspective, African traditional religion's concept of salvation is also erroneous. In this regard, Adeyemo says: "If an anti-social act is all that there is to sin, salvation from sin would be in the same terms...It is believed that one who excels his equals has been specially favored by the ancestors and such honor is indicative of salvation" (Adeyemo, 1973:93).

In Hebrews 10:1-18, the congregation of the Epistle to the Hebrews rejoices in the fact that a new era of spiritual prosperity and freedom from sin and bondage to sin has been introduced through the all-encompassing, all-efficacious and final sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The worshipping community has experienced a lightness of conscience due to its being shed of all burdens of guilt formerly incurred as a result of sin. Jesus' established will makes believers holy through the sacrifice of His body once for all (Heb 10:10). His one sacrifice forever perfects those who are being made holy (Heb 10:10). After Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, He entered His Sabbath, sitting down at the right hand of God (Heb 10:12). This was His priestly achievement. He gave relief to Old Testament priests who were always standing during their ministrations. However, traditional religious functionaries or priests within the African traditional religious context are still standing during their sacrificial ministrations: their sins adhere to them, as well as to the rest of the worshippers. In the researcher's view, they stand to pay allegiance to their ancestors through sacrificial performances in very subtle and manipulative ways. God the Father will never remember the sins and lawless deeds of those who confide in Him by faith through the blood (sacrifice) of Jesus. Consequently, they need not perform animal sacrifices any longer, because of the unfathomable forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ (Heb 10:17b, 18).

African Christian believers, in this study's view, have the mandate to intensify their contacts, dialogues and campaigns with their traditional fellow Africans, so that through mutual consideration, they may all appreciate the truth concerning

the sacrifice of Jesus, as revealed in the Bible. It is unfortunate that African traditional religions' members have opted to hold onto their traditional beliefs by blowing the horn of continuity in the area of sacrifices. Generally speaking, one can say that they seem to live a life without God, hope and goodness, if evaluated from a biblical and Christian perspective (Gehman, 1990:44-46). At this point, it is crucial to integrate this study's qualitative research findings.

11.2 INTEGRATION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

With regard to the concept of qualitative research, this study consulted the work of Denzin & Lincoln (1994), as well as those of Brotherson (1994:104); Morgan (1993); Steward & Shemdasani (1990); Fiske & Kendall (1990); Krueger (1994) and de Vos(). The literature review also helped to identify some contact points between biblical and African traditional religious symbolism, mainly in terms of sacrifices, especially the sacrifice of Jesus, and to assess the possibility of a practical and intimate co-operation between these two areas (Old Testament-Hebrews & African traditional religion) with regard to sacrifice. The possibility of an operational co-existence of African traditional religious sacrifices and the sacrifice of Jesus in African contemporary Christianity has also been investigated among the Xhosas, Zulus and Tsongas. Any incompatibility would suggest a mutual exclusiveness and superiority of essence, function and purpose. If compatible, however, African traditional religion and Christianity, as represented by the congregation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, would become equivalent, interchangeable or identical. In this case, there would be continuity, total integration and mutual assimilation. The opposite outcome would deny congruity and sanction mutual exclusiveness, rendering the relationship between Old Testament sacrifices, African traditional religious sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ a utopian one. The choice of qualitative empirical research as part of this study's research methodology was dictated by the fact that it conforms to the paradigmatic, analytical perspective, and respects the criteria of scientific objectivity, replicability and relevance.

The qualitative research investigation was instrumental in revealing what South Africans think about God, Jesus and his sacrifice, the necessity of sacrifices, as well as the role of the blood in African contemporary Christianity, not to mention how the above powers respectively impact on the lives of both African traditional religions' members and those of Christianity and the South African community in general. It is indeed evident that the material collected by means of the questionnaire is relevant to this study, since it deals with Christian beliefs and the Bible being read in South Africa by South Africans, showing their points of similarity and difference as far as blood sacrifices and their objects are concerned.

It is important to bear in mind that the qualitative empirical research helps to determine whether or not there have been any shifts in the areas of religious beliefs and practised ideologies, thought patterns and worldviews, and to point

out intact areas with the emphasis on similarities, as differences appear to be quite insignificant with regard to the research theme.

11.2.1 God

God is the object of sacrifices, prayer and worship in both the Bible and African traditional religion. However, in African traditional religion, He is reached through various intermediaries such as lesser gods, ancestors and other spirit beings acting as His delegates. In the Bible, however, He is reached through Jesus Christ. According to Hebrews 9:15, “Christ is the mediator of the new covenant.... Our respondents said “God is our Father but we cannot see Him with our naked eyes, He is our creator and the creator of the entire universe, the Alpha and the Omega, the owner of all things, the controller of our lives and future holder. Some people wrongly say that God is a moving wheel but it is not true”. “Generally it is acknowledged that everybody knows that there is a God. His knowledge has been universalized through His handiworks or general revelation that has been rendered plain and available to every human being. One complication is that people view God differently and sometimes they create their own gods”... “Today with the world’s technological advancement, thus the use of media such as TVs and radios to which an estimated percentage of about 98% of SA people have access constitutes an irrefutable proof that people hear about the word of God and they hear about God too”.

“Venda people’s god is *Nwali*”, yet one hears them saying that there is a God; and quite amazingly, they call upon Christians to back them up during funeral times. Therefore, just to add on what has been said about God, one can describe Him in the following way: He is our maker who loves and cares for us; the giver of all we need and the supplier of all our material needs”. ...”God is *UMvelinqangi*, meaning one who appears first...from the reed...He is a being with love emotions and compassion”....”We ought to worship Him and obey Him”...God is Spirit He lives with us and within us... Basutu call God *Tatamacholo*, the one who is above everything...He was also called *Modimo* to differentiate Him from ancestors”... “The mere fact that they worshipped the ancestors proves that there is a God. Africans were approaching God through this medium”.

“God is the source of life, He created everything, no one could have created all these (creative peculiarity), and He is anthropomorphically the personal being who is interested in our affairs. God is the creator of everything: sun, wind, night, day, heavenly beings, etc. He is the highest power, the God of love. In the Setswana culture, they call God one who dwells in the clouds”. .. He is the King, He rules and He provides. We are who we are today because of God, not because of the ancestors. He gives us wisdom. All religions pray to God but have different names. This is sufficient proof that people have some knowledge of God’s existence”... “God is omnipresent and He sees us, nothing can escape His

attention. In times of trouble, He helps us. God is the mother figure. He is like a father and a parent figure to us”.

The above responses obtained during the qualitative research part of this study concerning people’s knowledge about God include profoundness, straightforwardness and positivism, which are far removed from African traditional religious beliefs. There is a very significant shift in the understanding of who God is by various categories of people, from traditional to contemporary Africans. The understanding of God as the Creator and Supreme Being remains caught between traditional thought patterns and postmodern ones.

Africans, represented in this study by South African respondents, ban the transcendental, deistic understanding of God. God is intimately related to His creatures as a mother-father or parent figure. He is omnipresent, self-existent, a supplier of His children’s needs, and a protector and helper in times of trouble. He is love, and He is interested in the affairs of men. During medieval times, African traditional religious adherents approached the Supreme Being through the ancestors. For some South Africans, essentially sangomas, this medium has been kept untouched. However, true Christians in South Africa go to God through the divinely appointed redeemer and mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. The African traditional belief that we are who we are because of the ancestors has shifted in some milieus to the belief that we are who we are because of God our Creator. On the other hand, one can see that the interviewees’ responses agree with the idea in chapters two and three that African people had a syncretistic and sceptical idea of God. The African (South African) representation of God has been polluted to the extent that one sees a proliferation of gods associated with spirits and ancestors, who stand in the gap between the remote, irresponsible and unconcerned. The Supreme Being’s power, authority and influence have been usurped by spirits among African traditional worshippers (Olupona, 1991; Mugambi, 1985; Mbiti, 1975; Parrinder, 1976).

The knowledge about God in traditional and Christian contexts is very significant, depending on which view people hold with regard to Him. Since both contexts approach Him for safety, protection and care, He becomes the object of their worship, sacrifice, prayer and adoration. Since Africans (South Africans) deal with the problem of evil through sacrificial rituals addressed to God through the ancestors, one can see how the above discussion relates to or agrees with the topic of this dissertation. Mediation, that is, ancestors and what people expect of them, will be discussed in the next section.

11.3 MEDIATION

11.3.1 Ancestors and people's expectations of them

With regard to the identification of ancestors and what people expect from them, this study's interviewees gave the following responses: "Ancestors are my great grand grannies, you know, those who are protecting me in the worldly way". "They are the ones who are always there you know"... "In the rural area when a person had to go to a big city the people in his/her family would assemble under a certain tree and tell those who are down there (ancestors) to protect so and so and give him good luck to get a job"... "Your family advises you to sneeze before the white man when you get in his office seeking for a job, they say once you sneeze this will increase your chances and the white boss will like you even more. But on the scene it was just the opposite of what the people who communicated with the ancestors on your behalf that would take place. Whenever you would sneeze, in the white boss's office this would reduce your chances of being hired and he would chase you out of his office"...

"Ancestors are those people who died long ago and who are related to us; most of the things we Christians ask from God are the same things that people out there ask from their ancestors: riches or wealth, gold, silver, everything that we ask from God". .. "We are their posterity and things we have physically we have inherited from them. The way I look today has more or less to do with my ancestors and the mind of my ancestors. For instance today when I do things my mother tells me that I do them exactly like my granny".

"Ancestors have to do with people's identity and as Christians nothing should be expected from the ancestors. The Bible presents to us certain persons known as ancestors: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and those people in Christianity were our ancestors. They have to do with daily decisions and activities in life"... We can therefore refer to them and to those who went before us or dead relatives"... "Most Africans believe in them and worship them. But as Christians we don't need to pray to our ancestors in order to get things like gold, material things or when we need to pass our exams. We need to pray to God and also after prayer we must go and study. If we need a job, we must pray to God then afterwards we must go and apply for the job that we are aspiring for. We don't have to ask God for a job and just seat down".

"Truly speaking, there is nothing that we should expect or want from our ancestors. One pro-ancestors respondent shared that 'as our dead forefathers and relatives, there are closer to God according to African belief perspectives. When you want to present a request to God you do that through your ancestors'. From the Christian view now we can say that we really learn from our ancestors' life history, what good they did, the hard time they went through, the mistakes and corrections they made".

"We are reminded that the Bible refers to particular people as ancestors. The good things they did are the things that we learn from them. The bad things they

did are the same things that we try to avoid. The bad things done by those ancestors were corrected either by God or by the experience that they went through. Therefore, those things are similar to those of the African ancestors. However, with regard to my own experience and knowledge, a practical analysis of the entire situation proved to me that even though Africans believe in the existence of God they don't believe He can work. Only ancestors can work. They believe in God just to kiss Him but when something happens they go back to their ancestors. Some African people keep a bunch of kneel trees in the middle of the house to protect them from evil spirits"... "Those kneel trees were related to the history of the ancestors and had also to do with day-to-day life and activities as well as day-to-day decisions".

This rubric on mediation reveals some different opinions. Some reflect African traditional religious beliefs, and others Christian ones, as the following argument shows: "If you are a Christian you don't have to believe in ancestors because God says worship no other gods but me. Ancestors are dead people; dead, dead, dead! Buried and some of them separated from God"... "Truly speaking the ancestors don't help us with anything because the people who believe in the ancestors and who dance the *malombo* jazz, most of them are very much poor and there is neither success nor prosperity in their lives"... "We don't believe in ancestors because we serve a God who is jealous. Ancestors are the spirits of our departed fathers, grandfathers and great grand fathers. They are cleansed (comparable to catholic saints), except those who did evil"... There are categories of ancestors among whom the most important were chiefs and kings. They communicate with those who are living. People also expect pardon and blessing from ancestors. If one names one's child after them, that name will make the ancestors mediate good will and provide guidance and prosperity. For those whose entire families work in the mines, they need a lot of security, protection and healing from ancestors (Mitchell, 1997; Metuh, 1973; Nyamiti, 1998). Before approaching the issue of cult, this chapter will succinctly discuss the identity of Jesus and what He did. This is indeed relevant to this dissertation as far as sacrificial acts are concerned, since Jesus' sacrifice was the all-encompassing and ultimate sacrifice.

11.3.2 The person and work of Jesus

With regard to the question: "Who is Jesus and what does He do?", the following responses were obtained during the interviews: "Jesus is our savior, our redeemer, the Son of God who was brought in the World by God the Lord. He is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6); the Creator (Jn 1:1); He is our Father, He is our God"... One respondent said: "Jesus is my love. He is my everything-sometimes it is not only a hug, but I go to the extent of kissing Him. He is a gentle person, so kind, so loving and so merciful". Proverbs 18:10 reads: 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and they are safe'"... "Jesus supplies our needs, He stands on our behalf"... "Jesus transforms us from where we are to God. He saves us and gives us eternal life. He sustains and is our guide".

One respondent said: “Jesus is doing the same things as the ancestors. The ancestors were standing between living human beings and God just as Jesus does today”... “Jesus is our advocate, our mediator, the king of kings, the Shepherd and He does all these things, and even, more for He is God. Jesus loves the sinner. Her/his right is guarded - for that person is special to God. Jesus cannot defend us if we do not speak the truth. So he stands before God pleading for us and for the world”... “African traditional religious people do not believe in Jesus Christ. They do not understand when you talk about Jesus. God is supreme and Jesus is subordinate to God. They regard Him as a Jew. Africans embraced the name of Jesus but they do not believe in Him. They consider Him as another false deity... He is not equal to God”.

It is quite interesting to note the difference of opinion regarding the person and role of Jesus Christ. Some respondents adhere to the biblical portrayal of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, creator and redeemer, and all that is attached to His divine prerogatives. Others consider Him as being equal to African traditional religious ancestors (Nyamiti, 1984-1985), but they also confirm what was said earlier in this dissertation: that Jesus is unknown in the African traditional religious context - that people do not believe in Him. However, they embrace the name of Jesus, but consider Him to be inferior to the Supreme Being. People do not understand when one talks about Jesus. He is nothing to them but another false deity. One sees here a similarity in thought to contemporary theological and religious trends, as discussed earlier in this dissertation, namely the views held by African theological proponents of African traditional religion, African liberation theology, exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Simeon’s prophetic utterance that Jesus will be a sign that will be spoken against has been proven to be true (Lk 2:34b). With this in mind, the issue concerning the necessity of sacrifices will now be discussed.

11.4 CULT

11.4.1 Importance of sacrifices today

With regard to the question of whether or not it is necessary to make sacrifices today, this study gathered the following responses: “We don’t think it is necessary to make animal sacrifices today because God did it for us. He gave us His only begotten son Jesus Christ. Therefore the sacrifice has already been made and that is Jesus. The day God gave Him to the world to be crucified on the cross that was the best sacrifice”... “What drove God to send His son in the world is that people were busy making sacrifices, but they were not truly determined to forsake their ways”..., people were busy making sacrifices, repeating them and sinning in the eyes of God without repenting. This shows that animal sacrifices were ineffective”... “Today when I sin I boldly go to the throne of grace because Jesus, the sacrifice has already been offered there is no other sacrifice to be made.

Therefore, if anyone goes back to blood sacrifices he is going back to sin. It is not necessary therefore to make sacrifices today because Jesus sacrificed himself for us. Some people still do it”... “Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand

that Christian life is sacrificial, and after bloody sacrifices were discontinued by the sacrifice of Jesus Christians still offer their bodies as sacrifices to God. They express their gratitude to God through sacrificial and cheerful giving and services as a form of worship to Him"... "The AIC (African Independent Churches) are making these sacrifices. They have the right *umlindelo*. A sheep is slaughtered. About midnight the sheep is burnt, it is believed that the smoke is a sweet smelling aroma before God. Sometimes a tribal sacrifice is made. "It takes two forms, although sometimes suspicious elements are picked up. These things are those that could bring bad luck, they are burnt then"... "It is believed that these are sacrifices to the ancestors. It is a token that the bad things in the community are removed from the tribe. Sometimes it is believed that the human sacrifice is made when there is severe drought. A young girl disappears through being sacrificed to the ancestors". "This type of sacrifice involves top traditional doctors"... "The practice is still alive even today. Recently on TV it was found that people are trading in human parts. Some bury the hand of a person at the business premises with the belief that the hand would invite or attract so many customers to the business". The next section focuses on the question: What is the role of blood?

11.4.2 The role of blood

Why is blood important in the biblical and African contexts? To this question, respondents gave the following answers: "This is used to *shweleza* _ through it, Africans think they are redeemed, [and that] blood pleads for them"... "Blood united those in the world of the dead and the living"... "Families in the case of marriage are brought together through blood"... "The community also follows this method of spilling blood to cleanse itself from any wrongdoing"... "Africans drink blood and smear it around their bodies because they believe that blood possesses the virtue of giving them power and of cementing or increasing their friendships"... "When non-Christians slaughter an animal they take the blood because they believe that the blood allows them to communicate with the ancestors".

"The functions of the blood of Jesus are the same as those of the blood of animals but the effects are not the same. The blood of Jesus stands on its own. It was shed once for all and this stresses durability of value and effects of Christ's blood, whereas the blood of animals has to be spilled constantly. Jesus' blood should not be mixed with any other, because it renders old sacrifices obsolete. The blood of Jesus cleanses" (Turner, 1994)... "African people are very acquainted with the idea and functions of the blood because they use it a lot.

The blood of Jesus supersedes any other blood as the blood of God the creator, it was shed once and its effects still stand today. Jesus' blood is perfect. There is no mistake about it. "No one can turn around and say that one was not properly cleansed"... "Jesus' blood touches the core of the person. It cleanses sin and removes all guilt"... "The word of God in Hebrews 13:15-16 reads 'Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But don't forget to do well and to share, for with

such sacrifices God is well pleased'. Christ is the only and once for all sacrifice for the atonement of our sins".

"Blood symbolises something that communicates - for when the blood is coming out people start to sing power, power, power... It has a cleansing virtue". "In African cultural way it is the people's covenantal means with spirits and the ancestors. It symbolizes maybe oneness"... "In ATR the blood of an animal is crucial for the validity of the sacrifice. By spilling the blood the ancestors are appeased, the sins are atoned for and evil things are taken away".

This study's investigation reveals clear similarities in the essence, value, functions and applications of blood in African traditional religion, Old Testament, New Testament and daily Christian lives. The blood of animals was covenantal in the Old Testament and had cleansing and atoning powers. It was a divine provision in Israel for the renewal and restoration of disrupted or threatened relationships between YHWH and His chosen people. Genesis 9:4 reads: "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it." This suggests the sanctity of blood, for life is in the blood. The blood also seems to have a communicative power. Genesis 4:10 reads: "...Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." The Leviticus sacrificial system comprehensively describes the functions, value, validity and effects of blood in Israel's worship. However, the New Testament covenant, with regard to the blood of Jesus Christ whose once and for all self-sacrifice speaks more than the sacrifice of Abel and Old Testament animal sacrifices, discontinued Leviticus sacrificial encounters.

Blood is superior and more efficient. It is universally applicable to all men. Jesus said: "unless...and drink my blood, you have no life in you. Whoever...and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day". On first hearing these words, they sound anthropophagous, criminal and unbearable. However, as a symbolic utterance it conveys significant teachings. Inferentially speaking, this symbolism seems to predict the transforming effect of the divine life on men, and the Eucharist communion to be enjoyed here and in heaven by those washed by the blood of Jesus. When African traditional religious believers slaughter a sacrificial victim, all participants start singing "Power, power, and power", as the blood comes out of the slaughtered victim. The African belief that there is power in the blood agrees with the scriptures and Christians, who also sing about the blood of Jesus during their Eucharist celebrations. In Christianity, there is also a chorus that says: "there is power, power, miracle-working power in the blood of the Lamb; there is power, power, miracle-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb". The Lamb in this instance symbolises Jesus Christ. African traditional religious followers use blood to ward off evil spirits and evil in general. One sees the same type of behaviour within Christendom.

Christians misuse the blood of Jesus most of the time, in the same sense that African traditional religious members use animal blood. Christians like to cover their possessions with the blood of Jesus, in order to ward off evil, as if there was something magical in this. This study does truly not see the necessity for writing on a car: "covered with the blood of Jesus etc..." and many other Christian slogans, which tend to misuse the precious blood of Jesus in similar ways to

those of African traditional religious fanatics. In this study's view, one cannot completely rule out similarities. That the blood embodies communicative powers is a fact. It is also associated with safety, healing and salvation in a broad and narrow sense. The fact that the council of Jerusalem prohibited Gentile Christians from eating blood suggests something holy and sacred about blood, although it also seems to allude to the Old Testament Jewish diet.

It is necessary to clarify the fact that this study does not support any superstitious and erroneous understandings, misinterpretations or misapplications of biblical doctrines with regard to blood in general, and the blood of Jesus in particular, from whatever perspective this might originate. Objectively speaking, the researcher is an opponent of African traditional religion. However, this study does also not agree with some syncretistic behaviours found in Christian circles, that seem to result from sheer ignorance and uncontrolled emotions. The above paragraphs are instrumental in attempting to indicate the role of blood. It is critical to understand how this rubric is relevant to the topic of this dissertation, and how it ties up with the role of sacrificial blood in all the contexts considered in this study: Old Testament, African traditional religion, New Testament (especially the Epistle to the Hebrews) and the church today.

11.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with a comparison of biblical material on blood sacrifices (Old and New Testaments, especially the Epistle to the Hebrews) with African traditional religious blood sacrifices. After pointing out various similarities as well as a few differences, the researcher integrated the empirical qualitative research findings of research conducted in Kwazulu-Natal, North West and Gauteng provinces for the project "Reading the Bible in Africa". This has been motivated by some functional and purposeful affinities of mutually relevant materials. The material collected through focus group interviews seems to tie up with the whole issue of sacrificial performances in the Old Testament, African traditional religions (both traditional and current strands), New Testament and the Christian church today, in the process identifying some shifts, continuities and discontinuities, including some syncretistic trends. As was mentioned earlier in this dissertation, the information in this study has been incorporated with the authorisation of Prof. J.G. Van der Watt. The questionnaire used in the interviews comprised nine main questions, each with some sub-questions, of which only a few that seemed to be most relevant to the topic of this dissertation have been selected and discussed in this chapter, after the introduction and treatment of various similarities and a few insignificant differences encountered between biblical and African traditional religious sacrificial systems.

The integration of the empirical qualitative research findings included questions concerning knowledge about God, mediation, that is, who the ancestors are and what people expect from them, who Jesus is and what He does, cult, that is, whether or not it is necessary to make sacrifices. In addition, the role of blood was questioned. These questions, as well as the information gathered through the responses to them, are relevant to the theme and content of this dissertation. This is because, as findings of the qualitative empirical research, they appear to

support the information gathered on sacrifice in the literature review in terms of the Xhosas, Zulus and Tsongas. It also substantiates the fact that sacrifices and the power released through animal sacrifices are still a vital experience among South Africans who are involved in them. Blood is very important as a means of communication with supernatural powers, and because it contains healing and miracle-working powers.

Animal sacrifices permeate African traditional religion. Sacrifices also constitute practical components, with a focal shift that is unique to the New Testament. The archaic understanding and functional perspectives of sacrifices in African traditional religion have been kept intact up to this day. There is also the Catholic Church's contemporary paradigm to incorporate African traditional religious animal sacrifices into the Mass, alongside the symbolic sacrifice of Jesus which is performed each time by the officiating Catholic priest. If one could be allowed to use some symbolism, African traditional religion and Christianity represent two distinct and incongruent families. They seem to have been hostile towards one other, yet they exhibit striking similarities that would facilitate a degree of free and amicable contact between them.

In this study's view, African traditional religion appears to be like a mother with children, somehow unconscious of the passing of time and social evolution, as well as revolutionary transformation experienced under the powerful hand of technological advancements. It desperately continues to impose traditional and irrelevant ways of belief upon ultra-modern South African mentalities, in the name of culture primitiveness. One striking example in this regard would be circumcision schools, where many youngsters lose their lives in the name of cultural and religious beliefs. Christianity, however, represented by the congregation of the Epistle to the Hebrews although torn apart by numerous unfortunate schisms in contemporary times, seems like a clairvoyant, universal mother figure with well-sighted offspring trying to catch up with time and finding their place within the multi-faceted and complex systems of the world today.

The results of this study's investigations regarding the possible relationship between crucial components of these two religious systems seem to stretch far beyond any attempt to join them together. Divergence, confrontation and mutually obliterating moves become their irreversible and conclusive poetic songs. African traditional religious blood sacrifices present strong similarities to Old Testament sacrifices in terms of essence, form, function and purpose. However, they are substantially incompatible with biblical teachings, if evaluated from a Christian point of view. Christianity also seems to be inadequate as a religion of African people, if viewed from the perspective of a religious belief in African ancestors. The situation seems to predict a status quo. As was mentioned in chapter nine of this dissertation, African traditional religious sacrifices, like any other world religion's sacrifices, seem to have originated from the depraved man's blind search for a more powerful deity to lean on (if looked at from a Christian perspective). They are offered to African (South African) dead relatives or ancestral spirits. As was mentioned earlier in this dissertation, Jesus' ultimate teaching declares that dead people are kept in total confinement

or restricted places. Therefore, they do not have the ability to come back or communicate with those living on earth. What happens is the devil's subterfuge, in order to hinder people from having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ (see O' Donovan, 1996).

Old Testament sacrifices fit into God's eternal redemptive plan as divine types or shadows that found their concretisation in the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus. His blood discontinued the flow of Old Testament sacrificial blood and the old covenant that sealed them. Jesus' blood sealed the everlasting new covenant which was perfect and more efficient than the typological one. Therefore, one can note the superiority in essence, value, validity, function and purpose of the sacrifice of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, God dying for us and shedding His precious blood for the sins of the entire universe, past, present and future. Jesus' once and for all sacrifice is indeed a paradox in terms of biblical sacrifice, when viewed from the Old Testament perspective. A human sacrifice was an abomination in God's eyes (Dt 18:10-13; 12:31; Is 8:19; Ex 13:2, 15b), but now has become fit, agreeable and acceptable to God, and, unlike Old Testament and African traditional religious sacrifices, grants everlasting power for soteriological benefits, achieving for its people eternal redemption, salvation and forgiveness of sins. It also provides power for psychological benefits, effecting the healing of people's consciences, removing sin and guilt. Finally, the sacrifice of Jesus provides power for sociological benefits, making unto God a community of holy worshippers who offer to God sacrifices of praise, and who also translate their sacrifices into mutually supportive deeds of love and sharing (Heb 13:15-16).

Since the blood of Jesus discontinued divinely appointed Leviticus sacrificial typologies, does it not nullify man's heart-born sacrificial performances with regard to African traditional religion? From a biblical and divine perspective, how can African traditional religious sacrifices exist alongside the eternally accomplished sacrifice of Jesus on behalf of the entire world? Therefore, what transpires, according to the respondents in this study, seems to be a denial of any congruity between the sacrifice of Jesus and African traditional religious sacrifices. A few respondents revealed the fact that Jesus and the holy trinity were foreign to African traditional religion, and that people only embraced Jesus' name for the sake of convenience. Therefore, Jesus can only be looked upon as a good ancestor. The qualitative empirical research revealed that there are still people in South Africa who cling to the African traditional religious belief system and vehemently defend this. This chapter has dealt with the comparison of biblical and African material with regard to the concept and practice of sacrifice. The following chapter concludes this study by indicating how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen within the various contexts considered in this dissertation, and will also make some recommendations in this regard.

CHAPTER TWELVE: CONCLUSION

12.1 INTRODUCTION

As was specified in the introductory chapter, much has been written about sacrifices (Metuh, 1987; Magesa, 1997 etc.), to such an extent that finding a new ground or import in the scientific field of theological studies seems to be very scarce. Only differences in insights seem to constitute the major contribution to science today. This study has attempted to succinctly define the concept of sacrifice and its cognates (see chapter one, pp. 1-6) in laying a foundation for the problem statement of this dissertation, namely “*The Communicative Power of Blood Sacrifices: A predominantly South African Perspective with special reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews*”. This study has focused on the Republic of South Africa, including examples from elsewhere in Africa to broaden the research base. Therefore, due to the requirements of this dissertation in terms of scope and time allowed for its completion, the researcher concentrated, in his work, on the Xhosas, Zulus and Tsongas, who are reputed to be the largest nations within South Africa. It has been made clear that this study could not be comprehensive because the field is too broad. Therefore, it serves merely to illustrate how things operate in these groups, and whether or not there would be any noticeable differences between them. Therefore, the researcher did not adopt the hypothesis that everything would be the same in each of the abovementioned groups.

This investigation concerning the communicative power of blood sacrifices (both biblical and traditional) was prompted by the drive to determine why people in both traditional religions and Christianity in South Africa, including a few examples from elsewhere in Africa, have never completely parted with blood sacrifices. The researcher’s desire became even stronger when it was brought to his attention that animal sacrifices were being performed within the Catholic Church here in South Africa in the mass liturgy, alongside the sacrifice of Jesus (Sexton, 2002:2-3). Hypothetically speaking, this study has argued that, given people’s craving for and clinging onto blood sacrifices, this seems to point to the belief that some forces inherent to blood sacrificial rituals captivate those involved in them. If it were not so, it would have logically followed that blood sacrificial rituals would have been abandoned. However, considering the apparent continuity in the practice of blood sacrificial rituals, this suggests that some kind of power issuing from involvement in blood sacrificial rituals has perpetuated their practice, and this is what this study has set out to investigate.

The methodology of this study has been based on sound exegetical approaches, as described in Fee (1993:63-114); Van der Watt (2001); Kilian (1993:26-34); Porter (1997) and de Vos (1999). It is not the purpose of this dissertation to evaluate or prove (or even propose) any exegetical methods. Therefore, this study has referred those interested in such to extensive research conducted by scholars such as Wilhelm Egger (1996), Joel Green (1995), Stanley Porter and

David Tombs (1995), and Stanley Porter and C.A. Dennis Stamps (2002). The researcher has used a combination of methods, based on the requirements of the text, in these exegetical investigations, and this study has therefore not been method-driven, but rather text-driven. The text has invited a particular method to analyse it properly. Among the other methods used is the qualitative, empirical research method, by means of focus group interviews conducted in Gauteng, Kwazulu Natal and North-West provinces, results of which have enabled the researcher to evaluate and compare people's perceptions of blood sacrificial rituals in ancient times and today, and to identify some paradigm shifts in people's thinking with regard to blood sacrificial rituals. It has also been instrumental in substantiating the material that was collected for the literature review. This study will strictly adhere to the Harvard referencing system.

Chapter two dealt with the heuristic framework of this dissertation, by very succinctly providing descriptions of the views of various scholars concerning the nature of Christianity, African traditional religions and Western missions in Africa (South Africa), including some recent scientific theories on blood sacrificial rituals. It was argued that, given the fact that the face of Christianity is so diverse, broad and complex, and that there are so many churches in South Africa, this study would only discuss this for the sake of background and positioning - it would not be a comprehensive description of the history of the whole situation, but rather a way to sensitise oneself to the diversity of Christianity. This is because the purpose of this dissertation is to explore how people coming from Africa can use the Epistle to the Hebrews to better understand their culture and how they can link Christianity and African traditional religion as far as blood sacrifices are concerned.

Therefore, it was argued that this study needed this background orientation to the situation. The discussion has therefore just been a necessary positioning of this dissertation. It was argued that this study would not go into a lot of detail about blood sacrifices here, but would rather just provide a background, framework and positioning, in order for people to realise that there is Christianity and African traditional religion, and what each looks like. Scientific theories on blood sacrifices, as well as their respective criticisms, have attempted to show the essential significance of blood sacrifices in a given community (for detailed information in this regard, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation). One question that one needs to ask oneself is: What can we learn from all this, what can we apply and why? In terms of this question, it was argued that scientific theories on blood sacrificial rituals seem to be relevant to the theme of this dissertation, despite their respective weaknesses. It can be learnt from them that there is something out there that has been developed in the field of science, upon which any study regarding blood sacrifices should be based.

This study has also learnt that violence or blood sacrifices can be scarcely separated from individual human beings and communities at large, because blood sacrifices contribute to the establishment of human communities,

protecting them from aggression and ensuring their maintenance and continuity, and providing the power for reconciliation and establishment of harmonious relations, communion and fellowship between the world of the living and that of spirits. Furthermore, it has been learnt that blood sacrifices are as old as men, and seem to be inherent to them, and at the very core of their survival. This study has also come to the realisation that recent scientific theories on blood sacrificial rituals, included in this dissertation, are applicable to Old Testament blood sacrificial rituals, African traditional religious blood sacrificial rituals in general, and Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga blood sacrificial rituals in particular. They also seem to agree with the blood sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament as a scapegoat, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). In terms of individuals and the community, they appear to offer similar benefits. The above mentioned recent scientific theories have also been regarded as constituting a scientific framework for this dissertation, and people from Christianity as well as Africa can relate to them in seeking to understand their respective situations and ironing out their differences by using a referential framework.

The discussions in chapters three to eight were also conducted as a broad positioning. The researcher basically decided to draw broad lines as far as the communicative power of blood sacrifices was concerned. This study has purported to discuss the communicative power of blood sacrifice in South Africa (among Zulus, Xhosas, Tsongas), including a few selected places in Africa, as well as in the New Testament. It has also been argued that the purpose is not to go into too much detail, but rather to try and determine broad lines of comparison that ordinary people could understand when they read the Bible, and they would therefore be able to identify with their own situation.

In chapter three, the following groups were singled out: the Xhosa tribe proper from the South East or Cape-Nguni common designation, and Xhosa-speaking people, but who are not necessarily members of the Xhosa tribe proper, and who form a small percentage of the population located in the Willovale Kentani district. This helped to clarify and correct the general assumption that everybody who comes from the Eastern Cape and who speaks Xhosa belongs to the Xhosa tribe proper. This information was invariably valuable, because it signified the diversity of South Africans in the Eastern Cape, and acknowledged the identity, history and culture of each tribe of the Cape Nguni (Sipuka, 2000:129).

The suggestion provided by Soga that Xhosa people enjoyed more political and cultural stability in comparison with other Cape Nguni tribes may simply be insubstantial and too sentimental, given the fact that Soga is a Xhosa tribesman himself. This study argued that further research will hopefully explore the reasons for this common designation. Religion has sometimes been defined as reflecting its host society in such a way that the understanding of the latter will shed more light on the understanding of the former. The dynamics of Xhosa kinship that have been described in this chapter enabled the researcher to permeate the social structure underlying Xhosa people's blood sacrificial ritual performances.

Two itineraries have been specifically adopted: that is, common patriarchal descent and mutual obligation among kinship members. Patriarchal descent determines who the participants are and who the officiating persons in a sacrificial ritual will be. This study has also observed that socialisation has provided a context for various sacrificial rituals. Mutual obedience, obligations and rewards between junior and senior tribal members have respectively provided a social background for sacrificial ritual performances, operating under the same mutual obligation principle between ancestors or the living dead and their living descendants.

It was observed that Xhosa cosmology implicitly called for multiplicity and diversity of cosmologies, in accordance with the multiple and diverse groups and cultures. World religions' cosmologies have certainly achieved a coherent level of conceptual explanation and interpretation of the cosmos, in comparison with Xhosa cosmology which still experiences some complexities (Mosala, 1983:23). There is a need to understand that world religions' cosmological achievements have resulted from many developmental stages. However, with new paradigm shifts in the areas of knowledge, experience and interpretation of the universe, achieved coherency levels could be subjected to further transformations, as substantiated by emerging shifts in creation theology, for instance. As Mosala rightly observes, "Christianity, contrary to Western doctrinal ideology, is not a finished business, neither is African religion" (Mosala, 1983:23).

This observation has been made from the unconscious arrogance often shown towards other religious traditions by analysts from so-called established religious traditions. Their introductory point has often had a disparaging connotation in terms of the lack of unified thought in traditional belief systems, as illustrated by the following quotation: "One of the most striking features of traditional belief systems is the almost complete absence of what might be called a 'theology' There is a little speculation as to the nature of the spirit world or the life after death and, unlike some other people, a rather poorly developed corpus of myths" (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:319).

According to this study, it could impressively be inferred from the tone of the above quotation that traditional belief systems have failed to theologise, speculate and integrate mythological explanations. However, if one looks positively at this apparent absence of theology, the whole scenario does not point to inability – rather, it reveals that traditional religions are still undergoing an evolutionary process, just like established world religions did. In other words, what Hammond-Tooke suggests is that Xhosa people's belief system, together with similar belief systems, are still at a complex stage of development, whereby religious belief systems are still struggling for a more coherent and systematic expression (Sipuka, 2000:131).

It has been noted that the Supreme Being's remoteness in Xhosa people's belief system has not gone down too well with some Xhosa Christians, and they have tried to argue the opposite. It is true that, in the cosmologies of many Central and Northwest African tribes, belief in a Supreme Being or God is quite pronounced, and God is the direct object of their worship, which is carried out on a regular basis (Mbiti, 1969:59-74; Idowu, 1973:140-165). Among the Bantu tribes of Southern Africa, however, in particular the Xhosa people, as argued above, there is no similar belief and practice (Ikenga-Metuh, 1987:73). This study has thus concluded that if the Xhosa people of today are considered to believe in God and consistently interact with Him through various sacrificial rituals or worship, this could be due to Christian influence.

The allegation that there has always been an explicit worship of God among the Xhosa people is due to some African Christian writers who want to demonstrate and force continuity between Xhosa people's belief system and Christianity, by overemphasising similarities between the two, even if it means forcing them. This might also stem from the tendency among some writers and researchers to generalise religious concepts and practices observed in some part of Africa to Africa as a whole. Most works on African religions have tended to convey the understanding that they are dealing with the whole of Africa, when in fact they are actually focusing on two tribes, usually from Central and North-west Africa. They then proceed to draw general conclusions for the rest of Africa, based on the situation in a particular tribe. This is intellectual dishonesty, and the sad side of this is that it is misleading. This study does not deny that there might be common regional or continental religious concepts - however, any work that claims to cover the whole continent should then deal with issues pertaining to all African tribes or groups, and should clearly identify those that relate to each tribe or group's individuality.

The aim of chapter four was to establish and undertake an analysis of sacrificial rituals as performed in the traditional Xhosa context. This timid attempt has not fully exhausted this task, due to the scarcity of early scholarly records on Xhosa sacrificial rituals. Therefore, the researcher relied upon current reports that, to a large extent, have accounted for Xhosa sacrificial rituals after the Xhosa people had come into contact with Christianity and colonialism. Therefore, the veracity of these records cannot be guaranteed. However, this study has attempted to focus on elements that have traditionally been considered by most writers.

While investigating this research topic, the researcher came across Rev. Sipuka's statement that most research on Xhosa traditional practices and their understanding of blood sacrificial rituals has been conducted by white anthropologists and people who were entrenched in the Western culture. He says: "while this might be prolific on the side of objectivity considering the fact that they were investigating from an outsider's point of view, it also presents some disadvantages we are not allowed to overlook; namely prejudices and biases as well as the lack of insight into the issues they described and analyzed" (Sipuka, 2000:165). Although terms such as "natives, kaffirs, pagans and

savages were becoming obsolete in connection with referring to African people in current publications, you would still discover some disparaging and prejudicial reports concerning certain elements of indigenous African culture” (Sipuka, 2000:165).

Therefore, being cognisant of the fact that this only constitutes an observation and not an integral part of this study, it can be noted that Rev. Sipuka endeavoured to illustrate this by using only two examples which this study will shortly respond to. In attempting to explain kinship/lineage dynamics among the Bantu people, for instance, Hammond-Tooke went on to say: “safeguarding kin group interest is greater than the value of truth-telling as an absolute”, and he concluded that: “this has led to the widespread Bantu bagging character” (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:360). This comment is remarkable in its suggestion that there is the need to safeguard kinship group interests, sometimes at the expense of truth. It is a universal, sociological fact applicable to all groups. Tischeler, a sociologist, has reported on a group behaviour study conducted in America, which revealed that individuals were “willing to give incorrect answers in order not to appear out of shape with the judgment of the other group” (Tischeler, 1990:167).

Obviously, this applies to both small and large groups, that is, governments, institutions and churches. If this is true, why should the bagger effect of kinship groups be thought to be widespread only among Bantu people? The logical answer to this question is that it is possible that kinship group interests have different effects on different groups. For the Bantu, as it is suggested, it has the effect of mendacity, while for Europeans it possibly has the effect of veracity. With such a conclusion, therefore, it is still necessary to clarify why the same thing has a different effect on different groups, if people are essentially the same. Could this maybe be attributed to the fact that Bantu people are not the same as other groups? Could it be because one group is primitive and the other is modern and Westernised? Or that one is savage or barbaric and the other is civilised? Or that one is black and the other is white? Or that one is pagan and the other is Christian? It is important to determine this.

The second instance refers to a writer who attempted to explain the use of cattle among traditional Bantu people. With regard to the manifold use of cattle she says: “cattle are also the means of obtaining sexual satisfaction, since a legal marriage cannot take place without the passage of cattle” (Shaw, 1974:94). If Lamla’s description of traditional marriage as an alliance between two lineages is correct (Lamla 1971:20), then Shaw’s interpretation of the passage of cattle as a license to sexual satisfaction would be a great distortion of Bantu marriage. It is equivalent to saying that the dowry brought by the bride to her husband in Western culture constitutes her license to have sex with him (Sipuka, 2000:166).

This study is of the view that, unlike what Sipuka says and the types of questions he asks, there is a reversible cultural shock from both external and internal agents, and only the perception of either side triggers an explosion. Furthermore, not all criticism is bad, if only people could be more sensible about this and view it as an opportunity for self-introspection and learning, and ultimately for

correction. For example, the researcher recently visited a black preacher from the Free State. In his 1 metre high and 2m x1.5 lodge, he had a shocking way of life. Everything was dirty and mixed up. Without a spare cup, he washed his one and only cup without soap - to sum it up, he was repulsive because of his awful lack of hygiene.

In the researcher's view, he may have interpreted his visitor's deep shock as boastfulness and disparaging behaviour, because the researcher truly did experience repugnance and great unease in partaking of whatever was laid before him. This prematurely born inferiority complex, the mother to African reactionism between African people, will no doubt be greatly magnified when it comes to outsiders, and blinded, self-defensive reactionists would only see bias, disparagement and dehumanization, even if there was also something positive and advantageous. After having said this, however, Rev.Sipuka can rejoice in the fact that not all white anthropologists have shown that same kind of prejudice. For instance, Willoughby (1928) was one of those Western anthropologists who described Bantu culture with sympathy and insight. This has revealed the need for insider anthropologists who are steeped in Bantu culture. The investigation concerning blood sacrificial rituals among the Xhosa people has established that these rituals were both conceptualised and practised. The linguistic analysis of Xhosa words for sacrifice reveals that traditional Xhosa did not only perform sacrificial rituals, but also knew what they were doing. Anthropologists and researchers from various disciplines and interest groups have elaborated on the facts and meaning of Xhosa sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:166-167).

However, people still differ. Consequently, this study has dared to provide some suggestions that could help provide an intelligible demonstration of the existence of the Xhosa blood sacrificial system. For instance, it has been suggested that Xhosa blood sacrifices could be categorised in terms of birth, initiation, contingent, death and solemn sacrifices. The investigation with regard to Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals has revealed the fact that there are numerous rituals that include the slaughtering of animals, some serving as provisions for the feast, as in case of boys and girls' initiation rites, as well as marriage. Therefore, contrary to what some writers would like us to believe, not every killing should be regarded as a sacrifice.

The investigation regarding Xhosa blood sacrifices further determined that ancestors are involved in their descendants' everyday lives, and are consequently part of every ritual performance involving the slaughtering of animals that are intended for them. This makes it easy for this study to distinguish between ritual slaughter that can truly be termed a sacrifice (*idini*), and those that could be seen as customs (*amasiko*). The conclusion drawn with regard to the analysis of the types of Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals is that *ukubuyisa*, *ukupha*, and *izilo* constitute rituals that can properly be considered as blood sacrifices, while the rest can only be viewed as customs (Sipuka, 2000:167). This distinction is critical to the purpose of this study, which has focused on illustrating the communicative power of blood sacrifices in the Old Testament, African traditional religion (South Africa), the New Testament (Epistle

to the Hebrews) and the church today. The analysis of Xhosa blood sacrificial elements has revealed that it is quite difficult to be conclusive in terms of what specifically constitutes Xhosa blood sacrifices. Among the various reasons in support of this inconclusiveness are the following:

- People among whom research has been conducted. They have no tangible explanation for some of the rituals and elements associated with blood sacrifices. When Bigalke, for instance, inquired among the Ndlambe people about their use of *ubulawu* in blood sacrificial rituals, the response he received from his respondents was “*Savela kunjalo*” (Bigalke, 1969:128), that is, “when we were born it was like that”.
- Others’ explanations are just ad hoc opinions without any objective grounds for verification. Furthermore, the use of elements associated with blood sacrifices differs from one lineage group to the other, from one settlement to the other, from one Xhosa house to the other and from one Nguni group to another. For instance, it has been pointed out here that the use of *ubulawu* is more widespread among the Ndlambe than among the Gcaleka group of people.
- The third reason lies with researchers. Some of them overlook sacrificial elements noted by their fellow researchers. A respectable number of them keep silent with regard to the burning of the suet (*Intlukuhla*), including Bigalke and Olivier, who specifically conducted research on the two Xhosa subgroups. Only two offered their documented accounts in this regard. Moreover, some researchers emphasise elements that others consider to be insignificant. As an example, Pauw is the only writer who attaches sacrificial significance to the sprinkling of the animal’s stomach contents in the kraal. The others only mention it (Sipika, 2000:168).

In cases where there is a lack of clarity with regard to the meaning of particular rituals, as well as elements associated with blood sacrifice, the researcher has allowed himself to speculate as to possible meanings. These speculations have been made from either the general understanding of blood sacrifices or a similar ritual explanation from another context of study. The researcher, for instance, consulted Hunter and Kuckertz for insight into similar Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals which they explained in a Pondo context (Sipika, 2000:168). Undoubtedly, such speculations will contribute to an intelligible explanation of Xhosa blood sacrifices, if found to be accurate. Otherwise, the researcher would be happy to be informed as to the outcome.

The *ukunqula* element stirred up controversy as to whether ancestors are invoked or worshipped. The description of the arguments on both sides led to the conclusion that the argument that *ukunqula* is different from an act of worship has proved to carry more weight than the opposing one. Although ancestors are considered to be superior in power, and intimidate the living with allegiance, they basically share their spiritual essence with the living. At death, their spirit underwent a metamorphosis from *umphfumlo* to *umoya*. The basis of their superiority does not come from their metaphysical status, which distinguishes

them from the living, as is the case with the Judeo-Christian God. It is rather obtained through the customary respect for elders and elders' obligation to assume the well-being of their offspring. This respect due to ancestors in no way constitutes an act of worship. It is only intended to preserve the tribal traditions of which ancestors are custodians (Sipika, 2000:169). A conclusion concerning the nature of Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals can be drawn with regard to their purpose, essence, objectives and moods. Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals strengthen lineage solidarity - otherwise, without lineage, Xhosa sacrificial rituals would become non-existent and meaningless. In other words, Xhosa sacrificial rituals have value for a person who values his/her lineage. Essentially, they consist of communicating with ancestors through invocation and the bellowing of the sacrificial animal, which is perceived as the ancestors' positive response to the blood sacrifice (Sipika, 2000:169).

Given the fact that Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals are intended to maintain lineage solidarity, their major objective cannot be anything other than consumption and exchange. Consumption refers to the communion-sharing between the living and the living dead. Expectation underlies the obtaining of favours for blood sacrifices which instills a sense of mutual obligation between communion participants. A feeling of being in communion and a sense of mutual support characterise Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals, as evidenced by the festive and joyous mood that permeates them (Spika, 2000:169).

The discussion on Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals in this study has revealed the fact that the understanding and practice of blood sacrificial rituals among Xhosa people has been widely, if not entirely, moulded by their cosmological views, as well as by their social structures. A logical expectation would be a change in the concept and practice of blood sacrifices as the abovementioned elements change and develop.

Chapter five is devoted to a brief description of both Zulu and Tsonga sacrificial ritual ideas. It was pointed out that this study would not go into too much detail regarding Zulu and Tsonga sacrificial ideas, but would only mention them in order to position the dissertation for the sake of comparison, so that ordinary people from Africa can understand when they read the Bible, and can therefore try to relate it to their own situation. As members of extended Bantu groups, their blood sacrificial ritual performances, as well as sacrificial victims, have presented sharp similarities. However, they have also displayed significant differences. This study has seen that Zulu people's customs accommodate relationships between a human group and non-human species. These might be totemic, non-totemic or metonymic animals, as well as birds whose relationship with humans was considered to signify factual rituals of an irrefutable sacrificial nature. It was also noted that Zulu people incorporate the earth and sky in their blood sacrificial rituals for rain-making through the rainbow princess and python genie. The sacrifice of the hornbill caters for rain in times of severe drought. It is either killed by suffocation or by breaking its neck, and is sunk deep into the river's water.

It was also pointed out that, in Zulu people's cosmology, ancestors are mediators between men and personal gods, and between gods and the true spirit. Like Xhosa people, communication with ancestors occurs through various blood sacrificial rituals and offerings. Parrinder says: "ancestors' cult is equivalent to religious worship and the gods of the Bantu people (Zulu and others...) are their ancestors. However, we have failed to understand whether the 'true Spirit' referred to in Zulu sacrificial thoughts would be the same as the Holy Spirit or equal to the personal God".

Communication with the world of spirits occurs through the medium of blood sacrifice, as well as through prayer and divination. A blood sacrifice is a non-verbal medium of communication. The sacrificial object becomes a symbolic means of communication. Communication through the state of possession reveals the fact that Zulu diviners and traditional doctors all are possessed by ancestor spirits. The diviner's prescription in connection with the eagle or hornbill sacrificial rituals constitutes a symbolic killing meant to regulate the cosmic order. Zulu creation mythology suggests that the first ancestor or *umhlabathi* originated from "a swamp reed", and that the Zulu diviner is not born of a woman, but instead comes from the earth or *ihlunga*.

Silence is strictly observed in Zulu blood sacrificial rituals during ancestor worship. Ancestors have the right to eat raw meat and coagulated blood. Meat reserved for them must be burnt to ashes. When it is put on the fire, this triggers communication with ancestors. Sacrificial victims' entrails, such as bile, chyme and gall bladder, are used for ceremonial cleansing, healing and purification (Ngubane, 1977:124-126). Ngubane, a Zulu writer, alleges that the chyme has life-giving properties, and plays an extremely significant role in blood sacrificial purification.

A goat's chime, among the Zulu people, serves to restore "the spiritual wellbeing of an entire female age set, threatened by an offense by one member (loss of virginity)". A sacrificial victim's colour is very important among Zulu people: a white colour symbolises life, and a black colour is the symbol of death. The black sheep is placed into the category of scapegoats, and is treated like a man. Cattle constitute the sole species sacrificed to ancestors, and their digestive organs go through complete processing. Sacrifices made to ancestors and the python genie promote positive conjuncture on a social, cosmogenic level. The black sheep terminates drought and wards off the malefic effects of sorcery.

Tsonga people's blood sacrificial ritual ideas include the fact that mental illness constitutes the strongest religious form of blood sacrificial ritual - it is exogenous (external to the group), while sickness inflicted by ancestors is endogenous (internal to the group). In these cases, the divining bone diagnoses the nature of the sickness and prescribes the cure. The sacrificial blood ensures the expulsion of the pathogenic spirit. In order to curb a severe drought, Tsonga people sacrifice a black ram. Tsonga warriors sometimes spend time in purification camps, where they consume a goat's roasted chyme through the nostrils before

being allowed to go home. During a big millet ceremony, an ox is slaughtered for the consolidation of the marriage bond.

The last aspect of Tsonga sacrificial ideas which was discussed in this study is the sacrificial victim's blood during the weaning ritual. The blood serves as a purifying substance. Goats are true sacrificial animals, and not a currency for matrimonial exchange (*lobola*). They provide a minimal share to ancestors and their offerings are not pompous. Three networks of communication are involved in Tsonga people's blood sacrificial rituals: *lobola*, the divining bones and the diviner's prescriptions. The *lobola* brings different lineages together in a matrimonial bond, including various powerful communications with ancestors. The divining bones are detectors of various illnesses, and help to prescribe the appropriate cure.

Tsonga people believe that ancestors live in underground villages, and that they can appear in the human community in the form of blue snakes, inhabit secret woods etc. As has been pointed out in several instances in this dissertation, there are sharp similarities between Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga people's blood sacrificial rituals, as well as some particularities pertaining to each. However, the questions of how and why have not been given satisfactory answers, because interviewed respondents provided ad hoc opinions that are very difficult to substantiate. On the other hand, the researcher is of the view that there has been this element of a lack of inquisitiveness among traditional African worshippers in terms of the allegiance paid to elderly people. Traditional worshippers do things the way they have seen them done. They say things in the way that they were told.

In chapter six, this study attempted to describe and analyse modern Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals. It was argued that by modern Xhosas, it refers to people of the Xhosa culture who speak the Xhosa language and live between Mbashe and the Sunday River on the coastal side, including those who are distributed all over South Africa and in neighbouring countries from the 19th century up to this day (Wilson, 1969:77; Switzer, 1993:34; Davenport, 1978:53; Jackson, 1975:6). The sources used here have been drawn from the Eastern Cape, traditionally considered to be the geographical area of Xhosa speaking people, and in which they are still concentrated. It is therefore hoped that the results of this research will truly apply to most modern Xhosa people in particular, other Bantu people of South Africa, and black Africans in general.

This study has initiated its argument by singling out reported cases of blood sacrificial rituals that can concretely and objectively prove that blood sacrificial ritual performances are still being practised among modern Xhosa people. In order to provide a broader and more concrete picture, this study has undertaken to consult research conducted with regard to modern Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals. The results obtained here sanction both continuity and syncretistic discontinuity between traditional and modern performances and understandings of blood sacrificial rituals. With regard to continuity, it was observed that most of

the blood sacrificial rituals performed in the traditional context continue to be performed in the modern setting as well (Sipuka, 2000:205).

Syncretistic discontinuity, which is not complete discontinuity by all, but that between traditional and modern blood sacrificial ritual performances, was emphasised in this study according to the way in which blood sacrificial rituals are performed and understood. It was pointed out that the rationale behind this discontinuity is not immediately clear, and this led the researcher to consider the factors that have influenced modern Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals, with the intention of obtaining clarity in this regard. Factors that have shaped modern Xhosa people's understanding of blood sacrificial ritual performances were identified as political, economic, social, environmental, ideological and religious. They are broadly categorised as socio-environmental and religious factors (Sipuka, 2000:205).

Social factors were determined to have both eliminatory and modifying effects on modern Xhosa people's blood sacrificial ritual performances and understanding. Social circumstances have, at worst, rendered some blood sacrificial rituals, such as national sacrificial rituals, unable to be performed, and at best, made some blood sacrificial rituals difficult to perform. They have also had major modification effects on the performance and understanding of blood sacrificial rituals. People's exodus from their original birthplaces and scattering because of political and economic factors has contributed to the narrowing down of Xhosa people's unparalleled blood sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:205).

As was pointed out in chapter four, traditional Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals were meant to bind together lineage members. In the modern era, the attendance of lineage members at a blood sacrificial ritual has become something to be desired. Consequently, on sacrificial ritual occasions, much effort is made to inform as many lineage members as possible. At this level, it may be said that modern blood sacrificial rituals constitute mechanisms for undoing the destabilising effect of modernity, which weighs upon lineage members. McAllister observes that blood sacrificial rituals deal "with identifying cognate and affinity links, clarifying uncertain relationships, exchanging information about the genealogical and physical locations of distant kin, conveying kinship information to the young people and creating an 'imagined' kin community for those present" (McAllister, 1997:285). As we have seen, however, this does not always work, given the fact that some lineage members sometimes fail to attend blood sacrificial rituals (Sipuka, 2000:206).

The destabilising effects upon lineage members of modernity, and the effort involved in gathering them, has begun to transform the Xhosa sacrificial ritual congregation from a lineage to a nuclear family affair. Staples predicts that, in the course of time, it might even become a one-man affair (Staples, 1981:241). Circumstances imposed by socio-environmental factors make one decide on one's own when, how and with whom to perform a blood sacrifice. If circumstances do not allow for blood sacrificial ritual performances, a personal

address to the ancestors in the form of a prayer takes precedence over the usual one. When conditions are such that lineage members cannot attend blood sacrificial rituals, significant friends of the person offering the blood sacrifice, as well as clan members, constitute the congregation.

This phenomenon causes one to draw the conclusion that modern Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals have mostly become a family or personal affair, because the traditional and modern understanding of blood sacrificial rituals keeps on overlapping. The increasing emphasis on blood as the personal aspect of sacrificial rituals among modern Xhosa people now rests on thanksgiving blood sacrificial rituals for personal success, as some of the press examples provided in this dissertation indicate. The individualisation of modern Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals has engendered a situation that has rendered it difficult to provide a clear categorisation of these blood sacrificial rituals, because they sometimes appear to be fused in conformity with the wishes and circumstances of the individual. It has also become difficult to identify the ritual elements involved in modern Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals, because of individuals' retrenchments or incremental rituals, as their understanding and situations dictate (Sipuka, 2000:207).

Christianity has had both the effect of elimination and superficial modification of Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals. The mutually exclusive views of Christianity and the Xhosa belief system with regard to blood sacrificial rituals have driven a few Xhosa Christians to relinquish their traditional sacrificial rituals, while others continue to adhere to them (that is why one speaks of syncretistic discontinuity) in a disguised manner, calling them "*idinala*" (dinner). Apparently, the "*idinala*" concept seems to be a synthesis of modern Xhosa and Christian people's understanding of blood sacrificial rituals, or an adaptation of the former to the latter. However, a closer examination reveals that it has become difficult to convincingly explain what takes place at an "*idinala*", because the principles with regard to blood sacrificial rituals involved in both beliefs are mutually contradictory. This poses a great challenge to Xhosa theologians, who have to clarify this amorphous "synthesis" (Sipuka, 2000:207).

Other Xhosa Christians, who represent the majority, have opted for a syncretistic attitude by adhering to both Christianity and their traditional belief system, without synthesising them. This boils down to a dichotomous type of understanding of spiritual and physical salvation respectively, as offered by Christianity and Xhosa people's traditional beliefs system, which, according to them, are not contradictory but complementary. This also results in the social culture of co-operation based on religious affiliation, as well as neighbourhood as a kinship affinity (Sipuka, 2000:207). As illustrated earlier, non-Christians participate in Christian functions and vice-versa. Some timid attempts have been made to ascribe a Christian explanation to Xhosa people's traditional blood sacrificial rituals, but the model used, that is, the biblical command to honour one's parents and the communion of the saints, has proved to be extremely ineffective.

Consequently, a viable solution would now be for Christianity to develop, within the Xhosa people's milieu, an integrated salvation view that would satisfy both spiritual and eschatological needs, as well as physical and daily human needs. Therefore, this study can conclude its investigation in the area of Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals by saying that the nature and purpose of modern Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals cannot be precisely verbalised. This lack of precision may be attributed to the traditional understanding of blood sacrificial rituals that continually overlaps with the emerging understanding resulting from the factors discussed in chapter six of this dissertation.

Two types of understanding with regard to blood sacrificial rituals continue to be simultaneously upheld: some Xhosa Christians adhere to both Xhosa and Christian views regarding sacrificial rituals. They also continue to exist as an unspecified synthesis through "*idinala*". The emerging understanding seems to point towards a narrower and more personalised understanding of blood sacrificial rituals among Xhosa people. The concept of ancestors as objects of blood sacrificial rituals is now being gradually restricted to one's parents, and the congregation to one's family or homestead members. It can be predicted that, individually speaking, ancestors as sacrificial objects and the blood sacrificial rituals' congregation are now determined not by blood and kinship affinity, but by voluntary association, as is the case with churches and clubs, etc.

As already mentioned, this appears to be the direction that Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals are taking, without getting completely rid of elements from traditional sacrificial understanding. It thus remains an amorphous and fertile ground for new investigations by anthropologists and theologians. In all this, especially in modern South Africa, the influence and power communicated by these various blood sacrificial rituals which permeate the core of the Xhosa people's life remain undeniably in existence: reciprocal or reversible affinity between the departed and the living, as well as the renouncement and upholding of syncretistic attitudes, have respectively attributed to a few modern Xhosa Christians and the crushing majority of Xhosa traditionalists, including high-ranking political authorities in South Africa, all strongly emphasising the powerful impact of sacrifices on the black South African community.

The findings concerning the performance and understanding of blood sacrificial rituals in both traditional and modern Xhosa settings may be generalised to the rest of the Bantu tribe of South Africa, namely Zulus, Tsongas etc, since they all represent blood affinity, as was pointed out in chapter three of this dissertation. It goes without saying that social and environmental factors, which impact on modern Xhosa people's performance and understanding of blood sacrificial rituals, may generally be applied to the rest of South African Bantu tribes. However, there must be some similarities and differences. This study's findings therefore confirm the hypothesis of this dissertation that blood sacrifices communicate power to those involved in them, and therefore the same findings are linked to scientific theories of blood sacrifices, in that benefaction responses inevitably lead to an increased need for blood sacrifices.

The discussion in chapter seven of this dissertation dealt with some blood sacrificial practices among the Yoruba and Ibibio people of Nigeria. The purpose of sacrifices among the Yoruba people was discussed, and among the Ibibio people, blood sacrifices and their religious significance was discussed, as well as the Hebrews and African concepts of scapegoatism, Christ's event and human sacrifice in the African culture. It goes without saying that any denial of blood sacrificial realities and their similarities and differences in type, function and purpose to the biblical sacrificial system of the Old Testament, would be somewhat ridiculous and self-defeating. From the Yoruba and Ibibio people to the Xhosas, Zulus and Tsongas and other black African religious groups in general, as well as other black South African groups, the fact of empowerment through blood sacrificial rituals is overwhelmingly evident.

Concerning the objects of African blood sacrifices, one can only support one of the African theologian scholars, namely Wilbur O' Donovan, besides what Jesus in His parable concerning the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 have said. Deuteronomy 18:10-11 reads: "Let no one be found among you who... consults the dead. Anyone who does this is detestable to the Lord". "Traditional beliefs and practices involving ancestral spirits are not from God. They are part of Satan's subtle plan to keep many people from having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ" (O' Donovan, 1996:222).

In most parts of the world, many people have claimed to see their ancestors or spirits from time to time. They may resemble dead relatives and even talk like them. Luke 16:24-26 and 2Corinthians 5:8 teach that God assigns specific and definite places to the spirits of those who die, and restricts them to these places. They do not have the freedom to quit these places, except for by His special permission (1Sm 28:15-19). "Since demons have the power to appear to human eyes in any chosen form (2Cor 11:14; Rv 16:13), and since demons are much more powerful and intelligent than people it should not come as a surprise that demons have the ability to imitate the appearances and voices of dead relatives". "Why would demons imitate dead relatives? They do so in order to increase their deception of non-Christian religions which leads men to trust in ancestors or other spirits instead of trusting in Christ" (O' Donovan, 1996:224).

The apostle Paul teaches that "...the things which Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice them to demons not to God, and I do not want you to fellowship with demons" (1Cor 10:20). This should sound a clear alarm to African (South African) blood sacrifice practitioners, for them to understand that their blood sacrificial worship is devoid of any valid, valuable and durable benefit, apart from making them stray from the One true and self-disclosing God of the Bible. Satan, in his subtlety, has been empowering animal blood sacrificial performers to enter into a kind of intimate and unbreakable bond with these sacrifices, to the extent that people would prefer death rather than to be separated from their innate blood sacrificial rituals. Only turning to the powerful and unique sacrifice of Christ

described in the New Testament (Hebrews) may break the yoke of traditional blood sacrificial practices in an African (South African) religious context.

In chapter eight, this study briefly discussed sacrifices and Christianity today. The sacrifice of Jesus was briefly examined, because the theme is all about sacrifice. The researcher did therefore not concentrate on sacrifice in the New Testament, because this was considered to be too broad an issue to be managed in a short paper like this, since the purpose here was to focus on the sacrifice of Jesus in Hebrews. It was specified here that the sacrificial theme that occurs in the rest of the New Testament has been researched by Young (1975; 1979). Therefore, what has been presented here is just a framework or background to what has been done in Hebrews. It was argued that this study wished to provide a summary of the work of Young, who described what sacrifice in the New Testament looks like, and it was attempted here to link him with other researchers.

This study specifically, but shortly, undertook to discuss the sacrifice of Jesus as the climax and fulfillment of all Old Testament typological sacrificial systems. This sacrifice is the best, all-sufficient and final one. The theological interpretation of the sacrifice of Christ has been faced with the difficulty of drawing a line between typology and analogy within the realm of blood sacrificial practices. Jesus' sacrifice ratifies a new covenant with the new Israel. The purpose of the new covenant was to accomplish typological representations and establish a new relationship with God.

In its expiatory capacity, Jesus' sacrifice sanctified once and for all the sanctified ones. It was an aversion sacrifice and a ransom, a propitiatory sacrifice and an anti-type of Old Testament sacrifices. The paschal mystery of Christ and its nature emphatically refer to the executive historical implementation of His eternal redemptive plan on earth, as well as its culmination. The Christian teachings on Eucharistic sacrifices were then discussed. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church in South Africa today, represented by Archbishop Buti of Bloemfontein, has started the revivalism and integration of African traditional religious animal sacrifices into the Catholic Church's mass, alongside the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. With regard to the Eucharist and sacrifice, the researcher has clarified the fact that the New Testament teaching does not view the Eucharist as a sacrifice. It was adopted as such by early believers, in order to escape from hostilities.

The analysis of Eleguru's self-sacrificial and somewhat localised redemptive act remains peculiar, though very inferior, and incompatible with Jesus' once and for all sacrificial act. It has a tremendous bearing on the topic of this dissertation, in that it gradually brings to light the effective forces issuing from blood sacrificial victims, both animals and humans, Jesus' sacrifice releasing the most powerful and supernatural forces as the best, all-sufficient and final one. The above material is relevant to this dissertation because it includes the idea of blood sacrifice.

In chapter nine, this study attempted to provide a very brief description of sacrifice in the Old Testament, as background information for an exegesis of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After the introduction, the concepts of blood, fire and smoke as typical images in the Hebrew scripture were discussed, and these are connected to Israel's blood sacrificial worship. After this, the researcher presented a description of the altar, including its name and shape, after which he succinctly described Old Testament sacrifices, providing an overview, including Old Testament sacrificial typology, as well as Old Testament sacrificial procedures.

The discussion went on to focus on sacrifice in P, by emphasising the animals, techniques and basic types of animal sacrifice: burnt offerings, peace offerings, including their usage, purification offerings, purification and atonement, performance of the purification offering, including order, and reparation offerings. It then went on to discuss biblical sacrifice as a cultic reality or textual phenomenon, and then discussed prophetic critiques, and finally Deuteronomy and Israel's sacrificial worship, where it was attempted to indicate significant reforms that were adopted, and which have injected a fresh understanding into the knowledge and practice of blood sacrifices in Israel's worship. Internal devotion, confession of sins, love for one's neighbour, sharing and concern for the poor, widows and foreigners, grounded in an obedience to God, constitute the new meaning of true sacrificial worship. Chapter ten was devoted to an exegesis of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In Chapter ten, it was argued that this study would not deal with everything related to blood and sacrifice in Hebrews, because the purpose of this study is not to go into too much detail, but rather to create a Christian framework, so that people from Africa can use the Epistle to the Hebrews to understand their culture better, and to see how they can link Christianity and African traditional religion. The nature of the sacrifice of Jesus was discussed, indicating how it was representative, substitutionary and penal. After this, the motivation behind the sacrifice of Jesus and its purpose were discussed, and in this regard it was argued that it was to taste death for mankind, bring sons to glory, make atonement for sin and render the devil powerless. The researcher then went on to discuss the superiority of the blood sacrifice of Jesus, arguing that it accomplished God's will with regard to blood sacrifices, that Christ's seated posture implied that His sacrificial work had been accomplished once and for ever, that the ratification of the new covenant confirmed that sin had been removed, and finally how the bodily sacrifice of Jesus dealt with sin.

Based on the fact that both the sacrificial victim's body and blood may be offered separately as sacrifices, that is, the blood of Jesus as a sacrifice and the body of Jesus as a sacrifice, and given the fact that both sacrificial aspects overlap or complementarily respond to the entirety of the common understanding of sacrifice, this study has endeavoured to use blood-life sacrifice for sacrifice, because the life of every living creature is in the blood, and blood-life sacrifice is used for blood sacrifice or sacrificial blood. In this lengthy section, the following topic was discussed: that Jesus' blood-life sacrifice sanctions His sacrifice's

superiority. Under this topic, the entrance of the Leviticus high priest into the earthly sanctuary through animal blood-life sacrifice was discussed: this was a pre-requisite for his entrance, in order to atone for his own sins and those of the people.

Here, the significance of blood-life sacrifice in the old order was also discussed, which is mainly characterised by ceremonial, outward purification, granting sins coverage and forgiveness, and the benefits of animal blood-life sacrifices in the symbolic earthly sanctuary featured as a means to foster a relationship and fellowship between God and His people, according to His legal precepts, as they were typologies pointing to Christ's event. Animal blood-life sacrifices and the purification significance of the red heifer's ashes were then discussed, and this dealt mainly with the sprinkling of the blood of goats and bulls onto the furnishings of the most Holy Place, and the sprinkling of the red heifer's blood seven times in the direction of the Temple, as well as the sprinkling of water mixed with the heifer's ashes on those defiled by touching or coming into contact with a dead body, in order to purify them.

The chapter then went on to discuss the fact that Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary through His own blood-life sacrifice emphasises His sacrifice's superiority. His entrance into the presence of God brought about tremendous and final results for humankind with regard to blood sacrificial rituals: Jesus' blood-life sacrifice secures eternal redemption and is the ransom price for redemption, makes eternal atonement for sins, cleanses worshippers' consciences, removing sin and guilt. Jesus' blood-life sacrifice was performed through the Eternal Spirit - it incomparably emphasises the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice, because it was the sacrifice of Himself. All these facts seem to reveal something peculiar about blood, because life is in the blood and blood is life.

Therefore, a mysterious power resides in the blood, and when blood is being shed, it communicates a power that affects the lives and welfare of worshippers. Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates power for soteriological benefits: it makes worshippers holy and places them in a position of purity and continuous relationship with God. It grants them redemption, salvation and full forgiveness of sins, including unclouded access to God through Jesus Christ. Jesus' blood-life sacrifice communicates psychological benefits: consciences and hearts are cleansed, sin and guilt are removed, internal feelings of remorse are taken care of, and worshippers are delivered from the psychological bondage to the fear of death, since Jesus' blood-life sacrifice and resurrection overcame death and thus communicated social benefits through its power, which includes complete and total liberation from dead works, in order to worship the living God. Christian believers constitute a worshipping community, a society of liberated, saved, redeemed people, who socialise and gather together to worship and serve the living God.

They express their gratitude to Him as they confess His name and display compassion through sharing and mutual support. This study's investigation of the theme of blood sacrifice in Hebrews ties up with the scientific theories of blood sacrificial rituals, in that, unlike African traditional religious and Old Testament

animal sacrifices, the once and for all blood sacrifice of Jesus dealt completely and finally with the problem of fear and anxiety and guilt of sin, and cleansed worshippers' consciences. It granted them eternal atonement for sin, forgiveness, eternal redemption and salvation, not to forget the permanent access to God through Jesus Christ through faith. Although the findings of the investigation of blood sacrifice in Hebrews, especially the blood sacrifice of Jesus, show a paradigm shift and discontinuation of animal sacrifices, they confirm this dissertation's hypothesis that there is always communication of tremendous power, whether through the blood sacrifice of Jesus or the bloodless sacrifices of Christian believers.

In chapter eleven, this study attempted to compare biblical material on blood sacrificial rituals with that from Africa (Old Testament, African traditional religion and New Testament, especially the Epistle to the Hebrews). After highlighting various similarities as well as a few differences, the researcher integrated the empirical qualitative research findings conducted in Kwazulu Natal, North West and Gauteng provinces for the project "Reading the Bible in Africa". This integration has been motivated by functional and purposeful affinities of mutually relevant materials. The material collected by means of focus group interviews seems to tie up with the whole scheme of blood sacrificial performances in the Old Testament, African traditional religion (both traditional and contemporary strands), New Testament (Hebrews) and the church today, pointing out shifts, continuities and discontinuities, including some syncretistic trends.

As was mentioned earlier in this dissertation, the researcher has incorporated the information in this study with the authorisation of Prof. J.G. Van der Watt. The questionnaire used in the interviews comprised nine main questions, each with sub-questions that have been succinctly discussed in this chapter, after the introduction and treatment of various similarities and differences between biblical blood sacrifices and those of African traditional religions. The integration of the empirical qualitative research findings included questions concerning knowledge about God, mediation, identity of Jesus and what He did, the necessity for sacrifices today, and the role of the blood. This information has substantiated that which was gathered for the literature review, confirming the fact that blood sacrificial rituals are still being performed in South Africa (Africa). It also brought to the surface paradigm shifts in the perception and understanding of blood sacrificial ritual performances today. God, Jesus Christ and ancestors are very significant as sacrificial objects and supernatural powers that protect, heal and supply worshippers' needs, depending on whether the biblical or traditional contexts are being considered. Confession, prayer and worship constitute part and parcel of any given blood sacrificial system. Blood sacrifices are performed in order to ward off evil against individuals and the community as a whole. Blood is very important as a means of communication with supernatural powers, and as something that contains healing and miracle-performing powers.

The community is made up of worshippers, weak and vulnerable people frustrated and threatened by general human predicaments, natural calamities, diseases, epidemics, all types of evil/sin and death. As kinsmen and a

community, they need to know where they belong, and therefore team up against any fear-provoking phenomena, in order to cultivate a permanent and harmonious atmosphere of communion and fellowship with the supernatural through ejaculatory blood sacrificial rituals that communicate power for survival. Therefore, as has been argued several times in this dissertation, this study would like to show how the communicative power of blood sacrifices can be visualised within the various religious contexts considered. Finally, the researcher will provide some recommendations.

12.1.1.1 How the communicative power of blood sacrifices is viewed in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the communicative power of sacrifices is not a matter of visualization - it is rather a matter of fully believing in God and seeing the fulfillment of His promises and His word. The communicative power of sacrifices is seen in that in Israel, blood sacrifice makes the worship of God possible (Ryken, 2000). The mystical connection of blood to life and death makes it a powerful and ominous symbol of violence and wrongdoing. The shedding of human blood receives a capital sentence in the Old Testament, but animal blood is allowed in ritual slaughtering, where it is treated with great respect and functions as an essential element of the sacrificial cultus, and is brought into contact with the Holy of holies (Ryken, 2000). In the Old Testament, the communicative power of blood sacrifices is also seen in that they had the power to atone for worshippers' sins and to restore lost or disrupted fellowship with God (Packel et al, 1997).

Leviticus 1:1-2 speaks of Israel's blood sacrificial rituals. Ancient Near Eastern people's ritual procedures were prescribed through divination - available documents recording such rituals do not appear as a divine revelation, as in Leviticus (Shavalas & Walton, 2000). The aromatic smoke from the holocaust that is heavenwardly directed and inhaled causes the deity to accept the offering (Freedman, 1997). Blood libation was intended to appease chthonic deities by offering them life blood that increased their power. In Israel, blood symbolised life, and the manipulation of sacrificial blood was perceived as a substitute for the lives of worshippers (Lv 17:11-12).

The communicative power of blood sacrifices in the Old Testament is seen in the function of sacrificial blood, which aimed at warding off evil and impurity, and protecting sacred appurtenances or furnishings and places from demonic infestation (Lv 4:6-7, 17-18, 25, 30; Lv 16 for the Day of Atonement). All this shows how the communicative power of blood sacrifices was seen in the Old Testament. Unlike the pagan way, this is not based on guesswork. It is founded on God's revelation to His people, and the trust they had in Him and His word.

The Old Testament blood of the animal was the blood of the covenant, as stipulated and ratified by God. Heb 9:19-22 says that the law required that nearly

everything be cleansed with this blood, and without the shedding of this blood, there would be no remission (forgiveness of sin). This shows the power of sacrificial blood to cleanse and bring about forgiveness and protection. This emphasises even more the communicative power of blood sacrifices, in that animal blood sacrifices secured forgiveness and acceptance by God, because they were performed in repentance, as well as in faith of God's method of salvation. Animal blood sacrifices only had an intelligible significance insofar as they focused the attention of Israelites on the forthcoming Redeemer, and the promise of a perfected redemption (Hewitt, 1973:155-156). The communicative power of sacrifices is seen in circumstances that occur after blood sacrificial performances. Unlike African traditional religious beliefs, biblical sacrificial acts of righteousness were grounded in faith and obedience to divine revelatory and covenantal stipulations. This study will now examine how the communicative power of sacrifices is seen in African traditional religion.

12.1.1.1.2 How the communication power of blood sacrifices is seen in African traditional religion

O'Donovan says: "The origin of non-Christian religions involves superstition and ignorance". In addition, there seem to be fallen angels who seek the worship of people and seek to control their lives (1Tm 4:1; Col 2:18). As many Africans know, evil spirits threaten people with sickness, tragedy and other punishment when they fail to obey them. Such demons are very clever in their deception. They deceive people, pretending to be divinities or spirits of dead ancestors (O' Donovan, 1996:193). It may be inferred from this that sacrificial practices in traditional religions also originate from demonic deception. "Missionaries entering groups of people who had no contact with Christ often report severe conflicts with demons (unseen evil powers or powerful fallen angels), especially in the early days of their ministry" (O' Donovan, 1996:193).

Traditional African people know that certain spirits demand the practice of ritual worship and obedience from the people under their influence. Sometimes, these spirits have appeared visually to them with such demands, sometimes they have appeared in dreams, and sometimes they have communicated these demands through a possessed person or diviner. The evidence points to the fact that non-Christian religions involve contact with satanic powers of darkness (O' Donovan, 1996:193). While the Old Testament sacrificial system is backed by the Bible as a covenantal agreement between God and His people, African traditional religions have no Bible-like record that claims divine origins. However, they affirm the undisputed role of great African ancestors in the introduction of the African traditional blood sacrificial system through divination, which the Bible condemns as abominable to God (Dt 18:9-13). However, it is quite interesting to see the intriguing similarities in the ways that the communicative power of blood sacrifices is viewed in both sacrificial systems.

This study will now look at how the communicative power of sacrifices is seen among Xhosa people. Before going any further, the researcher would like to return again to Neyrey's God as Benefactor- Patron-Client model. In this model, a deity is perceived as "King, Protector of cities, God of refuge, Father, Lord of friends (those who seek Him by laying down a gift before Him), God of hospitality and God of increase and God of wealth, health and increase" (Neyrey, 2005:479). Neyrey's model views "reciprocity as a fixed, ubiquitous element of benefactor-client relationships": When a man provides a deity with a benefit (gift or blood sacrifice), he aims at serving and pleasing the one to whom he offers that gift. If the giver's intention is conveyed to the deity and stirs in him a joyful response, he obtains what he was seeking for..." (Neyrey, 2005:481).

In this regard, Malina says that, in order to get benefactions from superiors, subordinates have to use "inducement and influence" - inducement has to do with all "sorts of gifts, services, and presents", while influence refers "to reasons for doing what one wanted, hence requests, petitions, entreaties and the like. In language embedding religion, inducement is called sacrifice, influence is called prayer. Sacrifice of any sort is a form of inducement directed to the deity" (Malina, 1996:29). A similar situation is seen in the Old Testament and described in Hebrews in terms of the blood of bulls and goats, which could not remove sin. God or JHWH, as the Benefactor (Patron), made provision for Israel through animal blood sacrificial rituals as an outlet for the covering of their sins and the renewal of disrupted relationships between Him and his chosen people. Obedience on behalf of the client (Israel) was a pre-requisite for receiving benefaction. But here, unlike African traditional religion, whereby the client (African worshipper) makes blind attempts to search for a supernatural sustainer, God disclosed Himself to Israel and revealed to them His commandments, including the Old Testament blood sacrificial system.

It can be inferred from this that Neyrey's model seems to portray a system of exchanges and compensations through powers and effects. Power invites and reciprocates power, effects of power demand more power. The model is applicable to both African traditional religious and biblical sacrificial motivations and expectations from both worshippers and deities. With this positioning in mind, this study will now look at how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among Xhosa people.

12.1.1.3 How the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among Xhosa People

Among Xhosa people, the communicative power of sacrifices is seen during supplication blood sacrifices applicable in the case of national or tribal blood sacrifices that give empowerment or enablement for "rain-making, securing of the fertility of the land and crops, protection of the country against the lightning and the strengthening of the chief's army" (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:549). This communicative power of blood sacrifices is also seen during communion blood

sacrifices that enable communication with ancestors as gifts motivated by filial loyalty, or when ancestors request it through dreams. As a result of such blood sacrifices, Xhosa people would also enjoy good health, fertility, mill meal and cattle (Bigalke, 1969:97). The slaughtering of a goat pacifies a totemic ancestral animal (Olivier, 1976:40). The *Ukuvula umzi* sacrificial ritual communicates the power to inform ancestors of the fact that their descendants have moved to a new home or location, and to invite them to join them (Bigalke, 1969:80).

The *Camagusha* sacrificial ritual communicates the power to propitiate ancestors, depending on the wish of the homestead or the diviner's recommendation (Olivier, 1976:38). The *Ukunqula* sacrifice communicates the power to propitiate. This refers to a request that the supplicant addresses to the ancestors, requesting deliverance from misfortune. It also comports health, wellbeing and fertility supplications respectively, in connection with initiation and communion sacrificial rituals (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:329). Blood sacrifices therefore communicate power for the invocation of ancestors during blood sacrificial rituals, by calling their names as a way of communicating with them (Hunter, 1979:247). Among Xhosa people, the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen in the bellowing of the sacrificial animal. This serves as an essential element, since the cry constitutes the medium by which the praises spoken by ritual elders are transmitted to ancestors (Kuckertz, 1990:39).

The *intlukuhla* blood sacrificial ritual consists of cutting from the animal's stomach-protruding fat a piece to be consumed by fire and which constitutes an attracting smell for ancestors in the process. This ritual also shows how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among Xhosa people. A sense of mutual obligation, as well as mutual support features in Xhosa people's blood sacrificial rituals (Pauw, 1994:120). Finally, the communicative power of sacrifices among Xhosa people is seen in its strengthening of lineage solidarity (Sipuka, 2000:169). Having discussed some Xhosa sacrificial ideas, it is necessary to also indicate how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among Zulus and Tsongas.

12.1.1.4 How the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among Zulus

Among Zulu people, the blood sacrifice of domesticated animals such as black goats or sheep communicates power in order to end a severe drought. The sacrifice is offered to the python genie. The hornbill is also used for the same purpose. The sacrifice of an ox or goat communicates power in order to establish a dialogue with ancestors - a bona fide confession is a pre-requisite for this. The beauty and condition of the sacrifice are upheld (Berglund, 1975:228). Zulu cosmology testifies to the communicative power of blood sacrificial performances, whereby ancestors function as mediators between men and personal gods, and between God and the true Spirit. Libation, food offerings, holocausts, prayers and other rituals communicate power in order to maintain

contact with the dead (Van der Watt, 1982:77-78). Blood sacrificial rituals communicate power for maintaining a permanent link and communication between the living and ancestors - even a marriage plan has to be presented to the ancestors for approval (Mckitshoff, 1996:186-187).

Among Zulu people, blood sacrificial rituals communicate power to reinforce the vital link with ancestors who freely circulate among them (De Heusch, 1985:55). The bile and chyme communicate the cleansing and purification power of both people and utensils or sacrificial material (Ngubane, 1977:124-126). The purification process among Zulu people is centred on the digestive system, because the chyme possesses life-giving properties and plays an exclusive role in the purification of sacrifices, requiring no ritual cooking (Ngubane, 1977:126-130). The chyme enables people to recover the state of “whiteness” formerly lost because of broken prohibitions (Ngubane, 1977:18-25).

The bile is the true inscription of the sacrificial victim upon the sacrificer’s body, a sign that brings down the blessings of ancestors. The black sheep fulfills the role of a scapegoat. It is suffocated and buried far away from people’s settlements (Ngubane, 1977:119). It serves to end a drought and to ward off malefic effects of sorcery (De Heusch, 1985:62-63). All these show how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among the Zulu people. The aftermath of blood sacrificial rituals and some signs known to those involved become proof of the communicative power of blood sacrifices. This study will now consider how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among Tsonga people.

12.1.1.5 How the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among Tsonga people

Among Tsonga people, blood sacrificial rituals communicate power for casting out a pathogenic spirit, one which comes from outside the maternal or paternal lineage (De Heusch, 1985:83). The power to communicate with the spirit world is achieved through blood sacrificial rituals, as well as through prayer and divination.

12.1.1.8 How the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among modern Xhosa people

The communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen here in that, even in these modern times, South Africans, both leaders and ordinary people, are still clinging to animal blood sacrifices. There are some who have adhered to Christianity, but who still return to traditional blood sacrificial performances. Archbishop Buti’s call for the practice of animal blood sacrifices alongside the sacrifice of Christ shows to what extent people have been influenced and subdued by the power issuing from animal blood sacrificial rituals. In April 1999, Brenda Fassie, the Xhosa-speaking queen of pop music, slaughtered two cows, two goats and a sheep at

her Langebaan home, in order to thank her ancestors for her big comeback to the music world (Mtshali, 1999:15, 62).

On Thabo Mbeki's return to his home village after decades of exile in December 1998, according to the Daily Dispatch newspaper, he and his *Amazizi* clan members performed a cleansing ceremony in the kraal: two bulls brought for the party bolted before they were slaughtered (Hadland, 1999:133). This bolting was a good omen, and a sign that the ancestors were welcoming the blood sacrificial ritual. The ancestors communicated with the clan through the bulls' bolting. Therefore, the bulls, being media of communication, released the power to render interaction with the ancestors possible. The tenacious nature of Thabo Mbeki and his *Amazizi* clan towards their traditional religious beliefs in terms of blood sacrificial rituals is quite remarkable. The communicative power of sacrifice is seen in that the *Amazizi* clan today cannot help but shed animal blood in order to determine the will of the ancestors and to enjoy their manifold blessings.

In the modern Xhosa setting, the birth blood sacrificial ritual *imbeleko* has survived. Christians call it *imbeleko idinala y'umuntwana*, but it is still essentially the same as the traditional *imbeleko* (Raum, 1972:181). All initiation blood sacrifices are still observed in the modern Xhosa setting, except for *intonjane* (Lamla, 1971:34). The *Gcamisa* and *Ojisa* blood sacrificial rituals which are related to *Ukwaluka* are still performed. However, *Umugcamo* (informing the ancestors of the departure of the bride) is fading away (Raum, 1972:181). All contingent blood sacrificial rituals are still performed in the modern Xhosa context, except for supplication blood sacrificial rituals such as rain-making and seasonal blood sacrificial rituals, which are considered to be archaic. Some of the communion blood sacrifices such as *ukupha*, *izilo* and *ukutshayela* have suffered the same fate. Today, the most commonly performed blood sacrificial ritual is the thanksgiving one. According to Pauw, modern Xhosas ascribe more benevolence to ancestors than misfortune (Pauw, 1975:147).

Death blood sacrificial rituals such as *ukukhapha* (to send the deceased person off) and *ukhubuyisa* are still performed, but with some variations (Raum, 1972:183-184). These types of blood sacrifices maintain their traditional form or exhibit some modifications on account of their Christian influence. According to Manona, *ukukhapha* has been stripped of all its sacrificial significance, and it has now become just a "funeral meal" (Manona, 1981:35). Pauw says that the same ritual is now "ostensibly performed to provide food for the guests" (Pauw, 1975:177). He goes on to say that the intentions of blood sacrificial rituals today are sometimes confused or merged together (Pauw, 1975:175). This may be due to the growing ignorance of the various blood sacrificial rituals and the meanings associated with them (Manona, 1981:36, 38). Modern Xhosa people "interpret the ritual slaughtering for a newborn baby as a thanksgiving to the ancestors, more than as an invocation" (Pauw, 1975:175). It is therefore difficult to state exactly what modern Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals stand for (Sipuka, 2000:177).

Modern Xhosa Christians either minimise or eliminate the significance of sacrificial killings which are considered to be blood sacrifices. In the case of *imbeleko* and *ukukhapha*, these have been turned into “dinners”. The intention of Xhosa Christians to keep Xhosa traditional blood sacrifices alive while stripping them of their essential elements is not clear. A majority of Xhosa Christians continue to perform pure Xhosa blood sacrificial rituals while adhering to the beliefs regarding Christ’s absolute blood sacrifice. Thus, similar to the modern Xhosas in general, the belief and practice of blood sacrifices among Xhosa Christians is equally unclear (Sipuka, 2000:177, 178). To us, it is “mixed masalas”.

At this stage, this study can reiterate the fact that the overwhelmingly debilitating and enslaving power communicated by animal blood sacrifices in the Xhosa traditional setting still influences modern Xhosa people. Blood sacrifices still communicate the power to communicate with the spirit world, enjoy protection against malefic and malevolent spirits, enjoy good health and material blessings, as well as to have a progeny. Blood sacrifices provide power to appease angry ancestors, ward off the effects of witchcraft and sorcery, and for communion and reconciliation, propitiation and expiation, and invocation of the ancestors.

As has been mentioned earlier, the materialisation of results anticipated by those involved in traditional blood sacrificial rituals causes them to hold strongly onto them. Blood sacrifices permeate their entire lives. In this study’s focus group interviews, it was reported that while the blood of a slaughtered animal victim is pouring out, participants in the sacrificial performance chant “power, power, power”. Unlike the salvific power communicated through Old Testament covenantal sacrifices, African traditional blood sacrificial rituals communicate counterfeit power which hinders those involved from having a personal relationship with God, the creator (O’ Donovan, 1996:193). At this point, something still needs to be said about examples from elsewhere in Africa that were included in this dissertation.

12.1.1.9 How the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen elsewhere in Africa

Yoruba people know that the life of an animal is in their blood. When they offer blood, they know that they are offering the life of the animal to the divinity, with the intention that the power communicated through such a blood sacrifice will grant the possibility to have life in exchange, or to enjoy long life and prosperity and establish a bond with the supernatural order (Awolalu, 1973:90-91). They also apply the blood to their bodies in order to purify and strengthen them. They offer their blood sacrifices to the Supreme Being, as well as to a multitude of divinities, ancestral spirits and forces for various interactive benefits (Awolalu, 1973:91-92). For Ibibio people, a blood sacrifice is a means of communication with invisible beings (Ukpong, 1982:182). It is also a symbolic means of expressing friendship and communion, as well as of warding off evil spirits

(Ukupong, 1982:185). In this study's view, this clearly displays how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen among these two tribal groups in Nigeria. In the next sections, it will be shown how the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen in the New Testament, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

12.1.1.7 How the communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews

The communicative power of blood sacrifices is seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which had a perfect conformity to the will of God, and which emerged as the ideal model for all blood sacrifices. Old Testament blood sacrifices were imperfect - an example is the inability of the legal sacrificial system to grant perfection (Heb 7:19). The communicative power of the blood sacrifice of Jesus is made manifest in that it provides perfection to worshippers who draw near to God. This refers to the intimate relationship with God, in which by the new covenantal relationship through the blood of Jesus, consciences are cleansed and sins are really removed, resulting in sanctification (Attridge, 1989:269-272). Old Testament blood sacrifices had atoning, expiation and propitiation, as well as cleansing power, because they were divinely ordained and pointed to future redemption through Jesus Christ. However, they could not heal the worshipper from the consciousness of sin (Heb 10:2). Hebrews 9:9 speaks of the need to perfect consciences, because the purity that was granted by the power communicated by those sacrifices was sin-deep (Heb 9:13).

The unique, once and for all sacrifice of the new covenant has communicated a power that has proved to be more effective (Heb 10:22). The sacrifices of the Old covenant communicated power that could not remove sin. They kept on bringing people's iniquity and responsibility to mind (Hewitt, 1973:155). The one final, complete and perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ communicates the power that brings to believers' minds the new covenant that He established: "Your sins I will remember no more". The only perfect sacrifice of Jesus communicates the power that enables people to achieve proper results of blood sacrificial rituals (Attridge, 1989:272-273).

Purposely shed blood of animals could not take away sins. These typological sacrifices gained forgiveness and acceptance because they were performed in true repentance, with faith in God's method of salvation (Hewitt, 1973:155-156). The superiority of Christ as High Priest over Leviticus priests, and the inferiority of the Sinaitic covenant in comparison with the new and better covenant through the blood of Jesus, points to the communication of more power. Consequently, it can be said that the blood sacrifice of a rational and spiritual being is superior to the blood sacrifice of dumb creatures. These sacrifices communicated less effective power due to their imperfections, most of the time lacking repentance as a platform for their performance by worshippers.

Christ's self-sacrifice, in fulfillment of God's will, communicated abundant power for consecration and sanctification, bringing worshippers into a relationship that made them eternally fit for fellowship with God and to be regarded as worshipping people. This is because the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the most valuable, valid and powerful sacrifice, much more so than the numerous blood sacrifices of the Old Testament's covenantal legal system. It follows that Jesus' blood sacrifice has communicated even more supernatural power, in order to achieve His Father's divine requirements for His eternal redemptive plan (Stedman, 1992:105). By virtue of fulfilling all the divine requirements, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ displayed superior power and therefore provided perpetual perfection and sanctification, and abrogated the old cultic blood sacrificial system (Attridge, 1989:287-282). Jesus' once and for all blood sacrifice communicated power for soteriological, psychological and sociological benefits. From this it can be deduced that Christians endowed with spiritual as well as physical life, and having great thinking capacities, may greatly impact on society in general by helping to reduce societal evils and curb the crime rate, for instance, in South Africa. The tragedy is that this does not seem to reflect the reality of our South African situation. With this in mind, this study will now take a look at how the communicative power of blood sacrifice is seen in the church today.

12.1.1.8 How the communicative power of blood sacrifice is seen in the Church Today

A paradigm shift in biblical sacrifices is evident, and a human sacrifice which presents extrinsic similarities to other human sacrifices performed in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa has turned things around (Mfusi, 1996:193-194). Jesus, as a human sacrifice, paradoxically discontinued the Leviticus sacrificial and covenantal system, and He became the mediator of a new covenant ratified through His blood, meeting the requirements of divine will, purification and eternal redemption, forgiveness and salvation for mankind (Attridge, 1989:280). The Epistle to the Hebrews shows the inadequacies of animal sacrifices. These inadequacies leave worshippers desiring a better sacrifice and covenant. The uniqueness and finality of the willful, obedient self-sacrifice of Jesus brought about other types of sacrifice performances. These are known as experiential expressions of the inner man, as a result of the effect of Christ's blood sacrifice (Bruce, 1991:384).

Believers offer God verbal expressions of their hearts' gratitude, as well as the sacrifice of good works, mutual support and sharing of material and spiritual gifts, thus achieving the biblical communion of saints. Desilva suggests that the writer of Hebrews leaves us with "values of 'wellbeing' to God placed prominently before our eyes" (Desilva, 13:16, 21). "Every arena of life becomes an appropriate venue for offering sacrifices of thanksgiving to God, and all life is rendered sacred, as it is lived out of the centre of gratitude to

God...Nevertheless, 'sacrifices of praise' inside the sanctuary cannot be separated from the 'confession of His name' in the market place"(Desilva, 2000:526). The response of gratitude should also move us to obedient service. "This service is directed not toward God, but rather toward other human beings as an extension of God's generosity toward us and witness to the same. Every act of doing good and sharing with others what God has given us constitutes the liturgical offering that pleases God" (Desilva, 2000:527).

Therefore, it all boils down to the blood sacrifice of Christ. The supernatural power communicated through His blood sacrifice has transformed millions of lives today of people known as Christians or His followers or His witnesses, starting with the transformation of the lives of Jesus' disciples. The universality of the Christian experience shows how the communicative power of the sacrifice of Jesus is viewed. Lives that have been transformed in Christ also have an impact on their respective communities through sacrifices of praise to God, and through these people's services, sacrificial works to fellow human beings, as well as through their communion as saints. These types of sacrifices communicate power that first attracts God and brings Him to dwell in the praises of His people. Believers' sacrifices of praise also communicate power that attracts people universally and from all walks of life. The multitude of conversions and changed lives of people from all walks of life and professions, and from all five continents of this world, all countries and all religious groups, including world philosophers, constitute an irrefutable repertoire of irrevocable testimonies on how the communicative power of Jesus' blood sacrifice is seen in the history of the church and today (McDowell, 1990:326-359).

In the heuristic framework of this dissertation, the researcher made it clear that this study's descriptions of Christianity and African traditional religion would be very brief, and would only serve as a positioning and background, and to sensitise readers to the diversity of both Christianity and African traditional religions in Africa (South Africa), since the purpose of this study is to see how people from Africa could understand how to link Christianity and African traditional religions as far as blood sacrifices are concerned. In approaching the exegesis on the sacrifice of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it was specified that the purpose is to create a Christian framework, so that people from Africa can use the Epistle to the Hebrews to better understand their culture, in order to engage themselves with biblical material. While comparing information on blood sacrifices from both sides in the course of this study's investigations, the researcher did not depart from the belief that everything is the same, that one rules over the other or that one influences the other, but has endeavoured to place one next to the other and to see where they overlap. This is so that one can understand that, in those overlapping areas, one can look at biblical material from the perspective of African religions, after people from African traditional religions have understood these aspects, and a dialectical discussion can therefore then take place.

This study can now ask the following questions: What do we learn from this? What recommendations can be made from this study, and what are its contributions to the scientific field? Thus far, this study's findings have confirmed the hypothesis. In all the contexts considered in this dissertation, it has been found that blood sacrifices communicate powers, some of which impact on and captivate those involved in them in a significant manner. This is true of the Old Testament, African traditional religion and the New Testament, especially the Epistle to the Hebrews, with regard to blood sacrificial rituals. Four important points are worth considering:

- The Epistle to the Hebrews sanctions the discontinuity of Old Testament animal blood sacrifices by declaring them invalid and ineffective.
- Up to this day, African traditional religion sanctions the continuity of both animal and human blood sacrifices.

The findings of this study reveal that the continuity of both animal and human sacrifices in African traditional religion (SA: Xhosas, Zulus and Tsongas, and elsewhere in Africa) seems to confirm the fact that mysterious powers are released through this medium of communication (animal and human blood sacrifices) and reciprocal power and miracle-performing benefactions are bestowed on the receivers, or deities enhance the indelible commitment of worshippers to their object of worship, which seems to confirm this dissertation's hypothesis. Spencer (1997) says: "In various African countries, a revival of traditional religions is happening under the political cultural rubric of 'national identity', and with them the clandestine human sacrifices are being promoted. Particularly onerous to Africans are the divine emanations termed as lesser divinities and the ancestral spirits who represent human concerns to the Supreme-Being. These lay great blood burdens on humanity" (Spencer, 1997:193).

- The Epistle to the Hebrews stipulates that Jesus' blood sacrifice is now the only valuable one, and is superior to all other animal and human blood sacrifices. One can infer from this that Jesus' blood sacrifice has automatically discontinued African traditional religious blood sacrifices, both animal and human, because it is superior to them as God's self-sacrifice for all mankind.
- Within Christian communities in South Africa (among the Xhosas), some people hold onto a syncretistic belief system: they are loyal to African traditional religious blood sacrifices, along with Jesus' blood sacrifice.

These constitute some of the real challenges we are faced with today. If one reflects upon the interactive communication between the Deity (Patron) and the client (Neyrey, 2005:481-492), as specified earlier in this dissertation, one learns that the more intimately and longer people are caught up in these stimulating and mutually influential, demand-response, interactive blood sacrificial rituals, the more difficult it becomes to part with them, which seems to confirm this study's findings in the case of the Xhosa, Zulu and Tsonga people of South Africa and elsewhere in Africa. How can one now convincingly dissuade those who are still

loyal to African traditional religious blood sacrifices from them, and at the same time persuade them of the all-sufficient and superior blood sacrifice of Jesus? Truly speaking, there is no quick or easy answer to this question. How does one begin? What strategies should be used, and what recommendations should be made?

- The numerous similarities evoked in this dissertation between African traditional religious blood sacrificial rituals and biblical blood sacrifices can probably serve as contact points for people from African traditional religions to enter into the Old and New Testament, that is, the Epistle to the Hebrews.
- In other words, these similarities may be used as a common ground in helping people from African traditional religions to appreciate divine revelation in matters of blood sacrifices in general, and the sacrifice of Jesus in particular.
- Furthermore, the fact that African (South African) people who are loyal to African traditional religious blood sacrificial rituals address their sacrifices to the Supreme Being (the God of the Bible) through a multiplicity of intermediaries such as ancestral spirits, gods and lesser gods, can be positively exploited, since the Supreme-Being in both religious settings would serve as the common denominator.
- The fact that both people from Africa and Christianity (people from the Bible, especially the Epistle to the Hebrews) share one single Supreme Being to whom all their blood and non-blood sacrifices are made, could also be a very important aspect in the dialectical discussion between people from the Bible and those from Africa. The strategy applied by Paul at Athens (Ac 17:22-23) would be the most applicable in this situation. People from Africa must be encouraged and carefully guided in order to understand and appreciate the fact that they would be in better shape if they approached the Supreme Being through one mediator, the God-Man, Jesus Christ. This study acknowledges that this call for a lucid and clairvoyant undertaking should be exempt from any boastful, prejudicial or unfounded condemnation of our dialogue partners from Africa. Rather, one needs to display proper interest as a good listener, and exhibit a desire to learn from them as one lovingly and clearly reveals the biblical truth to them, as related to biblical blood sacrifices (Old Testament) in general, and Jesus' blood sacrifice (New Testament) in particular, especially as described in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In order to attain these objectives, the following may apply:

- One can organise interesting conferences on local levels, starting with rural areas and populous locations on a provincial and national level, including local, provincial and national stadiums where dialogue partners from the Bible or Christianity can meet with their counterparts from Africa (South Africa) or African traditional religions in a conducive and respectful atmosphere, in order to publicise the truth with regard to blood sacrifices

and to educate their respective communities of belief, and to reach a point of mutual understanding and co-operation.

- The truth regarding the blood sacrifice of Jesus and its effect must be carefully, lovingly, skillfully and scholarly instilled in the minds of the people. Hosea 4:6b reads: “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge”. Knowledge in relation to God’s truth in connection with blood sacrifices is more valuable than gold or diamonds. It liberates people and spares them from the dangers brought about by ignorance.
- Forums for amicable dialogue should be multiplied and intensified in primary and high schools, including all academic institutions, where the majority of youth can be reached. It goes without saying that financing organisations and Christian churches, as well as para-church organisations, could be called on to contribute.
- Therefore, given the offensive-rescue character of this enterprise, various media of communication must be used to reach as many people as possible: drama and role-playing, as well as modelling of blood sacrificial performances as related to both biblical and African traditional religions, focus group interviews and the use of audio-visual equipment. Those within Christian churches in South Africa (Africa) who display a dualistic attitude with regard to blood sacrifices, that is, who express loyalty to both African traditional religious blood sacrifices and to the blood sacrifice of Jesus, would - after a thorough and clear revelation of the truth of the Bible in terms of blood sacrifices - be encouraged not to continue wavering between these two opinions (1Ki 18:21b). If African traditional religious blood sacrifices constitute what they acknowledge to be the truth, then they should adhere to them alone, and if biblical blood sacrifices are what they consider to be the truth, then they should only abide by them. Adhering to both signifies confusion in a person’s beliefs.
- In the last analysis, the researcher recommends this: if one is fully convinced that one is carrying the true, uncompromised message from God, intended for all mankind, which brings eternal salvation, redemption and forgiveness of sins through the one and only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, one needs to organise a contemporary, South African (African) “Mount Carmel” contest, in which one would hope to witness divine manifestation in support of God’s truth.
- It is high time that academic, theological exercises are translated into practical beliefs, whereby one could use this occasion to call upon all God-fearing biblical scholars to take the fruits of their intellectual exercises and academic pride from universities’ library shelves and archives to their congregations and communities, in order to teach them. One could educate them about the truth and unwavering faith that only Jesus’ blood sacrifice, which grants them power for psychological, soteriological and sociological benefits, meeting the real needs of mankind forever, can achieve. This will indeed help to solve the present thorny problems of our congregations and communities.

- We desperately need contemporary, erudite theologians who will make the sacrifice of lovingly and convincingly proclaiming abroad that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ communicates the most sufficient and greatest power ever, in order to fully influence man and his community forever, and that no other animal blood sacrifice will ever be needed. It is truly believed that if our theologising fails to help solve the problem of the hour in our churches and communities, both our Christian communities and society will sink into the stormy, skeptical sea of religious pluralism, which denies the monopoly of truth and salvation to Jesus' blood sacrifice and Christianity. It follows that we ourselves would be running the grave risk of confusing not only ourselves, but also our respective churches and communities, being engulfed within a inescapable pit of skepticism and desperation.

If one fails to intelligibly denounce and expose the fallacies contained in the revivalism of animal blood sacrifices, as well as the confusing desiderata propagated by the contemporary trend of religious pluralism in connection with the sacrifice of Calvary, it goes without saying, therefore, that if one chooses to conceal the truth, one knows experientially and intellectually that, out of sheer, complex and unfounded fear, the blood of all our people will be on our hands (Ezk 3:16-21). There is such a great need to influence our churches, as well as our communities, by informing them of the truth that is revealed through our theological studies.

In this study's attempt to discuss the communicative power of blood sacrifices, the fact has been acknowledged that this pioneering work has not been exhaustive. Given the fact that, in theological studies today, contributions to science amount to differences in insights, the contribution of this dissertation to science boils down to the fact that it is the only study that has attempted to discuss the topic of the communicative power of blood sacrifices from a predominantly South African perspective, with special reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews. It goes without saying that various insights provided throughout this dissertation constitute factual and valuable contributions to science in general, and to the field of theological studies in particular. It is the researcher's hope that unexplored areas of this topic will form the subject of future research.

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