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Zionism and Faith-Healing in Rhodesia: Aspects of African Independent Churches

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Zionism and Faith-Healing in Rhodesia

Aspects of African Independent Churches

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Zionism and Faith-Healing in Rhodesia
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Zionism and Faith-Healing in Rhodesia
Aspects of African Independent Churches
Translated from the Dutch by V A. February
To Rev. Samuel Mutendi
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This paper is mainly the result of the fascination with which I observed the Zionist faith-healing practices while studying the significant recruitment techniques of the Southern Shona prophetic movements. Had it not been for the goodwill and sustained, genuine friendship of Rev. Samuel Mutendi, who allowed me to stay at Zion City for several months and to attend whatever ritual activity I preferred to observe, this paper could not have been written. To him and his followers at Zion City a special word of thanks. I am also indebted to a great number of Ndaza Zionist bishops – especially David Masuka Jnr. and Andreas Shoko – for their kindness and co-operation.

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M.L.D.
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Since the end of the last century, Christianity has been characterized by rapid growth in the membership of the Independent African Churches. According to Dr. Barret, there are at present more than 6,000 of these churches with a total membership of approximately 7 million to be found in more than 275 African tribes. A remarkable fluctuation underscores the growth of the whole movement, viz. the annual dying out of smaller groups and the springing up of new movements. This is not a balanced process. Towards 1967, for every 10 to 12 movements which died out, about a 100 new churches came into being. They attracted almost 100,000 new members per year. If we add the population growth and the new-comers recruited by the already existing churches, then the whole movement of the Independent African Churches grows at a rate of approximately 3-4,000 members per year. At this rate of development the combined Protestant and Catholic membership on the African continent will be surpassed in the future.

In South Africa especially, the statistical information seems to point at a rapid increase in numbers. From 1913 to 1948, the total number of churches increased from 30 to 880. Already in 1955 more than a thousand of these churches had petitioned for recognition from the state and in 1960 the number of movements had already exceeded 2,000. If one compares this rising membership with that of the Methodist Church, the largest Mission Church in S.A., then it appears that between the years 1940 and 1960, the Independent Church members
increased from 9.6% to 20%, while the Methodist membership remained static at a mere 12% of the total indigenous Bantu population.

The above-mentioned rapid growth gave cause to intensive questioning by research workers and missionaries into the factors influencing the rise of these Independent Churches. Right through, research workers have tried to trace the complexity of the causes of origin to its basic aspects. Thus in the descriptions of Sundkler and Balandier, with regard to the S.A. Churches and Messianism in the Congo, there is a sharp emphasis on socio-political factors. The fundamental causes are sought in social disruption, e.g. the apartheid policy, the occupation of tribal areas by Europeans and racial tension. Balandier reminds us that Messianism in the Congo has its origin in a ‘situation colonial’, in which the colonised are done an injustice by the colonisers. Lucy Mair goes even further by calling the Independent Churches “a simple correlation between the appearance of cults and the absence of political representation.”

In this context, the Independent Churches are sketched primarily as political protest movements against the background of African Nationalism and colonial paternalism.

H. Kuper and W. Knoob consider the causes of origin to be primarily related to ethnical factors. Kuper regards the process of breaking away and the formation of new churches in Swaziland as characteristic of the traditional tribal structure. The process by which related groups break away to establish their independence after the death of a head of a family is a traditionally accepted phenomenon which is transplanted onto churchlife without any qualms. According to Knoob “wird das Idealbild der Grossfamilie auf die Kirchengemeinde übertragen wie früher auf Klan und Stamm.” Thus the process of breaking away and building up of congregations is a reflection of the ethnical background. Dr. Barret, on the other hand, sees the most important stimulating cause in “the single failure of missions at one small point, to demonstrate the Biblical concept of love as sensible understanding towards others as equals.” He indicts missionaries on charges of lack of understanding, paternalism and unsympathetic behaviour in their attack on indigenous religious practices.
A recent penetrative study of a number of Independent Shona Churches in Rhodesia reveal that not only the above named factors, but also many another, play a role in the origin of these churches. In S.A. and Rhodesia the political climate was of such a nature as to evoke reaction and protest. Furthermore, lack of understanding and the sometimes austere rules of the missionaries in cases of polygamy, the use of beer and ancestor worship, were in no mean way responsible that the members of the Mission Churches broke away and joined up with the Independent Churches. The Separatist leadership is attractive because it has successfully adapted itself to the ethnic patterns. Here, responsibility is not only ordered hierarchically according to the seniority principle in the traditional kinship structure, but discipline, too, is adapted according to the traditionally accepted norms. This short treatise, however, does not concern itself with a representative analysis of the factors of origin among the Independent Churches, neither with a careful evaluation of the reactions of those persons interviewed, to the approach of the European Missions, no matter how important this aspect might have been. It aims, rather, at outlining the most specific power of attraction of Shona Zionism for the indigenous population; in short to describe the Zionist Church in Rhodesia as a 'Healing Institute'

The term Shona Zionism is taken to refer to: the Zionist Christian Church of Bishop Mutendi with its Headquarters in the Bikita Reserve, and a membership of more than 10,000 spread all over Rhodesia; the Zionist Apostolic Faith Mission of Bishop Andreas Shoko with its Headquarters in the Chibi Reserve and 5 to 7,000 adherents concentrated chiefly in the southern reserves of Rhodesia; the Zionist Apostolic Church of Bishop David Masuka, with its Headquarters in Bikita and appr. 5,000 followers in South-Eastern Rhodesia, and also numerous splinter groups, e.g. the Zionist Reformed Church and the African Zion Church of Jesus. For purposes of distinction I shall henceforth refer to the Mutendi Zionists (Z.C.C.) in contrast to the Ndaza Zionists. The latter is a collective name for all groups – among whom those of Shoko and Masuka – where the use of long robes and sanctified cords (ndaza) are prevalent. This distinction is used by the Shona themselves.
The life histories of 223 adult Zionists seem to indicate that the Zionist Churches recruit large numbers as a result of their prophetic healing activities. From Jan. 1965 to June 1967 interviews of a three-pronged nature were conducted with the Mutenzi Zionists and the Ndaza Zionists, viz. at Church Headquarters (14% of the people interviewed), among the local community in the Chingombe district (70% of those interviewed) and in the urban area of Fort Victoria (16%). The aim was to get a representative sample of the South-Eastern Shona Church members in the urban and the rural areas. It appeared that approximately 50% of the persons interviewed had joined the Zionist Church when they, or one of their blood relatives, had fallen ill. The majority implicitly believed in complete healing effected through the aiding powers of these Zionists prophets. They joined during treatment by a prophet in a local church-community, in serious cases during treatment at the Headquarters of a principal leader, or shortly after recuperation. These facts also vindicate the findings of research workers elsewhere in Africa. Sundkler refers to a Zulu prophet who, during a gathering, spontaneously calls out: “This is not a church but a hospital.” He personally finds “the healing issue the strongest influence in drawing people from the Ethiopian and Mission Churches into the Zionist fold.” In West Africa too, Mitchell invariably received the following stereotyped answer when he wanted to know why a person of the Aladura (Zionist) Churches came into its fold; “I was sick and was healed by this church or prophet.” While diagnosis and therapy may differ from area to area, especially if one takes into account the diverse traditional backgrounds, it is safe to assume that the primary importance of faith healing is an integral part of Zionism in Africa, South of the Sahara.
1 The Role of Healing in the Zionist Recruitment Technique

From the inception it is very important for any Zionist prophet leader to gain renown as a faith healer. After his baptism in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit takes hold of him, sometimes after years of waiting. 'Speaking with tongues' and prophecies characterise the presence of the Spirit. The favoured one is always granted the power to exorcise evil spirits or to heal through the laying on of hands. Of the three most important Shona Zionist leaders – Mutendi, Andreas Shoko and David Masuka – who, as migrant labourers in the early twenties, came into contact with Sotho Zionism in South Africa, Mutendi and David received the charism of the Spirit immediately after joining the church. Shortly afterwards they started with the recruitment of members in Rhodesia. Andreas Shoko, on the other hand, had to wait for eight years before the gift of the Holy Spirit became his portion. It is significant that only after this did he gain prominence as a church leader. He regarded himself as unqualified to embark on extensive campaigns before he was in possession of the predicate of being a Zionist Church leader. During these years of expectation, his dreams strengthened him in a belief that the Spirit would one day enter into him.

The most important of these dreams reflects his aspirations as future faith-healer. “I dreamt I was climbing a high mountain” he narrated. “On reaching the peak, I saw a pack of baboons. Petrified by my white face, all the baboons tumbled over the ledge, so that I found them all dead at the foot of the mountain. When I related the dream to the Zionist prophets the fol-
lowing day, they interpreted it as a promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit, after which I would expel many an evil spirit from the sick.”

It is obvious that the ‘white face’ and the ‘baboons’ represent the presence of the Holy Spirit and the evil spirits respectively.

Mutendi became the most influential of the three Zionist leaders. The historical development of his Church is very carefully recorded in the “Zion Christian Church Rungano” (Rungano = history). Its contents appears in the biblical form of chapter and verse. Next to the Bible, the contents of this book constitute their very own ‘canonized history’ with strong moralising implications. Mutendi’s healing wonders are also recorded and directly related to the initial phase of the extension of his Church in Rhodesia.

The introductory chapters explain the relation between the Zionist Church and the ancient Christian Community. It is followed by an historical description, of which the first chapter already carries the sub-title “Wonder of Magara”:

Chapter 16:3 “After these things he [Mutendi], started to spread the gospel from village to village. At Magara he came upon a sick man who was dying, but ‘Wedenga’ [lit. He who is from heaven, i.e. God] helped the sick one and healed him through the hand of Samuel Mutendi.

v. 4: The people were very much amazed that this church possessed the power of healing the sick and the power of preaching. Even to this very day we see that the sick are being healed.

v. 5: We also read in the book of James, Chap. 5: 14-20: “Is any one sick among you? Let him summon the elders of the congregation and let them pray over him ”

Chapter 18 deals exclusively with the wonders of Mutendi. At Mupamawonde, a village not far from the present head-
quarters in Bikita, he came upon a certain woman, Kami, who for more than 10 years could bear no children. Laying on of hands and prayer resulted in a speedy pregnancy. Impressed by the powers of preaching, faith-healing and the granting of fertility, 25 inhabitants of Mupamawonde allowed themselves to be initiated through the 'Baptism of John' into the Z.C.C.

Even resurrection is possible:

Chapter 18:2  “On a certain day a messenger came to Mutendi with the message that Miriam, one of the church-goers, had died after falling from a tree. He said, “Come and bury one of our church-goers who has died.” And they both departed.

v. 3:  When they came to Rukuni, the coffin was already in preparation, but Petrus Mamvura, the prophet, had in the meantime given an order that they should not bury the deceased, for she would be raised from the dead. He told the people, “Mwari [God], has revealed to me that He wishes to demonstrate His power to the people so that they might know that He is truly God and that He sends His messenger [Mutendi] to announce His Kingship.”

v. 4:  Then Samuel Mutendi said to the parents of the child, “We may not bury this child for she is not truly dead.” Thereupon all the vakuru [old men] angrily retorted, saying, “You are imper­tent! How will you resurrect a child who has been dead so long?” And they threatened him with guns saying that they would shoot him if he did not succeed in raising the child from the dead. But he, Samuel Mutendi, went into the house with the corpse, to pray for the child, while the others waited outside. As was the practise, there were guns to fire shots during the funeral procession, because she was the headman Rukuni’s daughter.
The men with guns kept on saying, “If you don’t succeed in resurrecting the child today, we shall shoot you.” Outside the believers also prayed until Mwari had caused a mighty work to come to pass by raising the child from the dead. This was proof of the omnipotence of God. Then Samuel gave back the child to her parents. And all the people, heathens and believers, believed in God.”

From the passages cited, it is apparent that Mutendi always attributes the performance of healing wonders to the power of God, as if to say that the honour for such deeds belongs to Mwari. He himself is part of the wonder only in so far as he, as the munhu vaMwari (the man of God), is being used. Yet to the Shona, the faith-healing wonders constitute the most important reality in bringing them to an acceptance of this man’s mission.

The Zionists themselves stress the central importance of their faith healing practices by referring to the work of Jesus Christ. Often one hears them saying, “Jesus would never have had such a following if he had not given so much attention to the sick.” To what extent Mutendi really succeeded in healing the sick is of little importance in this context; more significant is the fact that, right from the inception, his followers were convinced of his ability to intercede with God on their behalf. This faith worked infectiously and resulted in a flock of sick people coming from all over Rhodesia to ‘Zion City’. In this respect the development of the Z.C.C., and to a lesser extent the Ndaza Zionist Movement, bear close resemblance to the growth of Ngunzism in the Congo of which Andersson writes, “his [Kimbangu’s] faith-cures gradually became the most important feature of the movement – the main objective of the masses who thronged to his meetings was presumably the healing of the sick rather than the Gospel expounded by Kimbangu.”

As in Kimbangu’s case, Mutendi too did not solely confine his activities to faith-healing. He no doubt realized and exploited the importance of faith-healing in the recruitment of new members. Yet, in the first place, he wanted to preach the gospel and call upon his fellow Africans to be converted. In Chap. 15
of the Rungano it is explicitly stated that Mutendi began his task in Rhodesia by spreading the gospel. He had brought a new message (Shoko itsva) as has never been heard in Rhodesia (15:1). The new message, as he saw it, contained two central truths, viz. the baptism of John in Jordan (John 3) as a precondition to beatification and the subsequent process of possession by the Holy Spirit (Luke 3). In his own preachings faith-healing featured less prominently. It was relevant only in so far as it was the manifestation of Spirit possession. Even today Mutendi’s sermons seldom refer to faith-healing. He still regularly exercises the laying on of hands and the blessing of water. Yet, he himself does not testify about those cases of healing through miracles. Instead he allows his subordinate leaders and women to witness about the healing miracles during sermons. After all, these people do not only wish to express their recognition of, but also their respect to ‘the man of God’, who represents all curative powers.

Whatever Mutendi’s personal aims were, the main motive of the ever-increasing visits of the Shona to the Zionist headquarters was the curing of the sick. This soon effected the pattern of church expansion. At the beginning, Mutendi was constantly out on campaigns (rwendo) or making long-distance trips to visit the sick. But the throng of sick people, barren women and later even chiefs, restricted his mobility and forced him to concentrate on the extension of his settlement ‘Zion City’ – also called Moriah or Jerusalem. Now the sick came to him. As the various tasks of Independent Church leaders came to be more clearly demarcated, he could increasingly depend on a number of reliable, resident prophets to pay attention to the less serious patients, while he personally treated the more critical cases. In the course of time Mutendi’s prophetic function, when it concerned the diagnoses of illnesses by the Holy Spirit, was transferred to junior delegates. More and more he concentrated on Church organization, the consolidation of an ever-expanding sphere of influence, interviews with Church leaders of remote communities and sporadic visits to chiefs affiliated to his Church. In this way Mutendi’s leadership came to resemble that of the Ethiopian Churches, which in its Church organization bears closer resemblance to the Protestant Mission
Churches than the Zionist Churches. According to Mutendi himself, the prophetic task is the domain of the youthful members (basa ravaduku).

The change in leadership does not mean that faith-healing recedes as a factor of importance during recruitment. The testimonies of his patients and the yearly campaigns launched by his vafundisi (ministers) and evangelists all over the country, directly after the three big ‘Passover’ (Pasika) Feasts at Moriah, further kept alive Mutendi’s reputation as a faith-healer. In the sermons of these leaders the man of God with all his charismatic capacities is of central importance. The campaign has a two-fold purpose: on the one hand to visit the less accessible communities and inform adherents about the recent developments at Moriah, on the other, to recruit new members for the church.

During one of these campaigns in May 1965, I accompanied Mufundisi Ezekiah through the Chibi reserve. I could thus follow his preaching from village to village. An analysis of the contents of his sermons reveals that he never hesitated in portraying Mutendi as a symbol of undaunted courage in his dealings with the European administration, as a worker of miracles, a giver of health or rain. During the final gathering of about 300 people on Sunday afternoon, 23rd May 1965, the campaign came to a climax with a sermon by Ezekiah based on Matthew 10:1.

"The disciples of Jesus were sent to spread the word and heal the sick. They received strength to drive out evil spirits and heal all ailments. Before Mutendi, Masuka and Shoko began their work here in Rhodesia, we did not know that the Jordan existed, or that man could be healed through the laying on of hands. Even evil spirits are expelled through the laying on of hands. At present everything is possible through the laying on of hands! All illnesses are being cured. Barren women bear children. For men who have no success with women, prayers are said. I know of a man, older than myself, who wanted to have a wife; I prayed for him and six months later he was married. In the light of all these miracles we cannot entertain the objections of our opponents [other churches]. They are like unto pregnant women who refuse porridge (mhunga)
or vomit at the sight of it, but who after the birth of the child ask for this very nourishment."

After the service the sick who came for the laying on of hands by Ezekiah queued up. As the representative of Mutendi, Ezekiah carries a piece of sanctified paper with which he blesses the very many bottles of water brought along by the Zionists. This blessed water is later used for purification purposes, exorcism and medicinal treatment. After the members who come under the influence of Ezekiah’s preaching have been baptized in the Jordan (nearest river or pool), Ezekiah prepares to leave for Moriah, where he must report on the life of the community and the number of new members in Chibi.

A few fragments from the personal experiences of Zionists interviewed illustrate the importance of faith healing in drawing new members into the Zionist fold.

Bishop N. C., a Ndaza Zionist in the Gutu area, 55 years of age with 3 years of primary school education, relates: “I became a Zionist because my children were constantly sick. Two of them had to visit the hospital regularly and I became tired of undertaking the long journey ever so often. So I took them to David Masuka, where the Zionists prayed for them and they were healed. David advised me to visit one of his prophets living nearer my home, should the children have a relapse. After I had joined, I for the first time had the feeling that I was truly a Christian. Previously I, too, had been sick and had dreamt that a man with a long robe had laid his hands on me. When I joined David Masuka’s Church, I realized that the dream was a portent of things to come. The Dutch Reformed Church do not accord the African recognition as a human being. The missionaries even close their doors when they eat. The Zionists differ from them in this respect, because we regard each other as truly God—created Africans. Therefore we have a wonderful church. We do not employ medicines. Yet many Dutch Reformed Church members worship the ancestors and consult the ngangas [traditional diviners], or run to the hospitals in cases of emergency. If you ask my mother, she will tell you that she is a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. But we know that she is at the same time a practising nganga with a shavi spirit.”

Deacon S. M., a Ndaza Zionist, 45 years of age and with 3
years primary schooling, was afflicted by ancestral spirits (*midzimu*). He said: "I was a member of the Dutch Reformed Church with 2 years of catechism, but as yet unbaptized. I found no sign in the Bible that one should go to a hospital when indisposed; only that one should pray. When my children fell ill, I decided to take them to the Zionists for the laying on of hands and prayer. Before that time, the *midzimu* [ancestral spirits] had never given my family a moment's peace. I am convinced that if I had remained with the D.R.C., or had joined the Roman Catholic Church, these *midzimu* would never have left us.

But now that the Zionist prophets have prayed for me and my children, the spirits have subsided. Our problems are solved."

Minister (mufundisi) A, a Mutendi Zionist from the Chibi area with 5 years primary education, had earlier undergone an operation to his legs at Morgenster, the main mission-station of the Dutch Reformed Church in Rhodesia. On return to the reserve, the leg would not heal completely. Then the Zionists gave him an 'injection' to draw the water from his leg. He recovered. In 1951 he joined the Z.C.C. and, shortly afterwards, was appointed local leader of the Chibi congregation by Mutendi. Of his recovery he says: "Before the curative treatment I was a *mutariri* (caretaker) of the Dutch Reformed Church. I recall that at that time I, accompanied by other D.R.C. members, went to a group of Zionists to forbid them from luring our members away. That very same night, in a dream, the Zionist Spirit entered into me. Yet I purposely tried to forget about it until I underwent treatment at the hands of the Zionist prophets. Through their healing of my leg they had convinced me and subsequently I joined their Church. I became a true Christian only after baptism in the Jordan. After joining them, I received the great power [simba guru] to heal others through the laying on of hands and prayer. We receive this power from Mutendi, whom we honour and fear."

Prophet N.M., a Mutendi Zionist, 40 years old and with 3 years primary schooling, is a regular inhabitant of Zion City for over 5 years. He relates: "I worked in Fort Victoria when I fell ill in 1950. The symptoms were regular spells of dizziness. I was admitted to hospital but they could not cure me. So I was brought here to Moriah. After a few weeks I was cured. Before
I departed, I was baptized, because I feared lest the illness would return if I did not join the church. I got married in 1959 and shortly afterwards became stricken with paralysis. My family transported me from hospital to hospital in Fort Victoria, Ndanga and Salisbury. I consulted several ngangas and must admit that at the time I was no proper Zionist. I was carried here in 1961 in a critical state.

Through the treatment of the Zionists I gradually improved. Since then I have remained here and paid only short periodic visits home. My wife works on the fields of Mutendi to provide for our needs. Three of my offspring also dwell here. The paralysis is slowly disappearing and I hope to walk again some day. The prophets have diagnosed my sickness as being caused by my elder brother (mukoma), who has bewitched (kuroya) me. Our father is deceased. When I asked my mukoma for my share of the cattle for my bride-price, he became irate and decided to bewitch me. I became lame soon after reaching home.

At present I harbour no grudge against my brother but I pray that he, too, will find entry into this church through the Jordan. My brothers still worship the ancestors. A short while ago my departed father appeared to me in a dream. His anger was roused as a result of the enmity among his sons. I recounted my dream to Mutendi, because I could not but escape the feeling that the spirits were harassing me. After he had prayed for me, I had no more visitations from the spirits. In this way the man of God keeps the evil spirits at bay. I wear a strip of sanctified cloth round my neck to shield me against the evil spirits. Mutendi obtains his power directly from God because he was sent by God and not by mortals.”

In some respects the examples quoted above are representative of the majority of people who came to join the Church through faith-healing. Of the four, Minister A. is the best educated, with 5 years of primary schooling. Among the ranks of the Zionists the educational level is generally low. The most advanced members can lay claim to only 6-8 years of schooling. High school training is the preserve of the select few. This results in a deficient knowledge of the anatomy of the human body and a correspondingly greater receptivity to the traditional interpretation of the causes of illness of which the Zionist
prophets make liberal use.

In these circles a diagnosis which is based on the widely accepted African belief in the personal causation of all ailments and misfortunes – such personal forces being the neglected family spirits, malignant alien spirits, witches or sorcerers – is both understandable and acceptable. Moreover, these semi-literate people have a scant knowledge of European medicines, which in any case they identify with African medicines, only to reject both on Zionist doctrinal grounds in the end. The Shona concept 'mushonga', in fact, covers medicaments, i.e. from the most tested serum of the Western medical man to the most harmful toxin of a sorcerer. A literal interpretation by the Zionists of the New Testament, eg. Matthew 10, against their traditional African background, which forges a link between mushonga and ancestral worship as seen in the therapy of the medicine man, cannot but lead to a rejection of both. The use of medicine, and idolatry – for the Zionist, ancestral worship is synonymous with what is known as idolatry in the Bible – are so closely bound up with each other that it is impossible to think of them as being unrelated. The statement of the West African Aladura leader, Akinyele, is equally applicable to the Shona Zionists: “African’s can’t use good medicines only without getting mixed up with bad ones and idolatry. Whites can use medicine without this.” 14

In three of the cases, mention is made of earlier visits to hospitals. In Bishop N.C.’s case distance played an additional role, but in the case of N.M. and A., they were convinced that Western medicine had failed and that the curative power negotiated by the ‘man of God’ had tipped the scales. How and in what way did the hospitals fail these persons? Perhaps the root of the matter must be sought, not so much in the somewhat deficient medical service, which is sometimes the case with insufficiently staffed and remote clinics, but rather in a lack in the Western medical approach which, despite successful medical treatment, does not probe sufficiently into the spiritual causes of illness. In this respect not only the secularised medical service of the Government hospital, but also the Mission hospitals, are found wanting. Admittedly an attempt is made to meet both the spiritual and physical demands of the
patient in Mission hospitals, very often with a certain amount of success. Frequently, however, the Christian message is relayed to the sick in a manner which omits or makes insufficient allowance for a direct confrontation with the very real belief in evil powers. It so happens that, in the world visualized by the patient, these powers are the root cause of his situation. In other words, Western therapy is not sufficiently concerned with, or cognizant of, evil forces as a very potent reality in the patient’s life. There is a general lack on the part of missionaries in Africa to probe the reality of witchcraft in the African’s life and to accommodate medical treatment accordingly. It is for this very reason that so many members of the Mission joined the Independent Churches when they became sick. Patient N. M. is a case in point. Deacon S. M.’s reference to the mudzimu, which cannot be exorcised by the Dutch Reformed Church or the Roman Catholic Church, (and for him the church includes the hospital), is a further indication of the widespread belief that European medicine is inadequate for treating the midzimu or ‘illnesses due to witchcraft’

Very often a combination of factors comes into play during the joining-up process. In the cases of Bishop N.C. and Deacon S. M. it was the cure of others, e.g. their children, that swayed them. The former also clearly reacts against the non-recognition of the dignity and self-respect of the African, as experienced by him in the Reformed circles. Besides the promise of temporal health, this new church also offers him a community in which he can enjoy recognition as a human being, “a place to feel at home.” 15 No wonder that his church is a ‘marvel’ to him. In this new community, there is room enough for him to exercise his leadership capabilities. N. C. would, for example, never have become a Ndaza bishop or A. a Z.C.C. ‘minister’, if they did not become Zionists. With their qualifications they would have had but a limited share in the Mission’s church leadership. Whereas healing actuates the moment of decision to enter into the Zionist fold, there are therefore, in addition, many a profound, sometimes hidden, factor serving as a breeding ground for a rapidly expanding movement.

The above mentioned cases could give rise to two erroneous impressions: Firstly, that the Zionist Church draws its members
AREAS FROM WHICH PATIENTS' ARE ATTRACTED TO "ZION CITY" FOR HEALING TREATMENT

- Cities
- Towns
- Zion Christian Church congregations
- 1 Zion City, Z.C.C. Headquarters
- 2 Z.C.C. Headquarters of bishop D. Masuka.
- 3 Z.A.F.M, Headquarters of bishop A. Shoko.
- Gutu District.
- Chingombe chieftaincy: area where depth study was conducted.
- Some of the main roads in Rhodesia
- 85% of the patients visiting Zion City come from areas within the dotted circle.
exclusively from the ranks of the Mission Churches; secondly, that for the individual entry into the Zionist Church would imply a kind of religious terminus. In order to avoid confusion one should recall that, of the 223 Zionists mentioned earlier, less than 25% were fully baptized Mission members before they joined the Zionists Churches. Since the majority of its members are recruited from a non-Christian environment this movement actually resembles a ‘missionary institution’ For many this church is only a “healing institute” and no stable religious home or terminus. Apart from implying a stable membership, to be a Zionist could also mean an interim period for Mission Church members. This is especially true of barren women, who, after prophetic treatment, return to their former fold. To others it could be a thoroughfare to another Church or back to the traditional religious practices. Ultimately it may be an ‘experiment’ for someone who at his wits end, runs from nganga to hospital, to prophet or vice-versa, in search of a cure for a possibly incurable disease.
Invitingly and challengingly the following Zionist hymn reverberates through Zion City Sunday after Sunday:

Come and see what Jesus does,
Come see what Moyo [Mutendi] here performs,
Come look from the East,
You from the West, come observe what Zion does.
You who are sick, to Zion for treatment come,
Come and See!
You with 'zvipusha' [epilepsy] come and be healed,
Come see what Jesus does.

The other day we were with him [Mutendi],
Last night we were in his sight,
Last year we were with him
Even today he's with us.
Come see what Zion does!

In the past thirty years Africans from various parts of Rhodesia, and sometimes even from beyond its borders, availed themselves of these Zionistic invitations. Soon Mutendi saw the dire need for additional housing. In the course of time he had 200 hundred huts built next to the houses of the regular villagers. These huts provide accommodation for some of the hundreds of Zionists who annually come to the Headquarters for the 'Passover' celebrations. Being the living-quarters of the sick, it is referred to as the 'hospitara.' Furthermore, the Zionist settlement (see sketch-map) consists of Mutendi's house (H) with 24
A. 'Hospital' 200 huts; B. Zionist school; C. Teachers' living quarters; D. House of Sotho 'doctor' at entrance of Zion City; E. Church office; F. Shop; G. Garage; H. Stone-wall enclosure with Bishop Mutendi's western-styled living quarters and several huts for his wives; J. 'Dare' - stone-wall and cemented platform where Church Council and village court sessions take place; K. Church building; L. Residence of office-bearers, eg. clerk, boarding-master and prophets; 'boarding houses' for school children; M. Homesteads of Mutendi's oldest married sons, sons-in-laws and their families, at the foot of Mt. Zion (or Mt. Moriah); N. Arable fields; approximately 200 acres; O. Granaries and houses of orphans and widows; P. 'Tabero' - a clearing with cemented floor where daily prayer meetings are conducted.
huts in the inner court for his fourteen wives and more than fifty children. The extended household is shielded from the outside world by means of a wall, the entrances of which are guarded day and night by Zionist guards. Only highly ranked office-bearers or relatives are allowed to enter the innermost citadel.

Mutendi's Church and fortress are situated against the slopes of Mt. Moriah, a low chain of hills of the type commonly found in Rhodesia. At the foot we find the houses of the married sons and the regular villagers (M). When one enters the settlement, the pride of Zion lies on both sides of the road, viz., the 'hospital' (A) on the left-hand-side and the self-constructed Zionist school (B), with accommodation for 300 hundred children, and a few houses for teachers (C) on the righthand-side. At the official entrance we come upon the house of 'the doctor in charge', where visitors are sprinkled with blessed water in order to cleanse them before entry. Here we also find the administrative office (E) and the shop (F).

When a person arrives at Moriah, he is first sprinkled with sanctified water to remove all impurity or expel any possible evil spirit. Then the full-time clerk, mabarani Mushonga, a cousin of Mutendi, notes down the patient's particulars, e.g. address and complaints, in the sick-register kept specially for such purposes. The patient is handed a piece of paper containing the name of the prophet who will diagnose his illness at a later stage. Meanwhile, the 'boarding-master' has to see to it that one of the hospital huts is prepared for the newcomer. Since the sick-register only contains the names of serious patients, it is impossible to determine the exact number of patients who annually 'undergo treatment' at Moriah. During my stay at the Headquarters in 1965 there were, apart from those people who came and went daily, about 80 regular resident patients of whom 35 were children. The sick-register of 1964 shows a total of 460 adults of whom 60% were women, and the majority from the neighbouring tribal areas of Bikita, Gutu, Zaka, Victoria and Belingwe. Various patients, however, came from remote parts such as Wedza, Kariba, Zambia and Malawi (see map).

The specific nature of the illness, according to Western stan-
dards, is mostly not known. As in the case of the majority of ngangas, the prophets have little or no knowledge of anatomy or physiology. Consequently complaints of the patients (according to the 1964 register) are classified as follows:

Zwichemo: (derived from kuchema, lit. ‘to cry’ i.e. complaints) 130 cases; this is the most widespread category spanning from light ailments, e.g. cough or pain in the chest, to pleas to help patient secure a job or settle a family dispute.

Stomache-ache: 63 cases; a large percentage of it is ascribed to witchcraft.

Chibereko: (lit. womb or ‘fruit’, i.e. the power to bear children) 51 cases; all of whom are barren women asking for children, or people asking that the sex of their unborn children be predetermined. In reality this total is much higher, but because this is the most general reason why so many women visit Moriah, not all of it is noted down.

Mweya yakaipa: (evil spirits) 45 cases; the presence of evil spirits coupled to disease symptoms, are chiefly related to the perpetration of witchcraft or the retaliations of neglected family ancestors.

Chiposwa and Chitsinga: 43 cases; the two most general forms of witchcraft, i.e. poisoning or infection of the limbs.

Kuchema Kuwana: (lit. crying to marry) 21 cases; specific pleas for assistance in finding a suitable husband or wife, a process complicated by a physical deformation in some people.

Kutema musoro: (Headache) 20 cases; in reality, stomachaches, headaches or pain in the limbs are the most widespread of these symptoms. Psychical disturbances are usually ascribed to evil spirits. Very often these evil spirits are also held responsible for what is in fact malaria fever or a general deterioration of bodily strength through bilharzia, a not uncommon phenomenon amongst large numbers of people in Africa. Stomach ailments often derive from gastro-enteritis, while pneumonia, venereal diseases, trachoma, rheumatism, water in the limbs, etc. are to be found in almost each of the above mentioned Zionist categories. One can generally assume that most of the illnesses successfully treated by the Zionists, are of a psycho-somatic nature. Taylor draws attention to the fact that ‘swelling of the joints’, ‘aching all over’ and wasting, are the most common
psycho-somatic symptoms in Africa" - symptoms also regularly to be found at Moriah.

The psychological side of prophetic treatment indeed has a salutary influence on many of the patients who suffer from these types of illnesses. Sometimes compromise solutions are sought in serious cases, involving for instance a goitre, a malignant growth, blindness or a fractured bone. A temporary visit to a Western hospital does not necessarily imply total apostasy. At the end of my stay in Rhodesia, prophet N. M., whom we have already referred to earlier, was taken up in a Dutch Reformed Hospital for an operation to the goitre. It is tragic, however, that some convinced patients are so tied down by their group beliefs, that they would rather lose their lives than undergo timely medical treatment.

Every non-Zionist patient arriving at Moriah is regarded by the community as a potential Zionist. On arrival, a 'group-apparatus' comes into operation with the express aim of securing the patient’s membership of the Zionist church. Mostly the prophets suggest that the patient should tarry a few days in order to have direct contact with the ‘man of God’ for at least one session of discussion. The prophecies make it quite clear that the best chances of being cured is only possible after purification in ‘Jordan’, i.e. after initiation into the group. Only then, it is suggested, does the Holy Spirit begin to function effectively in them. The patient is thus subjected to subtle psychological pressures without his being fully aware of it. He is totally taken up in a community with an absorbing daily program and communal aims.

By communal aim is meant the building up of a ‘Jerusalem’, where Africans take the initiative. It is indeed a settlement to be proud of, because it has an own identity and constitutes a symbol of independence where the yoke of European supervision is non existent. In a society harbouring many an uprooted individual in search of such an identity, joining the Z.C.C. affords a solution. These people are sympathetically received in a system of mutual aid and help, of give and take. In return for the accommodation and the ‘medical treatment’, the recuperating patient is expected to work on Mutendi’s fields, to help make bricks for new buildings, to beautify the grounds of
the settlement and to help maintain the road leading to Moriah. The more serious patients receive free food supplies, which are subsidized yearly according to agreement by outlying congregations all over the country. In this way the patient feels himself involved in a nation-wide movement, which goes beyond the more circumscribed tribal loyalty. On the 28th of March 1965, during a sermon at Moriah, Evangelist Mordechai conspicuously gave vent to that prevailing group feeling of pride in the curative power of their leader:

"The reason why I say that Mutendi is sent by God, is that in the whole of Rhodesia there is not one village of this magnitude under the care of an African. In the Bible we read that people stayed in Jerusalem for 35 years awaiting their cure. All these people had made Jerusalem their home. We too cannot receive help at any place other than this one [our Jerusalem]. We have never come across Africans, as is the case here, who stay under the care of an African leader for years. Even members of other churches come here when all forms of medical treatment fail. This place is like Bethsaida. Just as the power in olden days had come through great personages such as Abraham and Jacob, it now derives from the God of Mutendi and Enginasi Lekhanyane."

Mutendi's power [simba] is stored away like the grain of a farmer's co-operation. He can cure you of all ailments. Assuredly he is the man of God!"

A patient in need of spiritual sustenance and protection against tormenting spirits, would not find it difficult to identify himself completely with a group holding such a conviction and constantly giving expression to it.

Even if Mutendi does not find the time to attend to all the patients personally in the City of Zion, he still makes his presence felt in a very real way. On the ideational level he represents a living reality to his followers, who believe him to act continually as an intercessor, or for some as a kind of mediator (mumiriri) between them and God. In sermons he invariably features as the central figure. He is a headman in his village; by virtue of his birth he is a claimant to ward-headmanship; moreover, he is the leader of a movement to which more than 10 Shona Chiefs belong and pay allegiance. All these qualities
make him admirably suitable as a great Shona Leader both in the spiritual and the traditional sense. As 'father' to his followers in Zion he occupies a central position. Contact is much more direct than that between the leader and his followers in the Ethiopian-type Churches. Often, during the morning and evening, the patients and villagers see him at the Tabero (P), where he officiates at the daily prayer-meetings. On Sunday afternoons he only too willingly expiates to his followers on the historical background of his church. When a patient is summoned to the dare (J) for an interview, the presence of a visiting chief or church leader from elsewhere adds further lustre to Mutendi's far-reaching influence. On such occasions a 'Minister' acts as interpreter between Mutendi and the patient, because the man of God may not be addressed directly. This Shona concept of courtesy applies to a person of lesser rank when he finds himself in the presence of a high dignitary. Mutendi is however not 'beyond reach', but listens attentively to the patient's complaints and poses questions about possible family disputes. The conversation very often assumes the character of a pastoral interview in which Mutendi assures the patient of his intercession, and impresses on him the necessity of a personal belief in the healing power of God. The interview ends with the eagerly sought after laying on of hands or with the brief touch of Mutendi's holy staff.

Mutendi's success as a faith-healer undoubtedly ties up with the pastoral nature of his approach. He is an acknowledged representative of the mysterious power of God; he recognizes the reality of evil spirits in the Shona hierarchy; he successfully resisted the repressive measures of the European Administration in the thirties; thus he is better equipped than any European doctor to apply effective 'psycho-therapy' among the poorly-schooled layers of the Shona. His solution is of a spiritual nature and strives after a forceful elimination of the spiritual causes of the illness, in which, the patient himself is a believer. After all, the whole Zionistic 'hospital programme' is pastorally orientated. Two daily prayer-meetings end in the laying on of hands and prayers for the sick by Zionist ministers. Contact with the ministers invariably brings back the patient to a personal relationship with God and the world of spirits because
conversations between patients and leaders frequently resort to the spiritual plane. There are almost always leaders present who have sufficient time to spend with the patient. Thus the patient is constantly succoured spiritually in a much more realistic way than is the case in a Mission Hospital, where lack of staff and an acute programme too often invalidate this type of mutual contact.

Just as in the case of a Western Hospital, which is attached to a clinic, where the most elementary form of nursing takes place, so also Mutendi has a whole network of smaller 'healing centres' in the various reserves. To every community with a mufundisi (minister), evangelist, mushumairi (preacher) and elders, there are two or more permanent prophets. Depending on the popularity and success as faith-healer, the houses of such a prophet could be extended to accommodate patients. In order to avoid competition and possibly friction with the Headquarters, this type of settlement very rarely reaches outsized proportions. In a few cases more than ten patients will be found at such a prophet's household. Very often these visitors, whose homesteads are but a walking distance from the prophet, do not live in these households. These 'clinics' are in constant touch with the Headquarters, because serious patients often proceed to Moriah on the recommendation of or accompanied by the local prophetic healers. The small healing settlements of the Ndaza and the Mutendi Zionists do not differ much. Healing practices are based on the same principles, the only point of departure being the difference in official Church garments and forms of worship. Neither Andreas Shoko, nor David Masuka, has succeeded in building up a settlement of Mutendi's size and stature. Yet this in no way detracts from the fact that at their headquarters faith-healing, although less formally organized, plays an equally important role as at Moriah.

In the Chingombe chiefdom (approx. 10 by 30 km.) with its 110 villages and 8,900 inhabitants, there are at least 30 Zionist and Apostolic prophets, with a corresponding number of practising traditional doctors (ngangas), and one Government clinic. A village with 12 families can thus have both prophet and medicine-man living at a short distance from each other. In some cases they are even members of the same household. In
actual practise, the members of all churches (Mission and Independent) and the traditionalists all too often exploit all the possible facilities in the immediate vicinity in times of illness. Typical of this pragmatic approach is the remark of Mai Mupini, wife to an Ethiopian Church Leader: “When I am sick”, she says, “I go everywhere; to the nganga when I’m bewitched through a foot-trap [chiisinga], to the prophet if I wish to find out who has poisoned me, and to the Mission Hospital for normal symptoms of illnesses.”
3 Prophetic Activities and Healing

In the 'City of Zion' or the remote clinics of the prophets, many a prophecy is made on behalf of the sick. The permanent prophets who reside in Moriah are sometimes agriculturists helping in the cultivation of the land, advisors to the Church gatherings, or, in the case of Johane Manami, trained craftsmen. Johane, who is regarded as one of the most reliable prophets—a distinction is made between the various gradations of enlightenment by the Holy Spirit—is at the same time a builder of no mean repute who had a lion's share in the construction of the Zionist school. After morning prayer it is the duty of the prophets to give their attention first to the patients, before they engage in other activities. The patients split in groups among the huts of the 'hospital.' One by one they see the prophet assigned to them. Each prophet is assisted by a junior Church leader or an ordinary Church member who acts as interpreter during the diagnostic spell of prophecy. The prophet is not supposed to know what the Spirit reveals to him. Therefore the presence of the interpreter is very important for his interpretation of the 'speaking with tongues.' When the patient, prophet and interpreter are closely huddled together, an expectant hush settles down. After a short prayer the Holy Spirit manifests itself through bodily tremors of the prophet, snorts and prattle.

A few examples of suggestions to the patient during such prophecies give an indication of the similarities and the differences with the divinatory practises of the traditional ngangas:
Moria; 4th June 1965. Johane Manami prophesies for Mai Chipiwa, a women hailing from Chibi whose emaciated face and sunken eyes are indicative of a prolonged illness.

Prayer: “God of all blessings, we thank Thee for this opportunity.” Speaking in Tongues: “Makafa, Just allright frende by jectu, I canrita but to free again for whit teka right menta, Moriah for too Jehova tek for mother.”

Diagnosis and Therapy: “God says that, if you wish to reach home safely, you must first stay in Jerusalem for a few days to receive the prayers of His servant [Mutendi]. When you are better they must again prophesy on your behalf so that you will know what to do when you reach home. God says ‘there is no peace in your house because there are two female enemies (vavengi) who conspire to kill you.’ One of these women live close by. You are both married to the same man. You must nyengetera nesimba [pray with vigour] else you will die. You must drink the water which Mutendi has blessed with his prayers. He will press his staff against your stomach and give you a newspaper which you must use at home. God says that He has witnessed how you and your husband have quarrelled about your possessions. He says, ‘Go tell everything to My servant Mutendi, because he will grant you succour’ You must stay here for at least seven days because your enemies anxiously await your return. Your husband and the other woman are hatching plans against you he has lost interest in you. You also have to contend with an inimical spirit. This is all for the present.”

The prophecy is interrupted ever so often through the ‘speaking with tongues’. All this while the woman nods in the affirmative. Some time later Johane prophesied for Finias, a Zionist evangelist and his wife who is psychically unbalanced (kupenga, lit. mad):

“Finias, God says you must pray with fervour and talk to His servant. God says he has witnessed the malevolent spirit in your wife and the spirit comes from her deceased relatives. He says, ‘I see the members of her family at home, kneeling before the spirits and then calling her name. Your wife must tarry here a while so that My servant can pray for her and ‘baya’ her [lit.
poke or touch] with his staff. Then you will receive sanctified water for use at home.' God says, 'You have too many thoughts, Finias; you must stay at home, filled with only one thought, and pray fervently. *Your in-laws are at loggerheads with you because of the bride-price.* For this reason your wife is possessed by a malevolent spirit. You have thought that the spirit was sent by your enemies, but now you know it comes from your in-laws. Take your wife to her house at a later stage, and leave her there a while. If you take her home directly from here, the spirit will have even greater power in your wife than is the case today. *Her parents must also do something so that the spirit can leave her.* Therefore she must stay at home until she is back to normal. I [God], shall accompany you to the house of your in-laws. My servant too will guide you and your wife."

Moriah; 16th June 1965: Prophet Nison prophecies for Chirikure's wife, who complains that she gives birth to daughters only and feels sick.

Prayer: "God of Enginasi and Moyo, who hast created heaven and earth, I pray Thee for power. Do as Thou wilt"

Speaking in Tongues: "Justa centre to be white to win sent a society Moria orindi papa orindi min tea grrrr."

Explication: "God says you must not be disturbed for I shall reveal My power to you through My servant. In order to have sons, you will be given a sanctified linen cloth which you must wrap around your abdomen. God says he has seen the evil spirit of a woman in operation in you. This deceased woman has received a cloth from your parents and they pray to this cloth. Her spirit wanted you to bear daughters only, but God says, 'I shall expel the spirit through the hand of My servant.' You will receive the sanctified water which you must use in the morning, afternoon and evening. You must also inhale the smoke of the sanctified burning paper. God says you must have faith and not doubt the things I tell you. You must also appear before the man of God to tell him everything. He will drive out the evil spirits which plague you now. Your husband is not satisfied with your visit to Moriah."
Woman answers: “Yes, for we belong to the Church of Christ.”
Prophet: “You and your husband have quarrelled and he was about to send you back to your parents.”
Woman: “Yes that is so, Amen.”
Prophet: “Your husband is implacable when you talk about the children”
Woman: “Yes!”
Prophet: “God says, ‘Do not be alarmed. Everything will be all-right through My power which works through My servant. I shall answer your prayer’ You must fervently pray when you return home! Amen.”

Chingombe chiefdom; 7th September 1965. Ester, a former Reformed Church member, comes to Prophet Potai with the complaint that she had already suffered four miscarriages and had been to various ngangas but all to no avail. After Potai had pointed out with the help of the Holy Spirit that the family spirits of both Ester and her husband are responsible for the miscarriages, Ester herself explained that her husband was possessed by a Dzviti23 shavi which comes from his grandfather. Because this spirit which is a ‘hunter’s spirit’ does not get sufficient attention, he ‘hunts’ (kuvima) in the womb of the woman and is co-responsible for the death of the children. On Ester’s side there is a spirit of the deceased mbuya (grandmother) which asks for a mbudzi yeimbzagukuru (goat from her grandchildren). Her husband had already given 15/- to Ester’s parents to buy a goat for sacrificial purposes, but because the money was not enough the sacrificial ceremony for the grandmother has not yet taken place.

After Ester had embroidered on the initial diagnosis of Potai, he suggested that she return to settle family matters and then come for Zionist treatment. He even suggested that Ester’s relatives proceed with the sacrificial ceremony to pacify the spirit, i.e. that Ester’s husband provide the necessary money for the sacrificial beast, on the condition, however, that Ester herself may not be present at the ceremony, since ancestral worship never brings lasting peace.
The examples cited are only fragments of prophecies. Sometimes one prophecy suffices, but often it is repeated over a period of days and weeks. As the prophet’s knowledge of the patient’s background increases, so also his analysis becomes more thorough and detailed. As in the case of the nganga, the patient is expected in such a situation to exercise restraint and observe how the diagnosis gradually unfolds itself upon repetition of the divination. Oft-repeated conversations with a resident patient, and gossip in a small, closely-knit community, contribute in no mean way to the information desired by the nganga and the prophet. It may even happen that a prophet or an nganga alters suggestions concerning a malevolent spirit, if from the patient’s attitude it appears that the spirit suggested is not regarded as the real evildoer.

One can safely assume that the diagnosis of the prophet, if compared with the traditional divination, usually runs parallel to that of the nganga. The difference is to be found in the medium through whom the extra-ordinary knowledge is obtained. The nganga relies on divinatory slabs, (hakata) bones or shavi spirits for his extra-perception, whereas the prophet invokes the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the prophet tends to label all spirits as malignant, while the nganga makes a more careful distinction between ancestral, shavi and ngozi spirits. 24

In principal however, they both concentrate on the personal causation of the illness. This personal causation is usually seen in terms of one of the following conflict situations:

1. A living enemy who wrongfully, with or without the help of a spirit, causes illness of death (as was the case with Mai Chipiwa),
2. the spirit of a deceased which acts independently of the wishes of a living representative (wife to Chirikure), or
3. a spirit which, according to tribal laws, has a legitimate claim to restitution and, as a result, functions in conjunction with living representatives (the wife of Finias and Ester).

In the first type of conflict situation one can expect malevolent witchcraft. This is the manner in which women or co-wives oppose each other when vying for a mutual love. The
The sanctification of old newspapers by Rev. Mutendi, through prayer and the touch of hand. By burning strips of this paper Mutendi's followers seek to protect themselves when assailed by malignant spiritual forces.
5. The Sotho 'doctor' at Zion City sanctifies a bucket of water through heating, adding a little salt and especially by stirring it with his short 'holy staff'.

6. Once prepared, all the sanctified water is consumed by a patient with abdominal trouble, in the course of a morning. A perpetual process of vomiting is believed to 'wash' (kusuka) the stomach.
prophet is thoroughly aware of the heavy penalty — a maximum of seven years imprisonment under the “Witchcraft Suppression Act” — which can follow in the wake of a direct imputation of witchcraft. He therefore avoids the term uroyi (witchcraft). Yet, because he suspects this to be the source of, for instance, Mai Chipiwa’s trouble, he wishes to strengthen her for the struggle, with God’s power. In her case the therapy will concentrate on allowing the power of God as represented in the proposed medicinal objects to come to the fore in a protective capacity. If, as in conflict situation two, there is a direct connection with the spirit of the deceased woman, the emphasis is on the spirit-expellant power of God. The relations between husband and wife takes an amicable turn only after the spirit has been rendered harmless and Chirikure’s wife has given birth to sons.

The third type of case is much more complex because it involves the legitimate claims of both deceased and his/her living representatives. Zionist prophets realize that in such a case they have to be careful with prescriptions of therapeutic treatment. Indigenous law enables Ester’s parents, or the in-laws of Finias, to exercise pressure on the sick in order to obtain the animals still outstanding in the bride-price. From the claimant’s point of view, illness of a member of the family is a sign of displeasure on the part of the spirit which claims compensation. This becomes the most potent weapon to wield against one’s antagonists. The party which has a right to draw on the mystical power of the spirits has the strongest case. If the struggle involves a believer who is sick and a non-Christian claimant, then the situation becomes doubly complicated, because mostly the dispute involves an animal which must be sacrificed or at least dedicated to the spirits. Zionist doctrine completely forbids any form of ancestral worship (pira midzimu), let alone propagating it. At the same time, however, the conflict must be settled before the desired atmosphere so conducive to a cure is possible. The prophet fully recognises this pre-condition. In both cases the prophet comes to a compromise solution. On the one hand, he advocates Zionist treatment, viz. expulsion of the spirit; on the other, settlement of the dispute within the confines of the family, which by way of implication points at ancestral worship. After the Zionist treatment, Finias must take his wife to her
parents, where ‘they who kneel down before the evil spirits’ must also perform ‘something meaningful’, on the prophet’s suggestion to appease the spirit. Ester’s husband must provide the means whereby her parents can satisfy the spirit. In practical circumstances, the Zionist approach of ancestral worship therefore shows a greater flexibility than the apparent radical rejection on idealistic grounds would seem to suggest.

In diagnosing such cases as would fall under category 3, there are a number of traditional, almost standardised conflict patterns serving as precepts for the nganga or the prophet. Almost without exception the prophets ascribe barrenness, miscarriages or complicated births to the interference of the mbuya (maternal grandmother) or vatete (paternal aunt) spirits, unless of course witchcraft is involved. These spirits are visualised in the form of apparitions, which literally ‘grab hold of the uterus’ to prevent birth or complicate it. The vatete has the right to perpetuate her name through the children of her brother’s daughter, if she dies without offspring. She possesses this right by virtue of the bride-price paid for her, and which in turn would enable her brother to obtain his wife. Thus she becomes the ‘vamwene’ (lit. owner or possessor of her brother’s wife). If, after her death, the brother neglects to transfer her name onto one of his daughters the vatete spirit smites her with infertility. But the vatete, also has other claims. If her brother dies and the kugadzira (the ‘bringing back home’ of the spirit of the deceased) ceremony is conducted, she is entitled to a cow from her brother’s eldest son. This cow is called ngombe yovutete (animal of the aunt). If she is already deceased at the time when her brother is gadzwa’d, or if the animal has not yet been forthcoming at the time of her death, her children can lawfully claim it. Should the demand not be acceded to, a conflict situation arises between the children of the brother and the sister. Now the vatete comes in the guise of a reprimanding mudzimu to spread barrenness among the daughters of her brother’s eldest son. The restless spirit can only be appeased when the children of the vatete, demand the ngombe yovutete for sacrificial purposes. In reality, the prophet diagnoses the causes or barrenness in terms of mweya yakaipa (evil spirits) and a mvengi (a living enemy), while the woman involved
interprets it as the *vatete* spirit, who, through her children as her living representatives, are demanding an animal.

Besides the *ngombe youvutete*, there is also an *ngombe youmai* (animal of the mother), viz. that cow which, in addition to the bride price, is a special gift to the mother-in-law. If the mother-in-law dies before a *ngombe youmai* has been delivered, her spirit returns to sow barrenness among her daughters or granddaughters. Among the descendants, the bearer of her name can lawfully claim the cow which is still outstanding. The *mbudzi yeimbazukuru* is that portion which, in addition to the bride-price, must be paid by the son-in-law in recognition of the procreative power of the mother-in-law's grandmother. As we have already observed in Ester's case, the maternal *mbuya* spirit is roused to her destructive task when the father of her grandchild neglects his duty towards her.

A diagnosis which is based on these traditional patterns of conflict and takes into account that barrenness is a threat to the woman's social position in an African community, is more understandable and acceptable than the sober, primarily gynecological explanation of the Western medical man. Very often the latter lacks an understanding of the subtle interplay between impatient members of the family, cows and malevolent spirits, which, in the thought-processes of the woman, are closely linked with her condition.

Upon diagnosis of the illness, the remarkable similarity between the *nganga* and prophet activities cease. Both of them find the origin of the disease in the disturbed communal society. Both recognise the bedevilling effect of the powers unleashed in the inter-human relationships and the threatening support of the spirits. But they stave off these powers differently. While the *nganga* seeks for a solution which accedes to the conditions of the spirits, *the prophetic therapy bases itself on a belief in the power of the Christian God*, which surpasses all other powers. The *nganga* is concerned about the restoration of the disrupted social relations. He advocates ancestral worship in the case of *midzimu* with a legitimate claim, and the expulsion of evil witchcraft powers or *ngozì* spirits through rites of a magical nature. *In addition*, he administers medicine with the aim of eradicating the patient's bodily injury. To the Zionist,
the *midzimu*'s claim to worship is inadmissible on Biblical grounds. A compromise is only reached when non-Christian relations must be met in the conflict situation. Despite recognition of the traditional appellations by the prophet, the spirits are constantly referred to as *mweya yakatip*$ (evil spirits). Their main aim is the elimination of the spirit through exorcism.

In rejecting medicines the Zionists bring about a remarkable adaptation and fusion of the prophetic treatment with the traditional pattern. The burning of paper, the smoke of which must be inhaled, the manipulation of the sanctified staff, the purification with water and the wearing of sanctified linen cloths, which the prophets almost always, prescribe, show a direct parallel with the medicinal practices of the *nganga*. The use of these 'instruments' form the substance of the charge by Mission Church members that Mutendi is nothing but a 'big *nganga*'. *Nganga*'s also use smoke repellants, water for cleansing rituals, staves charged with magic and amulets worn next to the body for protection. No doubt these similarities induce some Church members to equate Mutendi with the *ngangas*. To them 'faith-healing' is but a camouflage for magical practices which go hand in hand with and obscure the actual Christian message. In the world visualized by Zionist leaders, the similarity is one of form and not of content. For them the objects used during exorcism are primarily *the visual symbolic concretization of the Divine Power*, which in itself has no medicative effect. The interpretation of these symbols ties up closely with traditional thought-processes. The Zionist approach draws its strength precisely from the fact that these symbols are relevant to, and understandable for the Shona. The prophet does not only prescribe symbolic exorcistic treatment, but also suggests that there must be confidence in the man of God who will provide succour. Furthermore, he emphasizes the need for earnest and forceful prayer. During interviews Mutendi himself stressed the importance of the individual's faith. To an outsider it might appear as if there is no personal participation of the patient. Yet this is certainly not so.

Prof. Holleman, in an impressive description of traditional religious rites, points out that the symbolic approach of the Shona in their religious life gives rise to problems of interpre-
tation. He shows very clearly that the symbol is sometimes identified with that which it is supposed to represent. Thus the beerpot symbolising the presence of the deceased ancestor during the ceremony is at times addressed as if it were the ancestor in person. The pot becomes the ancestor! This phenomenon is also true of Zionist healing practices. The healing hand of the man of God, the sanctified staff and other objects prescribed by the prophets, are not only representative symbols, as might be inferred from discussions; at a given point they become the very power of God. Thus it happens that during the baptismal ceremony the power of the Holy Spirit in the water is conceived of as so real that afflicted men and women scoop up water from the Jordan for drinking in the hope of transferring some of the holy power to themselves. In such a situation the belief in a personal God, its symbolic representation, and the manipulation of objects loaded with magic become inextricably bound up with each other. There is a great danger that for some of Mutendi’s followers the accent of the healing practices may unwittingly shift further away from the Scriptural norms. Through these symbols their leader attains a certain claim to the Divine Power which enables him to manipulate it according to his good judgement in the interest of his followers. It is for this very reason that Evangelist Mordechai, during his sermon, could portray the power of Mutendi as a quantity stored up for the benefit of the Zionists, like grain in a co-operative granary. The mediating function of the leader and his right of determining the symbolic medicines, gives him a central, almost mystic position of power. Thus he can unwittingly prevent the intensification of the patient’s relationship with the historical Christ.

If we take the image Evangelist Mordechai a bit further we could view Moriah as a co-operative where God Himself is the ‘supplier of curative power,’ Mutendi is in charge of the ‘provisions’ and the prophets try to sell the ‘consumable commodities’ As has already been noticed in the prophecies cited, a period of residence in Moriah and the use of symbolic medicines are obligatory if there is to be any effective treatment. As the ‘director of the supplies’, all these medicines pass through the hands of Mutendi for his blessing. Once more his central
position is accentuated. The objects most frequently used are
Mutendi’s staff as the most potent expeller of spirits;
sanctified water which must be drunk, or which, used to spray
people, doorposts and livingrooms, acts as an expeller of spirits
or a protection against witchcraft;
sanctified needles, worn by the healers on the lapels and used
at the appropriate time as injection instruments, e.g. in the con­
stand pricking of any part of the body or nasal cavity for the
removal of ‘evil blood or water’;
sanctified newspaper, torn to shreds and burnt under specific
circumstances, e.g. for inhaling of smoke in cases of pectoral
complaints or to drive out shavi spirits threatening to possess a
child;
sanctified strips of linen cloth, worn by women around their
abdomen to stimulate fertility. The prophetically prescribed
number of knots in it is supposed to determine the sex of the
unborn child. Worn by children immediately after birth, or by
grown-ups around their necks, arm and legs, these strips serve
to protect the body against visiting spirits.
Sanctified soap is used for cleansing the body.

Only the church officials possess injection needles and green
papers with the Zionist seal on it with which they can bless
water during Mutendi’s absence. Participants of the annual
Easter Festivities at Moriah regularly take along a supply of
newspapers, soap and bottles. Shortly before their departure for
home a long drawn-out process of consecration takes place.
At the dare or in front of the church office Mutendi, in an
attitude of prayer, allows the various articles to pass through
his hands amidst the reverential silence of the audience.

The exorcism of spirits takes place in different ways. Shavi
spirits, which are less dangerous than the avenging ngozi, are
more common, and they are usually expelled during the baptis­
mal ceremony in ‘Jordan’ The force of the Holy Spirit in the
water makes it impossible for the shavi to remain in the per­
son undergoing baptism. During immersion the person gesti­
culates wildly when the spirit leaves him. Sometimes more than
one baptist is necessary to immerse the possessed person the
required three times. The manner in which the spirit leaves the
baptized person is a pointer to the type of spirit he harbours. A Dzviti (i.e. Ndebele) shavi evokes a fit of rage and results in an attack of the novitiate on the baptist. The njuzu water-spirit tries to drag the baptized person beneath the water surface, thus causing him to drown. To the western-orientated observer, such a struggle in the Jordan gives the impression of a person who fights for his life during the almost violent immersion, because he fears water.

Some shavi spirits return repeatedly after the first exorcism. These are usually spirits who had transferred medical knowledge among the forebears to the ngangas. Now they are searching for a suitable person among the nganga’s descendants to carry on the divination practices. In order to protect the patient against a returning spirit, the prophet recommends the wearing of a sanctified strip of linen round the neck. Should possession of the spirit still take place, thus causing abnormal physical contortions, the possessed person is ‘lashed’ with holy water (kurowa nemvura: lit. to hit with water).

The Ndaza Zionists employ a special technique to entice these shavi and expel them. During the services on Sunday afternoons the spirits in a plagued person are lured into putting in an appearance by means of song and dance. A gradual increase in the tempo of the drum beat, and a whipping up of the rhythm, lead to a frenzied state of ecstasy which results in spirit possession. When the possessed person falls to the ground in a convulsive state and begins to fight, some prophets grab hold of him and tie him up with holy cords (ndaza). Subsequently an interview is held with the spirit in order to find out its specific motivation. If it is a bewitching spirit, it expresses a desire, through the rather incomprehensible language of the possessed, to eat the flesh of a child. If it is a tormented shavi, he tells of the barren areas he hails from and asks for water. When the request has been granted, the possessed quaffs an amazing quantity of water. Ultimately the spirit is berated in the name of God. Afterwards, the prophets surround the possessed and lay their hands on him. They utter a loud and incomprehensible gibberish, pray to God in short staccato-like sentences, damn the spirit once more, while the rest of the congregation dance round them in a quiet and rhythmic manner.
Simulating unconsciousness, the patient remains prostrate until the cords are removed. Sometimes patients undergo this treatment for several successive Sundays until the final departure of the spirit.

In exorcising an ngozi all Zionist measures are brought into play for this spirit knows no mercy and is a threat to the whole family. Hardly driven out of one member of the family, he can so easily invade another. The entire family of a believer must undergo this treatment. Individually, they must subject themselves to repeated cleansing rituals with hallowed water and a water-smoke treatment of the house and the yard. In this way, according to Zionist notions, the power of God reveals itself at the place of residence and the spirit is forced to flee. When the first symptoms of the ngozi spirit appears in the form of psychic imbalance, the prophet immediately dispatches the person to Moriah, while at the same time he arranges protective counter-measures for those members of the family who stay behind. The ceremony accompanying the expulsion of an ngozi is in itself less exciting than that of a shavi, though not less impressive. By way of exception, Mutendi sometimes summons patients troubled by ngozi spirits to appear at the ‘tabero’ after the morning prayer. Without any extraordinary show, the holy staff is pressed against the stomach of the patient, while the ‘man of God’ utters an inaudible prayer. Its effect on the patient varies. But very often at the first touch of the point of the staff, the person falls to the ground and remains prostrate and motionless. In order to retain the exceptional quality of this mysterious manifestation of power, Mutendi limits such highest of all forms of exorcism to special occasions.

In the struggle against the ngozi spirit, the protective function of the Zionist Church is clearly demonstrated. ‘Minister’ Matevure sees it as follows:

“In our family there is an ngozi spirit who has already killed many of our kinsmen. My babamunini [father’s younger brother] has already paid ten oxen to the children of the evil spirit in order to appease it or prevent it from taking further revenge. If I had not joined this Church, I should also have had to pay mutumbu.\textsuperscript{26} The ngozi is constantly on the prowl in the background. At the least sign of a blunder in my Church life or a
relapse [kuheduka, i.e. to backslide] on my part, it could unleash its wrath on me. The spirit is that of an old woman whom our grandfather had chased away years ago and who had died alone in a bush. Only in this church do I find protection against the ngozi."

Elias Bope, a young man of 28 years, is subject to periodic fits of epilepsy. He first spent five months in the Mission Hospital at Gutu, where they treated him with injections. After that he found harbourage with the ngangas for periods of 5 months and, later on, 3 months. At last, at his wits end, he came to Moriah for treatment. The prophets ascribed the illness to an ngozi spirit. Of this spirit Elias says: "My father was guilty of adultery with a woman who later committed suicide. She was ashamed to admit her immoral conduct to her brother. Her spirit now pays regular visits to our village and then takes possession of my cousin, [muzukuru: daughter of vatete], who in turn begins to indulge in witchcraft. In this way may muzukuru has already caused the death of three of the children of my elder brother through beer-poisoning. My muzukuru and the ngozi conspire to cause my downfall. I was carried here in a totally depleted state. That very same day Rev. Champion baptized me as a protection against the ngozi. The water was blessed with prayer beforehand, in order to make it more potent for the ngozi's expulsion. At present I undergo the laying on of hands daily. I drink the hallowed water regularly. Sometimes, during fits of possession, [presumably after an attack of epilepsy], Mutendi treats me with his holy staff, which contains great power [simba huru]. This power is from on high. Here at Moriah I am being protected against the spirit, and for the time being I remain here, because I am shielded from the attempts of my muzukuru."
4 Preaching and Faith-healing

As preachers of the occasion, the Zionists have no peer. They never work out a sermon on paper in advance. At the most, they would write down a few Biblical texts and adapt its contents in any possible way to the practical situation confronting the preacher. Those things which are alive in the thought-processes of the people as a result of the latest occurrences, always find reflection in their preaching. The Sunday afternoon services of the Ndaza and the Mutendi Zionists usually last from 3 pm till sunset. In this period, six or more preachers deliver their sermons. This time span leaves them sufficient room to incorporate the most recent individual and group experiences in their sermons and even debate them. Thus when Mutendi as the most influential person in tribal politics became involved in a border conflict, subsequently dragging the inmates of his settlement into it, the sermons at Moriah had a ready-made topic for discussion for weeks on end. In the preaching of that time the church leaders were chiefly concerned with reiterating their loyalty to the 'man of God', calling people to prayer, and uttering encouraging words to Mutendi. In such a tense situation there is ample time for emotional discharge. The preachers give vent to the feelings of the group, while the rest of the community dance themselves to exhaustion.

In addition to opportunities to preach occasion-directed sermons there are the ever recurring Zionist themes, of which the testimony of faith-healing is but one. As I have already stated, Mutendi seldom refers to healing wonders in his ser-
 Mons. It is sufficient for him that his followers preach about it. As their leader, he preaches about the growth of his Church in a language modelled on that of the Old Testament. He sees a thorough identification of his group with the people of Israel. His followers are the Israelites of Rhodesia. His repeated apprehension by the police during those initial years is presented as akin to the struggle of the leaders of Israel, and the relation of his Church to other groups bears close resemblance to that of Israel with her surrounding neighbours. Right through all this there is an almost monotonously recurring representation of Mwari as the God of Power. He grants the power to withstand the affliction of imprisonment, to ward off the temptations of this life, (beer, ancestral worship, immorality), and the power to hold one's ground against evil forces, in short, to 'live in strength' in a continually threatened existence. Mutendi's secret is precisely in this gospel of strength. Through his mediation the divine power which secures a meaningful existence is transferred to his followers in their daily lives. Initially the power to heal formed but an integral part of an all-embracing Zionist program. But under pressure from an ever increasing demand, it expanded to become the most important manifestation of power expression.

A sermon by 'Rev.' Champion during a visit to Chief Ziki in the Bikita District reveals to what extent Mutendi as a faith-healer fascinates the minds of his followers. He rounds off his eulogy by addressing Mutendi and the congregation in the following manner: "Great One, you love us with the love with which Christ prayed to his Father when he said: 'I pray not for the world, but for them who have given Thee to me' Through you, reverend One, we behold God. You must pray for us, notwithstanding the thoughts of the people of the world. Their thoughts are not stronger than the ngozi spirits that you expel. Ngozi is a difficult spirit to drive out of a person. Yet this man does it. Leprosy is a dangerous disease which does not heal easily. Yet this man heals many lepers. Nobody thought that Thomas would ever be cured of leprosy. Yet today he is the most active and healthiest man in Chilimanzi. All illnesses are cured. Therefore we say that he [Mutendi] is a treasured gift to us, Africans. Your lordship, we are still powerless and do
not understand all your teachings. We are naked in your presence."

Such a testimony from a man who, as 'first minister', is at the top of Mutendi's leadership hierarchy, is indicative of the kind of respect shown to the 'man of God' by the majority of his Zionist followers. It is even more impressive when such a sermon is uttered by an influential senior chief in the presence of Mutendi and about a thousand of his followers. During the Easter celebration at Moriah, in July 1966, Paramount Chief Samu from Gonakudzingwa, preached as follows: "I was sick and laden with problems. I searched the country for ngangas, but they could not help me. Then I was converted through the wonders of this man. When I bless water with the green paper of this man, patients are cured, who could not even be helped in the biggest hospitals in the country. I stood in wonder and awe at this. The man of God must help me to stay away from the ngangas of whom there are many in the southern parts of our country. I have come to him because there are many of my subjects who try to bewitch (teya) me. They hate me because of my position as a chief. Snakes and owls enter my house and people dig up medicines from the ground in order to bewitch me. My one desire is that the man of God journeys to my home, so that all the people in my territory might know that my father has arrived."

Mutendi quite obviously assumes an important position in such testimonies. Less apparent is the plea of Paramount Chief Samu that Mutendi must help him to stay away from the ngangas. Mutendi is praised and showered with thanks for his part in the healing process. Yet in the background, there is always the fear of Zionist 'patients' that at one stage or another, they would once more seek recourse to the ngangas or the hospital. It is for this reason that the patient petitions Mutendi or the community in general in advance to help them through intercession to guard successfully against any relapse in their spiritual life. This request shows that faith-healing is a binding factor in the Zionist community. Even in such radical cases as broken limbs, or accidents which necessitate treatment in hospital, there is a stigma attached to the person on his return to the group. Despite the acceptance of hospital visits, it is still re-
garded as a relapse in the spiritual life (*kuheduka*), a form of infidelity. Zionists with non-Christians relatives know that senior kinsmen will exert pressure on them to go the *nganga* or the hospital in case of serious accidents. It is therefore not strange to hear a Zionist, during a sermon, express the desire to be lead in prayer. “Pray to God to strengthen me when they take me [forcibly] to hospital” or “pray to God that I do not become unconscious so that they take me to hospital without my knowledge” are the most commonly expressed sentiments.

To a Zionist church leader or office-bearer in particular, a compromise with the Western medical world implies loss of prestige. After his release from hospital such a Church-official’s sermons are characterized for some time by an apologetic attitude towards the main leader and Church group. Even in case of dire physical need the leaders prefer to do without medical aid rather than lose some of their prestige.

The favourable climate created among the ranks of the *Ruwadzano* (Women’s Association) during the weekly gatherings, contributes considerably to the magnetic pull the Zionist Church holds for women. Every Wednesday afternoon the leading women meet at Moriah or in the outlying congregations to discuss domestic affairs, to plan new communal projects and to hold services. The service itself consists mainly of the testimonies of women who believe that they have been cured through faith-healing, that Mutendi has granted children to them, or that they have been helped ‘to change over’ from bearing daughters to sons, or vice versa. Of great significance is the psychological effect on women who constantly live under the threat of forfeiting their social position if they remain childless. Not only are they incorporated in a community where they have the daily attention of prophets and other Church officials, but they are also party to purification rituals with sanctified water and an inspiring ‘cloud of testimonies’ of women who have received help in this way. The testimonies of the leading women in their own circles serve to consolidate the group. Its encouraging nature largely contributes to effect the psychologically important tension-release in the patient which is very often a necessary pre-condition for pregnancy.

Of the 23 prominent married women of the Z.C.C. com-
munity in the Chingombe chiefdom, nine report pregnancy after years of barrenness. Six believe that Mutendi has helped to determine the sex of their child in advance. Here by way of illustration are some snatches from the preaching of these Ruwadzano women in 1966:

*Mai (Mother) Lydia,* first wife of the most senior Church official in Chingombe ends her sermon thus: "I came to Moyo [Mutendi] without nay possession, yet he cared for me [wakandiwaka lit. he has shaped me], so that I now lack nothing. Peace unto you!"

**Participants:** "Amen! Halleluya!"

"I believe in the God of Moyo, for if we do not recognize the signs [zviratidzo] in our midst or do not believe, we shall be judged. We have been baptized by Moyo and if we do not obey the laws he has laid down, we shall not see heaven. Women, we fail in our faith, even if we are blessed. There are members of other churches who do not know that one can be cured. There is no love among them. They do not visit each other in times of illness. They do not have the signs of healing and 'zvibereko' (children) in their midst. Do we lack anything? Moyo grants us everything. Peace unto you! If there is no rain, ask it of Moyo and it will rain; if we have no children in our houses, the God of Moyo will assuredly grant us fertility. Peace in Zion."

*Mai Ezekiah:* "The God of Moyo has granted me four children after years of barrenness. We thank Thee, God of Moyo, because Thou hast visited us here in Gutu. When we were young, we journeyed to Zion. The Reformed women scoffed at us and our parents beat us. But we persisted. Now we have love and security! Godzo Zion!"

*Mai Sunungurai:* "First I had no child, but now there are children. When Maria walked to the grave, she sang: *Jesu wangu* [My Jesus]. In like manner, we must honour Moyo, for many women found help in that Church. Many of them had no children. Nor did they have goats with which to pay the ngangas. Today, however, we have our very own nganga, viz. Moyo. Let us all run to Moyo, for with him there is deliverance!"

*Mai Senita Zenzara,* (leader of the Ruwadzano): "In this church many a wonder came to pass. I myself have experienced
three. When I joined the church, I was a young girl. I had a sore throat which my father, a nganga, could not cure. Sometimes my swollen throat made it impossible for me to eat warm food for months on end. My sister advised me to join Zion, and I found healing in their midst. After I had joined, I gave birth to two daughters. The others laughed at my failure to produce sons to perpetuate their father's name. During a conference at Moriah in Bikita there was an announcement, 'Those who long to have children, please stand aside.' I stood aside together with some other women and related to Mutendi that I wanted to shandura jeko [lit. change my menstrual pains] and bring forth sons. Thereafter Mutendi stood up with his staff and said: 'In the Name of Jesus.' When I returned puwu! behold my first son. This was the second wonder for me in Mutendi's Church. And then puwu! the third marvel; I had three sons. I am very happy because of this and it is for this reason that I stand in front of you today'.

Prophetess Maria: "I received my Tella through the prayers of Moyo. When Mutendi laid his lands on us, we were still unbelievers and asked: 'Can water help a person to bring forth children?' But when we returned home a son was born unto us and the people looked at him with admiration and wonder. They beheld Moyo's handiwork through the presence of my son'.

A phrase from Mai Senita's testimony 'They laughed at me', gives but an inkling of the desperate position in which a woman finds herself in an African society if and when she cannot satisfy one of the most basic requirements of her marriage, i.e. bearing children. The full development and growth of an African marriage relationship stands or falls on the ability of the woman to pro-create. Taylor points out that, whereas an important reason of breakdown in Western marriages is abstinence of the sex act, in an African milieu it would be barrenness. When the husband negotiates with the father-in-law about compensation for the bride-price he has paid and starts looking for a replacement or an additional wife; when in a polygamous household the woman who has sons and daughters scoffs at her opposite number for having daughters only, then a heart-rending period sets in for the unfortunate
woman, during which she hankers after understanding and security. In the testimonies of the Zionist women, we find the promise of everything the socially wronged female yearns for: love, security and fertility. The God of Moyo, so it seems, is capable of everything. Therefore the call: ‘Let us hasten to Moyo where deliverance awaits us!’

The cases of unsuccessful Zionist treatment are not mentioned. After all, the testimonies are concerned with success and not failure. Yet there is no lack in Zionist circles of examples where a Christian attitude and love is sufficient to keep a childless marriage intact. When some women do not benefit from the Zionist treatment, they, in their disappointment, explore other avenues. Others retain their church membership, despite their being childless. The fact that they are fully accepted at Moriah or in the local congregations, in spite of their inability to contribute towards the ‘testimonies of success’ is an indication of the understanding that the will of the God of Moyo does not always correspond with the wishes of His people.

The overall impression which Zionist faith-healing makes on a person, is one of a remarkable confluence of old and new, of traditional divination and a confirmation of God’s sovereignty over the evil powers in a typical African way. This is especially evident in the prophet’s diagnosis and therapy. This form of adaptation to the indigenous background and its subordination to the judgement of the Holy Spirit need to be cautiously evaluated in order to do justice to both the advantages and disadvantages involved.

If one take into consideration that, next to his healing activities, his followers also ascribe a mediating function to him at the gates of heaven, then Mutendi certainly meets the demands of a Bantu Messiah. Yet, a theological characterization of his Church as a Messianic movement could lead to a premature and negative judgement and to a concentration on the dangers of this type of Christianity at the expense of the positive elements in it. These dangers merit a close watch. For this reason it has already been mentioned that Mutendi, as a result of the important role he plays as a negotiator of the Godly power, for some of his followers impedes rather than inten-
Exorcism of fighting shavi spirit during baptismal ceremony at Zion City. ‘Rev. Champion needs all his strength to immerse the possessed novice into the waters of Jordan’
8. Zionist evangelist, Ruben, (Mutendi's son) sprinkles door-post to safeguard homestead against entry of ngozi spirit. This precautionary action was taken after he had exorcised the dangerous spirit from the afflicted inhabitant of the hut.
Ndaza prophetess and interpreter pray and 'speak in tongues' as introduction to a prophetic diagnosis of the causes of barrenness of female 'patient' in the background (near ZAFM headquarters in Chibi district).
10. Ndaza bishop, with 'holy cords' hanging from his neck, treats patient after church service. Laying on of hands and pressing of 'holy staff' to chest and abdomen of patient, takes place simultaneously (place: Gutu district).
sifies the personal relationship with the historical Christ. This is very apparent from the oral testimonies of the Ruwadzano women, in which the man of God has such a central position that the healing power of God or His Person as a Healer becomes more of a commentary than the central subject of the Scriptural exegesis.

There is the other danger that the leader, under pressure from the expectations of his followers, is required to perform more wonders, or that he must adapt the measures representing the power of God more to the magical ritual backgrounds. Thus the distinction between the old and the new would at last also be obscured for some people and the church itself could form a bridge back to the old traditional religious practices. The question arises whether, in the case of Elias Bope, his attachment to Mutendi as the protector against ngozi spirits and to Moriah as a kind of citadel against evil spirits, offer sufficient perspective for the liberating power of God. Are we not confronted here with such an attachment to the person and environment that a real solution to the fear induced by the ngozi is excluded?

Yet a critical attitude is only justified here if one takes into account that the Zionist Movement in Rhodesia developed under circumstances in which the individual was searching for an own identity. The centrality and near-deification of the main leader result from efforts to relate the Christian message to the African world of thought and belief, in a manner the white missionary was not capable of. Because the position of the leader is directly linked with the socio-political situation, any assessment of the Messianic tendencies would have to take the perpetually changing nature of Church leadership into account.

Even if a sympathetic treatment which would be cognizant of all these factors ultimately leads to a rejection of certain syncretic practices, the Mission Churches could still learn a lot from it. The prophet's probing into that which for the African is the causation of his illness, the expulsion of spirits through exorcism and the integration of healing and pastoral care springs to mind here.

In Dutch Reformed Mission circles in Rhodesia expulsion of spirits through the laying on of hands are associated with
the activities of the Pentecostals. As an officially recognized form of healing it is not be found in the Church. There are, however, some female workers who, in the case of psychically disturbed Shona women, not only anticipated the necessity of visual and symbolic representation of divine power, but also successfully applied the laying on of hands. The importance of a Church-controlled form of exorcism within the context of the Mission Church finds its best reflection in the extraordinary experimental attempts of Rev. Mundeta of the American Mission Board at Mt. Selinda near Chipinga. As a co-worker of the hospital, part of his pastoral task consists of oft-repeated interviews aimed at penetrating into the deeper psychic background of the patients, of the public burning of magically charged amulets or blankets dedicated to the midzimu and the expulsion of spirits. During exorcism he is assisted by his wife. In a specially constructed small ‘temple’ the Reverend and his wife sing hymns which are calculated to invoke the spirits in the patient in question. If they succeed in letting the spirit put in an appearance, (buda: come out) they expel it through the laying on of hands and prayer. In this way an attempt is made to represent the sovereignty of Christ in as concrete a manner possible to those who need much more than mere medical treatment. In view of the Zionist prophetic approach it seems to me expedient that the Mission Churches embark more on the type of experimental work employed by Rev. Mundeta.

In respect of future developments in the Zionist faith-healing one would tend to agree with Turner that “the movement towards modern medicine is the most effective safeguard against the only other escape from the limitations from spiritual healing, a return to the magical methods of the past” 30 But a shift towards an acceptance of modern medicine at this stage in Rhodesia is less noticeable than with the Aladura movement in West Africa, as described by Turner. Among the Ndaza Zionists, the compromising attitude of the Church leaders in urban areas – where a new situation of compulsory medical examination demanded by some employers needs great flexibility – has already led to a break with the more conservative leader element in the tribal areas.

For example, Bishop Komboni Vambire, who has been working
at Fort Victoria for more than twenty years, breaks away from David Masuka and starts his own “African Zion Church of Jesus” in 1965, with the important addition of clauses 13 and 14 in his Church Constitution. These clauses read as follows:

13) “We have permission to drink medicine or go to the hospital: For Isaiah told them to take a lump of figs and use it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover (Isaiah 38:21) (See also Luke 10:33 and 2 Kings 20:17).

14) Whatever tree is medicine we eat it. (Genesis 1:29)”

From interviews with Bishop Komboni’s four vafundisi it appeared that they were all former leaders in David Masuka’s church who had fallen into discredit because they used medicines. With the increase in urbanization, one can expect Zionism in the urban areas to adapt itself more readily to the new and changing conditions. Amongst groups with a greater attachment to the leader, as in Mutendi’s case, the process will be somewhat slower. Mutendi’s son, Enginasi, who in all probability will be the future leader of the Z.C.C., has already intimated that he wishes to abolish the sanctified paper and the strips of linen.

Whether he will succeed in his endeavours, or whether he will wilt under the pressure of his future subjects for whom the symbolic healing measures are inextricably bound up with their entry into the Zionist fold, or whether he will retain the existing practices in order to avoid a schism, only time will tell.
Notes

2. B. Sundkler, (1961), 32. ‘This root cause is the colour line between White and Black’
7. In using the term Zionism, I have partly maintained Sundkler’s division of the Independent Churches into Ethiopian, Zionist and Messianic categories c.f. also the typographical representation of H. W. Turner in V Hayward’s ‘African Independent Church Movements’ (1963) 13. It must be borne in mind that Sundkler’s typology for the purposes of this treatise is not strictly applied in the sense that Zionist Churches with Messianic tendencies, are indicated as such at every opportunity. For a description of what Sundkler calls the ‘Bethesda Colony’ see his ‘Bantu Prophets’ (1961), 154 ff.
8. The Chingombe Chiefdom forms part of the Gutu tribal area, one of the most densely populated regions in Rhodesia. Ethnically, the 8-9000 inhabitants of Chingombe belong to the Southern Shona, with two wards chiefly inhabited by the Hera (Zezuru) and the Rufuru (Karanga) tribes. A Random Sample Survey conducted on a 20% basis of the total population, resident in 110 villages in 1967, indicate that the division for adult religious groupings above 18 years is approximately as follows:
   Traditionalists with no Church Affiliation: 16.7%;
   Dutch Reformed: 18.1%;
   Roman Catholic: 12.8%;
   Methodist: 3.3%;
   Pentecostal Mission Churches (Full Gospel and Church of
Christ): 8%
Zionist: 13% ;
Apostles, who also belong to the Zionist category: 4%;
Chibarirwe (Ethiopian): 14%;
The First Ethiopian Church: 8.5%, and other church groupings,
e.g. Assemblies of God, 1.6%.
Membership of Independent African Churches (41.1% of the
population), is thus nearly as high as that of the European
controlled Mission Churches (42.2%).
The fact that Zionism spread to this district only in the early
1930’s, and the Ethiopian Churches only after
1950, while the
Reformed Mission was already operative from the first decade
of this century, is proof of the phenomenal growth of the In­
dependent Church Movement in that area.
12. Very often the historical growth of the Church, or at least the
high lights of the story, are repeated, with the accent heavily on
Mutendi’s successful resistance to the repressive measures taken
against the extension of Zionism in its initial phase. In the
eyes of his followers, Mutendi’s repeated release after short
spells of detention was a moral victory for their leader in his
relations with the European authorities.
13. Pricks with a sharp needle, to extract ‘bad’ blood or water.
15. Of such a ‘place to feel at home’ Welbourn writes: “It is possible
that precisely such a need for personal identity, for a label
by which men can recognize themselves in terms of those whom
they know ‘face to face’ is the fundamental (if largely uncon­
cious) motive in the formation of independent churches”, c.f.
is of opinion that the symptoms enumerated occur most
frequently in patients treated by the faith-healers of the Congo
Khaki Church.
19. Lekhanyane was the founder of the Z.C.C. in the Transvaal.
Mutendi broke away with him from the Z.A.F.M. Although
Mutendi became more independent in the course of time and
by own initiative adapted his church to the Rhodesian circum­
stances, his name and that of Lekhanyane are often mentioned
in one breath.
20. Mutendi employs an effective system of ‘compulsory visits’
as a result of which high-ranking church officials of all his
outlying congregations are expected to spend at least two weeks
in Moriah, at regular intervals. This ensures contact with remote
communities and the constant presence of office-bearers at Moriah who could minister the pastoral needs of the patients.

21. The influence of the traditional divination practices through spirit possession is seen very clearly in Zionist prophecies. In the traditional religion every recognized svikiro (spirit medium) is assisted by a regular ‘interpreter’ who, during the possession-stage by the visiting spirit, interprets the message to the audience.

22. ‘Speaking in tongues’ very often betrays the hidden desire of the poorly-schooled prophets to master the English Language. On this occasion, they exploit the few words at their disposal.

23. Ndebele Spirit. The term Dzviti originates from the time when the Ndebele warriors of Moselekatse suppressed the Shona.

24. While the mudzimu is always the spirit of the deceased ancestor or blood relative who can exercise his/her mystical power in a malevolent or protective manner on the family, the shavi is always an alien spirit which can cause less serious illness, or be instrumental in supplying the person in question with substantial wealth. Thus the curative insight of an nganga is very often ascribed to a shavi spirit. The ngozi is the most feared and dangerous of all spirits. It is the avenging spirit of a murdered person, or of someone who has suffered death through unlawful treatment, e.g. expulsion without food. This spirit visits the offspring of the accused involved, and causes serious illness or death. Research in Chingombe revealed how firmly entrenched the belief in the mystical power of the mudzimu is. Only 16% of the adults (exceptional cases from all the various Churches) were prepared to maintain that the ancestral spirits have lost their power of influence and mysticism among the living.


26. ‘Mutumbu’ lit. means ‘the whole physical body’ but in this context it is compensation for damage in the form of oxen, which, per limb as it were, have to compensate for the aggrieved and deceased person. Generally compensation amounts to a maximum of ten oxen or a young woman, who, without bride-price, is handed over to the relatives of the ngozi spirit.

27. Conflicts are very often expressed in terms of threats of witchcraft. In Samu’s case there is reason enough for conflicts. The presence of a detention camp for political prisoners in his area keeps his people speculating. Consequently there is greater pressure on him both from his subjects and from the Administration. For a successful term in office he is dependent on both. The illness and problems of this senior chief in all probability have a direct connection with the tensions which accompany the almost unavoidable division of loyalty to which the Shona Chief is subject.

28. “Western Europe” Taylor suggests, ‘rightly or wrongly, has
isolated the act of intercourse as the consummation of marriage which, if withheld, provides the ground for nullity. The primal view, regarding the child as the consummation of marriage, considered it more natural that the sterility should annul it”

See J. V Taylor, (1963), 111.

29. B. Sundkler, (1961), 323. For him, the basic criterium for distinguishing between Messianism and other Independent Churches, is in the mediating function of the leader at the gates of heaven. This distinction does not yet entail a radical choice between Christ and the Bantu Messiah for the Mutendi Zionists, as was Sundkler’s impression with Shembe and Lekhanyane. For this reason, I prefer not to typify the Z.C.C. as a Messianic movement at this stage.

References


This essay examines one of the major attractions of the African Zionist movement for the indigenous population of Rhodesia. It is based on the personal testimonies of numerous Zionists, on the author's observations of faithhealing techniques in the colonies of prophetic healers and on an analysis of the contents of sermons obtained during a two and a half year period (1965-1967) of research in the central and south-eastern parts of the country.