

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.