



Is this a GENUINE REVIVAL?

A Missiological Investigation about the
Revival among the Zulus

ALBERT PILON

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Translated by
Dr. David E. Orton

Dedicated to my wife Anneke

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Psalm 124

- 1 A Song of Ascents, of David.
“Had it not been the LORD who was on our side,”
Let Israel now say,
- 2 “Had it not been the LORD who was on our side
When men rose up against us,
- 3 Then they would have swallowed us alive,
When their anger was kindled against us;
- 4 Then the waters would have engulfed us,
The stream would have swept over our soul;
- 5 Then the raging waters would have swept over our soul.”
- 6 Blessed be the LORD,
Who has not given us to be torn by their teeth.
- 7 Our soul has escaped as a bird
out of the snare of the trapper;
The snare is broken and we have escaped.
- 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth (NASV).

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Foreword

Sects thrive and flourish. They spread lies like fundamental truths. They stop at nothing, if circumstances dictate. They gaze and smile sympathetically at the poor innocents and are vitriolic if someone sees through them. They fashion their own truths and are terrified of the real Truth. They come with splendid promises and conjure up their mirages before the eyes of people who are thirsty for love, security and personal attention. New members are brought in as beloved ones, are stripped of their finances and are then discarded. But you see them reappear in each new generation. Like actors, they don a different coat every time.

The sacred is relegated to merchandise. Isn't this just what happened to Kwasizabantu? A supposed revival, and indeed one of the most durable the world has ever known. That is the message with which they managed to attract attention around the world because of a deep-rooted yearning in evangelical and Protestant circles for a new revival. So many people are depressed at the weakness of spiritual life in their own countries and churches, perhaps in themselves too. In the circumstances it is almost the gospel that rings out when attention is drawn to a special revival in South Africa which has the potential to spread its wings worldwide. Along with hundreds of others, the curious, seekers and hungry believers flocked to the feeding troughs in Zululand.

Was this a revival? I wanted it to be. I hoped it was. But the stories were too vague and could not be checked. I had doubts and felt I was a very weak believer. Several times I was on the point of letting the flame in my heart be fanned in far-off South Africa. I hoped and feared... Occasionally I was invited by the Kwasizabantu movement

in the Netherlands as a speaker. Apparently (“people” thought) I had seen some light. Until, around the year 2000, reports appeared in the press of serious abuses in the supposed revival in South Africa. The leading lights of Ksb in the Netherlands refused to give me answers to my questions about this. I was immediately dispensed with. Anyone who uses his brain ... is by definition an enemy. There is no room for questions in the revival flock.

In the Netherlands I have the reputation of being a specialist on sects. This is not my title. I drifted into this, from an early age, as I had the dubious pleasure of coming into contact with a number of sects – though I did not commit myself to any of them. But how were things to go on with Kwasizabantu? They too practised the tried and tested ostrich method, of burying their heads in the sand. The door was closed to me.

What a surprise! A little over a year after the scales fell from my eyes Albert Pilon told me of his painful awakening from the revival dream. And further surprises were to follow. He proposed to research Kwasizabantu. He quickly found facts which to me seem earth-shattering, at least in the Christian world. Bravo, Albert, for having had the courage – despite being broken and damaged by all your painful experiences – to produce this courageous piece of work. The Lord is with you; otherwise you would not have been able to do it. And you have kept the faith, which may be seen as a modern miracle after so many frustrating experiences. And you have kept your love for the biblical truth, after so many lies, so much ill will and untruthfulness. May the Lord’s name be praised!

First clear the dross, then onward, in search of the true revival, driven by the still Voice in our heart. Not despairing, but hoping. Not giving up but taking up the challenge. This is the testimony of this book by Albert Pilon. And even though it is painful and sad to read your book, still in the background I hear the angels singing and I see the face of the Invisible One, who himself is Love. This sour apple is one to bite into. After the sour comes the sweet, which cannot be found elsewhere than in the rough ground of earthly reality.

I warmly recommend this book to its readers. That should be clear. Brace yourself and dare to confront the bitter reality, and hold fast to an unblemished hope, unadulterated by lies and deception. Go with God!

Rev. Abram J. Krol, Gorinchem, The Netherlands, 2015

Introduction

In 1966, or thereabouts, the South African Erlo Stegen announced that a revival had broken out among the Zulu nation in the former Zululand.¹ He claimed to be ushering in the greatest and best revival of all time, which has continued unabated since it first arose in 1966. Stegen says, “God had kindled His fire which spread over the mountains and through the valleys of Zululand, so that in one week, in fact in one day, thousands of Zulus were converted.” Later the revival spread to the other indigenous peoples, coloureds and whites of South Africa. Stegen saw the chance to bring about a multiracial community of people whom he called “the Kwasizabantu mission station”. When the propaganda machine began to run he seemed to have success. It was not long before people came to visit Kwasizabantu from all over the world, to experience for themselves some of what seemed to be happening there.

Under Stegen’s leadership Kwasizabantu quickly grew into a self-sufficient village, separated from its immediate surroundings. In addition to work, security and education, the inhabitants also found Western civilisation. But Kwasizabantu is no more than an artificial society which sooner or later everyone leaves, because in the past decades it has been seen more and more as a power centre. Stegen’s preference is for a well-lubricated mission station, where he can mobilise vast crowds of people and create the impression of a revival.

In 1973 Stegen came to try his luck in Europe, expecting to see a revival there too. He and his teams visited European countries several times a year to hold campaigns and conferences. They did not just see

¹ The former Zululand is now part of the province of Kwazulu-Natal.

it as a mission to bring the gospel to the Zulus in South Africa but also desired to let Europeans have a share in “what God has done for the Zulus”. In due course Stegen was able to gather a group of firm adherents around him who set up communities in national centres. Among them were people with a full academic education, people from the middle classes and groups of less well educated immigrants from the former Soviet Union. All were seeking a leadership figure and an anchor in life.

The success that Stegen has enjoyed in Europe is due to the modernisation of society which began in the 1960s. Norms and values which had established the basis for society for centuries were abandoned. The Christian church has been drawn into this process and has been forced into the margins of society. The vacuum that has developed seems to be fertile ground for movements of spiritual renewal that originated in other parts of the world. Their leaders radiate charisma, have great powers of persuasion and enjoy unusual authority.

Stegen’s dream came to an abrupt end in 1999 when a persistent stream of rumours emerged which placed Kwasizabantu in a bad light. Newspaper columns were filled with apparent deception, misuse of power, secret funds, forced decisions, corporal punishment, one case of homicide and connections with the secret service in the days of the Apartheid government. The cause of this is the fact that former members and colleagues are able to contact one another through the internet. They seem barely to know one another, if at all, partly because they left over a period of some decades and live on different continents. Using a number of different platforms they come out with press reports about the situation in which Kwasizabantu finds itself.

After that there appeared personal interviews with former colleagues in the secular press which talk of such evil and degrading matters that few people believe them. They left the movement disillusioned and traumatised. Many of them were scarred for life. It is notable that some people who were once sympathisers with the

movement and were touched by it speak of an experience with positive consequences for their lives from that point on.

Question-marks against Stegen's interests or policies are particularly unwelcome to him. In the press he categorically denies all accusations and tensions, not batting an eyelid. Nonetheless the process is irrevocable as more and more colleagues and members leave. What remains in the end is a movement of limited size which grossly exaggerates its own importance.

Is Stegen right to talk of revival, while according to former members it is a matter of deception? Have theological researchers found traces of deception, or been led up the garden path? And how is it that his adherents ascribe so much power to him? Can the history of the emergence of the historical background of Kwasizabantu give us clarity as to the character of the movement? To what extent does Zulu religion and culture play a part in this, as the movement arose in the former Zulu homeland in South Africa? What is its position in relation to the universal Christian church, the African Independent Churches (AIC's) and Western sects or cults?

The aim of this book is to shed light on Stegen's Kwasizabantu revival movement. Its intent is not to describe the complete history of the movement. It is an attempt to give an analysis on the basis of material occupying a period of almost 50 years, dealing with Kwasizabantu's own publications, theological studies of Kwasizabantu by third parties, letters, newspaper articles and documents.

In addition, as author I interviewed dozens of former colleagues and members of Kwasizabantu in Europe and South Africa. In the fieldwork in Kwasizabantu I found a number of Zulus and whites who experienced the beginning of Stegen's revival. As they were among his first colleagues their accounts are especially valuable.

I was not aware where this study would lead me and had no idea in advance what the conclusions were going to be. After reading the correspondence and studying independent scholarly sources, I began to realize the enormity of the disastrous situation Kwasizabantu has been in since it came into existence. During the 14 years I was leader

Introduction

of the Dutch branch of this movement (till 2002), I was totally unaware of these irregularities. However, I want to sincerely apologize for the untruths that I spread and the mischief that I have done to others.

The book you are holding is a case study and is not intended to be a scholarly publication.

Albert Pilon



figure 1 - map of South Africa

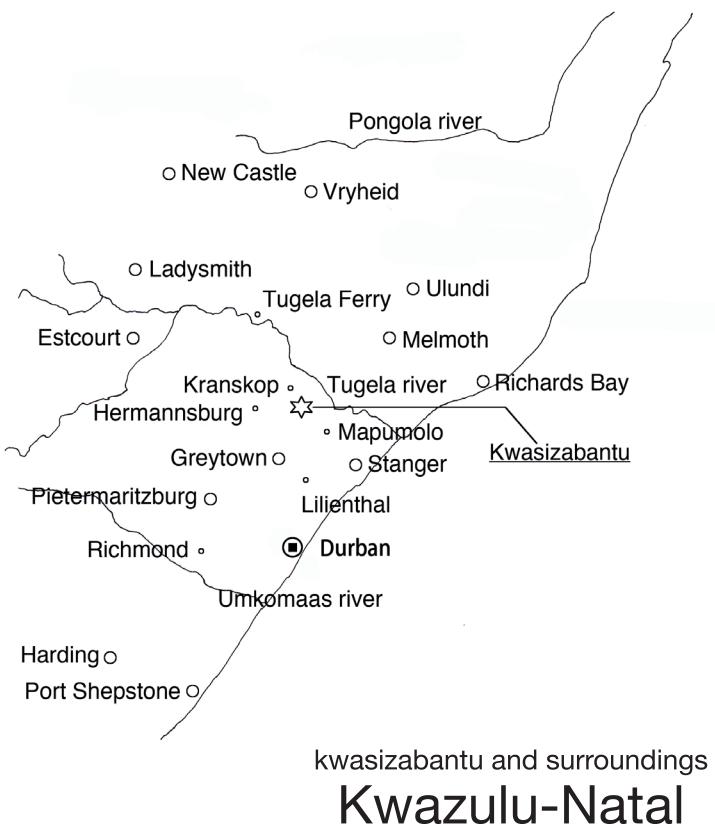


figure 2 - map of Kwazulu-Natal

CHAPTER 1

The Kwasizabantu Revival compared with revivals from which it emerged

Introduction

From 1970 Stegen gave worldwide fame to his revival so as to let others share in “what God has done for the Zulus”. In Europe he gains success by organising summer conferences annually in Switzerland. In the beginning he managed to attract several thousand people with stories of the revival in Zululand. If a revival has not occurred in Europe, it seems that he raised expectations that were too high.

The question is how Stegen interprets revival. Few words in contemporary Christian use are used with so many different meanings. The word revival does not occur as a noun in the Bible. Nonetheless it seems to be one of the most commonly used words in the evangelical dictionary. One might wonder whether there is a general definition of the term revival. It is crucially important because spiritual movements gain their content and shape by means of the different notions that they maintain.

What is revival?

Revival is a term that is used in evangelical and experience-based circles which are looking for spiritual renewal. Christians whose lives seem to them to be dry and arid try by means of prayer and dedication to move God to bring them to change. Sometimes individuals, churches or a whole district can be touched by the Spirit of God, the effects of which can be visible for years. One consequence is that un-

believers, especially, seek and meet God. The Bible is discovered and experienced anew, by which means faith gains new a living content.¹ For the search for revival there is biblical legitimation.

Methods

Roughly 160 years ago groups of missionaries and colonists came to South Africa. They had come from Hermannsburg in northern Germany, where a revival took place in 1848. A century later (1948) Stegen announced a revival among the Zulu nation and founded the multiracial community of Kwasizabantu. The revivals of Hermannsburg, Lilienthal and Kwasizabantu are then described and compared with each other and assessed.

Revival in Hermannsburg

Louis Harms (1808-1865) was the second of ten children from the family of Christian Harms, an Evangelical Lutheran preacher in Hermannsburg, Germany. His father, influenced by the Enlightenment, did not believe in redemption through Christ.² He was not a pure rationalist, but as a supernaturalist he tried to link human speech with biblical faith.³ On the insistence of his parents Louis went to study theology in Göttingen, but after a year and a half he decided to stop. He could no longer believe in God, the Bible, and the divinity of Christ.⁴ So as not to disappoint his father too much, he decided to complete his studies without changing his views.⁵ With the final examinations in sight Louis fell into a crisis and began to read the Bible seriously. Through the text John 17:3 it became clear to him that he was a lost sinner in need of the grace and forgiveness of Christ. Up to that point, in his own eyes he was blameless and without sin. This

¹ E. Hulse, quoting M. Lloyd-Jones, in *Give Him no rest*, 2006, p. 93.

² J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, 2008, p. 21.

³ J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, 2008, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵ J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, pp. 27, 28.

realisation cast an entirely new light on his future ministry. Later he described the Enlightenment as *Eselsgeschrei der Vernunft* (“donkeys’ cry of reason”).⁶ After completing his studies he served in Lauenburg⁷ (1830-1839) and Lüneburg⁸ (1840-1843). In 1844 he was confirmed as assistant minister in Hermannsburg and on his father’s death (1849) appointed as minister.⁹

Louis Harms proclaimed the biblical message with power and simplicity, leaving a deep impression on those who heard him. As a pastor he was an outstanding advisor and with his friendliness he was able to gain a following. He associated with the common people, speaking Plattdeutsch (Low German).¹⁰ But he was not democratically disposed and was possessed of a striking personality.¹¹ He remained unmarried for his whole life. As a result of the great seriousness with which Louis Harms took his ministry, a spiritual awakening slowly dawned. Almost all members attended church services and the number of participants at communion increased.¹² Around 1848 there was the first talk of revival. From far and near people came to Hermannsburg to listen to Louis Harms. He called people to repentance and holiness of life.¹³ As the church filled up, the drinking and amusement centres emptied. Many came to a genuine conversion, which was evident in people’s behaviour and was given expression in a real confession of faith. The revival was in line with the morals

⁶ J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, p. 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹¹ J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, introduction.

¹² J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, pp. 64, 65.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

and customs of Lutheran orthodox doctrine,¹⁴ as Harms combined Lutheran orthodoxy and pietism.

Innumerable complaints were brought against Harms for forming conventicles. In order to avoid condemnation, Harms therefore conducted informal conversations with groups of believers in Plattdeutsch on weekdays. There were no prayers or singing, and the Plattdeutsch Bugenhagen Bible was used.¹⁵

Harms had a great heart for mission and convinced the congregation of the necessity of preaching the gospel to the heathen. His model for mission was borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon missionaries (Willibrord, Wilfred etc.), who brought the gospel to Germany around the year 700. They did not come as individuals, but in groups of 12 to 20 people, who established monasteries and were self-sufficient. Around the monasteries they built Christian villages. By such means Harms aimed to set up a network in Africa to shine the light of Christ. Later other parts of the world followed. The missionaries should not receive any financial support, should own everything in common and were expected to live on the level of the indigenous population.¹⁶

Louis Harms was able to awaken the missionary zeal of a number of young men who wanted to train as missionaries. As their education seemed to be inadequate for university studies, it was decided to found a training institute, the leadership of which was entrusted to his brother Theodor.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁵ J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, pp. 85, 87, 88.

¹⁶ J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, p. 199; J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, pp. 105, 106.

¹⁷ J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, p. 199; J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, p. 101.

The condition was dedication and love for the lost. The candidates were given a theological education and were trained in practical skills. On completion of the training, it was decided to send them out to Africa. For economic reasons a small, 200-ton sailing ship was built, as transport costs would otherwise have been too high.¹⁸ In 1853 the first 12 missionaries boarded the *Candacé*. The plan was to disembark in Ethiopia, but unfortunately they were impeded from doing so. Out of necessity they departed for Durban, a South African port. Here the way proved clear to conduct missionary work among the Zulus. They named their first mission post Neu Hermannsburg. In the succeeding years, from here the word spread quickly over Zululand.¹⁹

Louis Harms never visited the overseas mission fields in person, and he never took part in international conferences. He served the Hermannsburg congregation as pastor and teacher until his death in 1865, after which Theodor Harms took over the entire leadership. Louis Harms's greatness consisted in prayer for the congregation and the mission field. Whenever he began to pray he prayed like Elijah and God provided for all needs, so he never asked or begged for money for mission.²⁰

Louis Harms brought Hermannsburg worldwide attention. This place on the Lüneburger Heide became known not only to Christians in Germany but also to many Christians in North and South America, Asia, Africa and Australia.²¹ Under his ministry a revival took place which bears fruit to this very day. A tree grew from the mustard seed

¹⁸ J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, p. 199; J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, pp. 112, 113.

¹⁹ J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, p. 199; J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, p. 115.

²⁰ J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, p. 211.

²¹ J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, p. 8.

which in the first forty years produced 2,000 missionaries and 9,000 converted colleagues from among the heathen.²²

In Zululand a number of mission posts grew up which developed into villages, the name of which is a reminder of the German past. Separate churches were built for whites and Zulus. One of the white congregations is Lilienthal, which was founded in 1898 and emerged from the congregation of New Hanover.²³

Today this church – Evangelisch-Lutherisches Missionswerk in Niedersachsen-ELM²⁴ – is linked with 19 partner churches in 17 countries worldwide.²⁵

Revival in Lilienthal

Anton Engelbrecht was born the son of Johannes Albrecht Engelbrecht in 1905 on the Braunschweig farm on the Pongola river at Lüneburg near Paulpietersburg in Zululand. His grandfather Johann Detlef Engelbrecht came with the *Candacé* to South Africa in 1861 and was a missionary in the area of Ekhombela.²⁶

Anton's parents were faithful churchgoers, who had not been able to point the way to Christ. On one occasion he was deeply moved by a sermon and decided to become a missionary. Fear of the last judgment and the will to make something of his life were two strong forces that dominated his life. Finally this prompted him to make his decision.²⁷ From 1927 to 1934 Anton Engelbrecht attended the missionary training institute in Hermannsburg, Germany.²⁸ The fire

²² J. Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms*, p. 193.

²³ W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, 1987, p. 10.

²⁴ <http://www.elm-mission.net>

²⁵ J. Reller and H.F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte*, introduction.

²⁶ H. Pape, *Hermannsburger Missionare in Südafrika*, 1986, p. 46; A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, 1965, pp. 15–17.

²⁷ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 35.

²⁸ H. Pape, *Hermannsburger Missionare in Südafrika*, p. 46.

that burned in the time of Louis Harms had given place to biblical criticism. Despite resisting this, Anton fell into a crisis.²⁹ He also clashed with a number of Nazi-sympathising lecturers.³⁰

Redinger, who was present at a conversation between Anton Engelbrecht and Hermann Hambrock during a train journey to South West Africa (Namibia), relates the following. Engelbrecht would have nothing to do with National Socialism and condemned it vehemently. He spoke about it repeatedly with deep contempt. He differed considerably on this question with a number of lecturers and this brought him into discredit.³¹

Engelbrecht wanted to bid farewell to his studies, but persevered and completed them. He was an intelligent person with charisma, who kept himself apart from fellow students and displayed traits of ambition.³² Despite this training he found no peace for his soul.³³

Back in South Africa he was almost immediately sent to the mission post of Esibongweni, where he first deputised for his brother Albert.³⁴ As a missionary he worked on the area between Vryheid and Melmoth. He took his horse over the mountains and valleys of Zululand, where he led indigenous evangelists. Without love he preached a legalistic religion and applied church discipline strictly. The result was that the indigenous Christians were saddled with the Western standards of the Evangelical-Lutheran church. In 1946 he was moved for health reasons to the German-speaking Evangelical-

²⁹ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, pp. 44-46.

³⁰ Vision, *Gemeinde Weltweit*, 2000, p. 8.

³¹ E. Redinger, email 2 August 2004.

³² W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, p.ii.

³³ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 14.

³⁴ *Hermannsburger Missionsblatt*, 1934, p. 90 and 1935, p. 58; H. Pape, *Hermannsburger Missionare in Südafrika*, p. 46.

Lutheran church of Lilienthal in Zululand.³⁵ As a preacher he turned radically against the conformity to the world in the congregation, which was enough to create many tensions. As a result of this, three years later he fell into a crisis once again, which led this time to his true conversion. He was counselled in this by an evangelist who was a family member.³⁶ He now preached the gospel with new zeal, and nominal Christians fled to God in concern for their souls. The lives of many changed completely and families were reconciled.³⁷ Opponents accused him of exaggerated piety, fanaticism and perfectionism. As a result of the criticism and resistance prompted by his preaching, he rejected church authority and in 1951 he left the Evangelical-Lutheran Church.³⁸

Engelbrecht ended his ministry and church membership in writing, in accordance with the rules of the synod.³⁹ He moved with his brother Gerhard to Pretoria, where he set up an independent evangelistic ministry of his own. In addition he set up a Bible School with the name “Bibelhaus heilig dem Herrn”.⁴⁰ Meanwhile Engelbrecht maintained contact with the church members of Lilienthal who were on his side. In due course he began tent evangelism among the Zulus.⁴¹ The move of the Bibelhaus to Claridge near Pietermaritzburg was thus a logical step (1955).⁴² He began to preach the gospel enthusiastically, and many were touched. He even got through to Nazi-sympathising

³⁵ H. Pape, *Hermannsbürger Missionare in Südafrika*, p. 47; A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 61.

³⁶ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, pp. 65-69.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74

³⁸ H. Pape, *Hermannsbürger Missionare in Südafrika*, p. 47; A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 85.

³⁹ A. Engelbrecht, *Wie ein Adler*, pp. 111, 112.

⁴⁰ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 92.

⁴¹ A. Engelbrecht, *Wie ein Adler*, p. 127.

⁴² A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 155; W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, p. 21.

farmers who became followers of Christ.⁴³ The congregation grew to a few hundred members and became English-speaking instead of German-speaking. Engelbrecht spread his wings, founded 14 outposts, 8 bookshops, had a large chapel built (1966) and held overseas campaigns.⁴⁴ The number of workers grew, some of them coming from Europe.⁴⁵ Meanwhile Engelbrecht's "free evangelism" met with resistance from the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, which set up an investigation. It was striking that Engelbrecht did not want to lay any responsibility at the door of colleague preachers who accused him of authoritarian behaviour, person cult and sectarianism.⁴⁶

On one occasion Engelbrecht had a special experience, which he called being filled with the Holy Spirit and by which means he gained a new view of the work of the Spirit.⁴⁷ He invited David du Plessis (Mr. Pentecost) to hold lectures on the Holy Spirit, and du Plessis laid strong emphasis on speaking in tongues as evidence for being filled with the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸

Widow Leni Witthöft (née Röttcher) was also blessed with special gifts, for which Engelbrecht held her in high regard. He therefore gave her responsibility for the bookshops and the staff.⁴⁹ She became his prayer partner, who spent a great deal of time alone with him. This created an unfortunate situation and led to Engelbrecht losing a degree of authority. After his wife died, he married Leni Röttcher.⁵⁰ Engelbrecht became blinded by pride, arrogance and materialism,

⁴³ Vision, *Gemeinde Weltweit*, p. 95; A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 139.

⁴⁴ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 146; A. Engelbrecht, *Wie ein Adler*, p. 117.

⁴⁵ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 166.

⁴⁶ H.J. Becken, *Betrifft Pastor Anton Engelbrecht*, Hermannsburger Mission archive, Germany; *Missionsanstalt Tagesbuch*, pp. 88/60, dated 3 March 1960.

⁴⁷ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, p. 143.

⁴⁸ W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, p. 14.

⁴⁹ A. Engelbrecht, *Von der Herde weg*, pp. 177, 178.

⁵⁰ H. Bartels, conversation with Redinger on 6 September 2009. Anton Engelbrecht (died 1989) was married to Martha Ripke (died 1973). Seven children were born from

and respected his co-workers and members of his congregation less and less. In the end deep-rooted tensions between Engelbrecht and his closest colleagues were the reason why Stegen and his companions saw an opportunity to occupy all the positions in the administration and to marginalise Engelbrecht. Stegen singlehandedly dismantled Engelbrecht's work, sold possessions, even returned gifts and sent superfluous staff home.⁵¹

Kwasizabantu Revival

Erlo Stegen was born in 1935, the son of Carl Stegen (1901-1980) and Irmgard Witthöft (1906-2002), on the Paardefontein farm near Mbalane not far from New Hanover. He was the fourth of six children. He married Kay Dahl (1943-2005) and had six daughters. His forebears were descendants of German immigrants. They came from northern Germany, having heard the call of *Gottes Rufer in der Heide* ("God's herald on the heath"): Louis Harms.⁵² His grandfather Heinrich Christoph Stegen left with the *Candacé* for South Africa in 1883 to support the Hermannsburg Missionary Society as a farmer.⁵³

Stegen grew up in the white Evangelical-Lutheran church of Lilienthal and came under the influence of Rev. Anton Engelbrecht. The Stegen family supported Engelbrecht in his initiatives and joined the separated congregation of Claridge. From 1952 to 1953 Stegen trained as an evangelist at the "Bibelhaus heilig dem Herrn" in Pretoria. Prior to this, however, he had a crisis and a fierce argument, because he wanted to become a farmer like his father and grandfather. He experienced this time, in his own words, as "hell on earth".⁵⁴ After completing his training Stegen became an evangelistic worker with

their marriage (H. Pape, *Hermannsburger Missionare*, p. 46). Shortly after her death he remarried, to Leni Röttcher (died 1990), the widow of Mannie Witthöft.

⁵¹ E. Redinger, *Coup d'état*, 27 March 2000.

⁵² A. Pagel, *Gottes Rufer in der Heide*, 1978.

⁵³ W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, pp. 19, 17.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

the Claridge congregation. For twelve and a half years he conducted tent evangelism among the Zulus in the area along the Umvoti River. He wanted to preach fire from heaven,⁵⁵ but without success.⁵⁶ To get out of the impasse he absorbed himself in Zionism, trying to find the key to their success.⁵⁷ When nothing proved of use his courage sank and he again fell into a crisis, the result of which was that he determined to stop spiritual work.⁵⁸

The Beginning of the Revival

In late 1966 Stegen joined together daily with a number of Zulus in a cowshed for prayer. They believed that God was seeking someone to function as a channel to speak to them. They first thought of Helen Mzila, but it turned out that she was not prepared to do this.⁵⁹ One particular day when everyone was together in prayer, a powerful wind⁶⁰ began to blow through their midst and the cowshed began to shake.⁶¹ At this point the “Spirit of God” came down on the Zulu woman Magasa (*uthole uMoya*). She received the gift of tongues and became Stegen’s Zulu prophetess (*umprofeti*), whom from then on he would always consult for advice.

Stegen told Redinger that he could get Magasa to go into a trance, and said through her he could approach God directly. He saw the trances as the breakthrough to revival; through them he received direct answers to all his questions and so was always completely in touch with God’s will. Hence everyone should listen to him. This gift

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 30.

⁵⁶ E. Stegen, *Opwekking begint bij jezelf*, 1993, p. 41.

⁵⁷ Testimony of E. Redinger, points 22 and 23.

⁵⁸ W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, p. 33.

⁵⁹ Testimony of E. Redinger, point 33.

⁶⁰ Cf. A.I. Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism*, 1976, p. 85; in the Zulu language the Holy Spirit is called *uMoya*, which literally means wind or air.

⁶¹ W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, p. 36; E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, 1998, p. 62.

that worked through Magasa had been granted to him personally, so that he would not go astray.⁶²

The trances led to huge clashes with the members of the Claridge congregation. They could not make Stegen out and found him two-faced. None of those present dared to question whether Magasa's messages were right, because she was held in special esteem.

In the beginning of the revival also experiences of warmth or fire (in the body), healings, deliverances, exorcism, speaking in tongues, dreams and visions flooded in like an avalanche. Stegen claimed that the experience of warmth or fire was the last outpouring of the Holy Spirit before the second coming of Christ, which would pass through him over the whole world.⁶³

Stegen went through a process of accommodation to the Zulu culture, which places completely different priorities on the use of norms and values. This created a conflict with Christian ethics.⁶⁴ The Claridge congregation split, while a group of less than half embarked on the new adventure with Stegen (see Appendix 1, pp.221-223).

After some time the Mapumulo magistrate prohibited the holding of meetings in the cowshed because of the development plan. Stegen resisted at first, but in the end went in search of a new place to meet. In 1970 his brother Bodo bought a farm near Kranskop with the name "Jammerdal" and gave him a ten-hectare piece of the land for the realisation of a multiracial community. Stegen called his location "Kwasizabantu", which means a place where people are helped. He

⁶² E. Redinger, interview 14 July 2006; testimony points 33, 34 and 35.

⁶³ D. Stone, interview 2 July 2006; A. Williams, interview 15 July 2006; E. Redinger, *Comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001.

⁶⁴ In missiology this process is called acculturation.

borrowed this name from a neighbouring postal agency which was situated on a nearby hill.⁶⁵

This location lay between a traditional Zulu area and a farming area. Stegen built homes, schools and an 8,000-seater auditorium. He also set up a large number of businesses, most of which bear the Stegen family name. These businesses brought many opportunities for employment and grew into an important economic factor. They include plantations, a supermarket, a bakery, and a farm where yoghurt is made. The products are of good quality and are sold at reasonable prices. The staff are recruited from their own supporting families and work mostly for pocket-money or for a low wage so as to “help” the mission.⁶⁶

Kwasizabantu is a multiracial community with a class society under the authority of whites supplemented by a number of prominent Zulus. After these there follows a middle group of mostly whites. Below them are mainly poor Zulus, who are generally less settled. For them the community is a stepping-stone between the African world and the Western world.

Stegen’s Publicity Campaign

Stegen realised that if he wanted to achieve success he would have to create publicity for his revival. In the book *Revival among the Zulus*, published in his name, he draws a connection between the Kwasizabantu revival and the early Christian church.⁶⁷ Stegen aimed to show how closely Kwasizabantu relates to the “first church”.

⁶⁵ At that time the Apartheid legislation prohibited whites from visiting the “homelands” and conversely, the Bantus needed a pass to come into white areas. The solution was a place that was situated on the border of both areas and which guaranteed free access to everyone.

⁶⁶ The businesses include Emseni Farming, Bonle Yoghurt and the water factory aQuellé, which has an annual profit in the millions: <http://www.aquelle.co.za/default.php>

⁶⁷ Cf. M.L. Daneel, *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia*, 1970, p. 14: The Zionist movements have a carefully described sacred history alongside the Bible. They have

He says: “For years I had a special love of the first Christians and one can scarcely read the reports of the first church without being touched by them.”⁶⁸

He leaves no room for doubt as to the exceptional events: at all times of the day hundreds of heathens were arriving, spontaneously and full of conviction of sin, weeping with remorse and pleading for salvation. From far and near they came to Mapumulo to hear the gospel.⁶⁹

Stegen says: “God had lit His fire which spread through the valleys and over the hills, so that in a week, in one day in fact, thousands of people were converted. This happened among both the Zulus and the Xhosas in South Africa.”⁷⁰

In collaboration with the German Kurt E. Koch, the book *God among the Zulus* came into being. This book contains a report of the miracles of 1966 to 1976. As Koch was able to make the story of the revival attractive to a Western readership, the propaganda machine started to work perfectly. The book appeared in 1979 and was published in many languages. Consequently Stegen and his teams were invited to give talks in various European countries. With the help of his brother Friedel he organised conferences which were attended by thousands. Christians of different denominations who had been seeking revival for years found themselves very impressed by Stegen and joined his movement. In a number of European countries centres were founded with communities and schools for their own education.⁷¹

strong moral regulation and hark back to the early Christian church.

⁶⁸ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, p. 20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48: “We only had to go in front of the house and look, at any time of day, any day of the week, there were always one or two hundred people standing waiting.”

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁷¹ Kwasizabantu set up centres in Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Romania and Russia.

Years of Disquiet and Commotion

The early period of Kwasizabantu had a rather tumultuous course; it was a coming and going of members and co-workers. In 1977 a number of them and previous members of Claridge made an attempt at reconciliation. The initiative lay with Derryck Stone, who appointed the American Loren Cunningham of YWAM as umpire.⁷² Unfortunately this effort proved fruitless and Stegen continued on the same course.

In early 2000 a communiqué⁷³ came from a committee called *Concerned Christians*, whose members had left Kwasizabantu either willingly or compulsorily and held deliberations for three years before they made anything public. They expressed their concern at the authoritarian behaviour of the leadership, which had traumatised many former members.

On 23 June 2000 a Commission of the South African Evangelical Alliance under the leadership of Ds. Moss Nltha declared that Kwasizabantu had started to resemble a sect, because it saw itself as an exclusive way to God. It based its statement on the testimonies of 20 ex-members who appeared before the commission. After this a persistent stream of rumours started to circulate, which placed Kwasizabantu and its leader Stegen in a bad light. Newspaper columns appeared, filled with supposed deception, misuse of power, secret funds, forced decisions, rapes, corporal punishments, one case of homicide and connections with the secret service in the days of the Apartheid regime. The commission issued a document with the title “Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission”. It tried a number of times to speak with Stegen to apply the legal principle of *audiatur et alteram partem* (listen to both sides). Unfortunately all efforts in this direction came to nothing.

⁷² J.P.J. Theron, interview 9 November 2004. D. Stone, interview 2 July 2006; E. Redinger, testimony points 77, 78 and 79. The persons indicated presented a similarly worded declaration on this question.

⁷³ This communiqué is entitled: ‘Urgent Plea to the Leadership of the Kwasizabantu Mission’, 19-02-2000.

In recent decades Stegen's empire has slowly but surely disintegrated. Hundreds of believers left because Stegen's behaviour led to unavoidable differences of opinion or serious conflicts. Traces of damage and destruction were left in people's lives. Among them was part of his family and fellow workers from the first days. Despite everything Stegen systematically denied facts concerning accusations and misuse of power. Since the publication of the "Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission" in 2000 nothing has changed in relation to Kwasizabantu.

Overview of the personalities of the leaders in these three revivals

Louis Harms

Leadership

He had an exceptional vision and zeal for mission, which he was able to convey to his congregation. Many were trained as missionaries and sent out with the support of farmers and tradespeople. Various parts of the world were reached with the gospel.

Character

He was a striking figure, not given to democratic sensitivities. The obedience God required of him was what he too demanded of his fellow believers. He was a beloved pastor who was able to keep people's allegiance by means of his kindness and friendliness.

Spiritual attitude

He grew up under the influence of rationalism, and studied theology without really knowing God. Only when he fell into a crisis did he realise that he was a sinner who needed the grace and forgiveness of Christ. From then on he was inspired by the Word and the Spirit of God and became a fervent preacher of the biblical message. The proof that he really followed God was abundantly clear in his life.

Anton Engelbrecht

Leadership

He was an active person who trained young people as evangelists and conducted evangelism in Zululand. In addition he had a vision for church-planting and literature distribution in other parts of the country. He also held campaigns overseas.

Character

He was extremely talented and had a charismatic personality. Moreover he displayed traits of ambition, was legalistic and strict. He left the association of the church so as to be able to realise his own views. He did not want to grant any responsibility to preachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, who accused him of authoritarian behaviour, personality cult and sectarianism.

Spiritual attitude

He was brought up in the church without knowing God personally. As a result of a series of crises he eventually came to a real conversion. He was an enthusiastic speaker, who turned radically against conformity to the world. When he reaped success, he became blinded by pride, arrogance and materialism.

Erlo Stegen

Leadership

His vision is to send out teams into as many countries as possible to proclaim his message of revival. Through the authority he gained by means of the “revival”, he was able to gain recruits. He combined his leadership with the charisma of a number of Zulu prophetesses.

Character

For 23 years (from 1945 to 1968) he stood under the influence of Engelbrecht. The formation of his character, religious development and notion of mission were unmistakably determined by Engelbrecht. He exercises absolute control of his movement and will not tolerate any dissent. He refuses to give an account of himself to church authorities, who reproach him for authoritarian behaviour, deception, misuse of power and sectarianism.

Spiritual attitude

He was brought up in the church and wanted to become an evangelist. At all costs he wanted to preach the fire of heaven, went through a number of crises and in fact aimed to stop, until unexpectedly a “revival” occurred. Stegen regards himself as God’s infallible representative who is in an unassailable position above all criticism. His delusions of holiness and greatness can hardly be corrected.

Assessment of the Revivals

Hermannsburg

In the days of Harms rationalism was at its height and spiritual life was dry and arid. Through Harms’s inspiring preaching his congregation and its neighbours were touched by the Spirit of God. After the believers had come to new life, unbelievers also came to conversion. Inspired by the revival many left to preach the gospel overseas. The effect of this revival remains visible to the present day in Hermannsburg and in places in other parts of the world. The Hermannsburg revival took place within the Evangelical-Lutheran Church and was under the supervision of church leaders. Later the congregation was to continue for a time as an independent Evangelical-Lutheran church, but in due course returned to the church fold.

Lilienthal

Through the preaching of Engelbrecht a spiritual awakening took place among nominal Christians, who had come to a living faith. Driven by his charisma, the work spread out into Zululand and beyond, until it ultimately disintegrated in disharmony.

Kwasizabantu

Stegen conducted an intensive search for revival. The result was an intermingling between Christianity and elements from Zulu religion. Through propaganda the movement in South Africa and Europe

mobilized great crowds of people and thus awakened the appearance of a revival.

Hypothesis

The Kwasizabantu revival is not equivalent to the concept of revival that is commonly accepted among Christians. Supernatural experiences, for which there is no biblical basis, play a part. There is therefore a need for a far-reaching investigation into Kwasizabantu.

Relevance

These days many Christians are open to renewal through Christian movements that come from other continents and have their roots in other cultures. The relevance of this study is consequently not limited only to the context of Kwasizabantu. It also holds a warning to Western churches to be alert for spiritual movements that are attempting to make inroads.

CHAPTER 2

A Short History of Kwasizabantu

An inward-looking group

Halfway through the last century the German community in South Africa came under serious pressure, as the English-oriented government of South Africa declared war on Germany in 1939 and fought alongside the Allies. Germans who had not become naturalised South Africans (or were pro-German) and other pro-German Europeans were arrested and placed in internment camps and regarded as enemies.¹ The social life of the German community was limited to the church, which was the original motive for their presence in the country. In the process of preserving their identity they had become an inward-looking group. On the departure of Engelbrecht things began to change. He was open to proclamation to other European inhabitants of South Africa. As his Claridge congregation took shape, other English-speakers joined. As a result the originally German community came out of its isolation after the war. This was also true for Stegen, who was making his international debut as a revivalist preacher. He founded an international movement, his brother Friedel Stegen being given responsibility for Europe.

¹ O.L. Nel, *Agter die doringdraad in Koffiefontein*, 1948, p. 86.

Early History

Around 1966 Stegen lived in Mapumulo with his brother Friedel, who owned a shop there. With his brother's indigenous staff he decided to come together in a cowshed² for Bible study. This was only a small group, which did not grow in number despite the outpouring of the "Holy Spirit". Despite all the stimulation no congregation grew. Some local inhabitants were members of one of the Christian churches in the Mapumulo district which had been founded there by church mission organisations many years previously.³

In order to stimulate the spiritual work in Mapumulo, in 1967 Stegen appointed workers from elsewhere for evangelism among the indigenous population. Their efforts would surely give rise to a firm nucleus of believers. But they saw little progress, as the local population did not want to listen to them. The reason lay in the collaboration between Stegen and Magasa. They recognised Magasa's spirit and speaking in tongues as that of the Zionist group of Mavundla, of which she was a former member, and which was rejected by them.⁴

Who was Mavundla? He was a missionary with the American Board of Mission until the Spirit came upon him (*uthole uMoya*) and he felt led to begin a Zionist group of his own in the region of the Umvoti River.⁵

² E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, p. 18.

³ G. Lademann-Priemer, *Heilung als Zeichen für die Einheit der Welten*, 1990, p. 93; these are the Evangelical-Lutheran mission in Umpumulo (in 1849 the Norwegian missionaries Schreuder and Udland opened up the Mapumulo district for the gospel); the American Board Mission with the mission post *Inyamazama*; the Catholic Mission with the mission post *Isitundu*.

⁴ Manfred Stegen, interview 24 November 2004: Constance Masango knew that Magasa already spoke in tongues in a Zionist movement of Mavundla. They knew one another as they belonged to the staff of Friedel Stegen in Mapumulo. E. Redinger, *Has Ksb Got Zionist Roots?*

⁵ This information comes from Ngobese from *Empangeni*, with whom Redinger had a conversation in December 2004. Ngobese grew up in Mapumulo and lived there for a long time. He was a member of the house church movement among the Zulus.

As Stegen had no response from the immediate neighbourhood, he had Zulus picked up by trucks from further afield, whom he gave the prospect of food and help. Despite all his efforts, to the present day Stegen has not managed to get a congregation off the ground in Mapumulo.

The Zulu prophetesses

Stegen laid the spiritual foundations of Kwasizabantu with a number of Zulu women. Their names are Magasa (Hilda Dube),⁶ Josephina Ntsibande and Helen Mzila. They were prophetesses (*umprofeti*) who formed the “inner circle” with Stegen and were called mamas. His brother Friedel was also one of their number. Magasa (died 2010) became Stegen’s most important confidante. Through her marriage to Josias Dube she became a member of the Evangelical-Lutheran church in Mapumulo, where her children were baptised.⁷ Dube was an alcoholic and put his family through serious suffering as a result, to the extent indeed that a number of his children died of hardship. Four children born from their marriage who played a part in Kwasizabantu are Jabulani, Thofozi⁸ (1952), Lindiwe (1964) and Sindi. Thofozi and Lindiwe were also to join the “inner circle” and received the same gifts as their mother.

Being completely preoccupied with her activities, Magasa had little time left for her family. This provoked resentment on the part of her husband, Josias Dube. Stegen then plied him with gifts, gave him livestock and had a house built for him. In the end Dube accepted the situation and said *nomo bangamthatha sebemlobile*, which means “even though they take her away they have already paid the dowry”.⁹

⁶ The Western name for Magasa is Hilda Dube. In Zulu culture people are generally called by various names.

⁷ K.E. Koch, *Im Paradies* (no date), p. 37.

⁸ Her Western name is Lydia.

⁹ E. Redinger, testimony point 43.

Josephina Ntsibande was active for many years as a prophetess, but was a less significant figure. Her husband's name was Fanuel Ntsibande. When Ntsibande once asked Stegen why he prayed so intimately together with Magasa in his bedroom, Stegen became angry. He put pressure on Ntsibande to confess his sin, but was not content with his confession. After that Stegen forced him to divorce his wife, which Ntsibande refused. As he was residing in the country illegally, Stegen reported him to the authorities.¹⁰ On the way the man hanged himself at night on the Paardefontein farm (Mbalane).¹¹ Josephina Ntsibande remained resident at Kwasizabantu until she died in 2004. Helen Mzila played little part in the movement and later fell out of favour.

Co-workers from the very beginning

In the course of his fieldwork in Kwazulu-Natal the author met a number of Zulus and whites who were present at the beginning of the revival. Since they were among Stegen's first co-workers, their statements are of particular value. The names of some of the prominent co-workers are Nathanael Ximba, Obed Mbambo and Erwin Redinger. They were drawn in for evangelism among the indigenous population in the Mapumulo district and settled there with their families in 1966.¹² Two other witnesses from the early days are Mabaso and Hirth. Who are they?

Erwin Redinger grew up among the Zulus and is exceptionally well informed about their language, culture and religion. He was born the son of Freddy Redinger in 1931, on the Mbalane farm bordering Stegen's farm. Redinger grew up with Stegen's children and with them he attended the Evangelical-Lutheran church, the elementary school in Lilienthal and secondary education in Hermannsburg. He knows

¹⁰ N. Ximba, interview 14 November 2004.

¹¹ Manfred Stegen, interview 25 November 2004.

¹² E. Redinger, Background information on Nathanael Ximba, 3 February 2001.

the Stegen brothers extremely well. After this he attended the AEB¹³ Bible School and subsequently Engelbrecht's Bible School in Pretoria. Following that, until 1963 he was a full-time mission worker with Claridge among the Zulus and Xhosas in the south of Kwazulu-Natal and from 1967 to 1968 with Stegen in Mapumulo. He is married to Getrude Freese, a cousin of Stegen's.¹⁴

Around the year 2000 Redinger conducted groundbreaking work in committing to writing the observations of eyewitnesses of the so-called revival. As he was a co-worker of Engelbrecht and Stegen, the articles that came from his hand witness to a deep insight into the development of the situation surrounding Stegen. These observations are of extraordinary importance, since they relate to the origins of the movement that was later to be called Kwasizabantu.

Nathanael Ximba was born in 1924. He worked with F. Redinger, who offered him a three-year training at the Union Bible Institute. After his training he began his career as an evangelist. From 1965 to early 1967 he worked at Tugela Ferry for Stegen. Within two years he had baptised his first 40 people. Since God was blessing his work, Stegen called him to Mapumulo. When Ximba's wife asked questions about the behaviour of Magasa, Stegen wanted to force Ximba to divorce his wife, which, naturally, he refused to do.¹⁵

Obed Mbambo was also asked by Stegen to come and work full-time in Mapumulo. He came from Ozwatini (Kingscliff), where he was the manager of a shop owned by Friedel Stegen. In 2001 he was extensively interviewed by G. D. about his stay in Mapumulo.¹⁶ Mbambo died in 2005.

¹³ AEB, the Bible School of the Afrika Evangeliese Bond, set up in 1924.

¹⁴ E. Redinger, Background information on Nathanael Ximba, 3 February 2001.

¹⁵ The testimony of Mbambo is on a digital recording in the possession of the author. In the footnotes this interview is referred to as "Testimony of O. Mbambo, 2001".

¹⁶ O. Mbambo, Testimony 2001, recording.

Barney Mabaso is married to Florence and they have five children. He came to faith in 1964 at one of Stegen's tent campaigns in Tugela Ferry. In 1966 he was one of Ximba's first baptismal candidates. He was pastor of the Kwasizabantu congregation in Tugela Ferry and was later to occupy a key position in the 2000 split.¹⁷ He too regularly accompanied Stegen on tour in Europe. He is now leader of the Rock of Life Church in Tugela Ferry and founder of various congregations in Kwazulu-Natal.

Helga Firth met Anton Engelbrecht during a tour in Germany. From 1967 to 1971 she stayed at Claridge, after which she returned to Germany. She is the only European witness from the early days, who visited Mapumulo and experienced the transition to Kwasizabantu. Contact with Stegen remained until 1980.¹⁸

The tumultuous years 1967 to 1970

Initially Stegen was able to persuade Engelbrecht with the members of the Claridge congregation to visit the Mapumulo "revival" and allow their lives to be examined by Magasa. Anyone was allowed to present their questions or problems to Stegen, who then went into Magasa's room, to emerge a little later with the answer.

He made the spectacle known far and wide, and people arrived from far and near. In the early days it was always said: "All roads lead to Mapumulo."¹⁹ When Gerhard Engelbrecht and his wife Ilse, a brother and sister-in-law of Anton Engelbrecht had doubts as to the origin of the trances, this eventually became cause for a split.²⁰ In the

¹⁷ For this see the DVD of the meeting held on 28 June 2000 in Tugela Ferry, in which Magasa says she regrets the trouble her daughter Thofozi caused. After this meeting the Tugela Ferry congregation continued independently.

¹⁸ H. Firth, telephone interview 15 December 2005.

¹⁹ H. Bartels, interview 13 November 2004; B. Stegen, interview 24 November 2004; A. Williams, interview 15 July 2006; E. Redinger, interview 14 July 2006.

²⁰ H. Bartels, interview 13 November 2004; E. Redinger: personally Anton Engelbrecht was never against the trances and was bullied out of the group, interview 29 March

same period David du Plessis²¹ gave a number of talks in Claridge about the work of the Holy Spirit.²² Du Plessis was extremely concerned when he heard of the nature of Stegen's supernatural inspiration in Mapumulo.²³ In the midst of all the confusion Stegen saw his way clear and he and his companions made a bid for power. He undermined the Sunday meetings of the Claridge church by holding services elsewhere.

Stegen began with services on the farms of Ewald Witthöft at Kranskop, of Hogart Joosten at Sandpruit near Dalton, and of Martin Stegen at Elandskraal. Stegen certainly had to go out of his way for this, given that the location in Mapumulo did not present any opportunity for services in which whites could also take part, since it was situated in a Zulu residential area (1967-1968).²⁴

Engelbrecht came out worse from a vigorous power struggle, and as his congregation had scarcely any members left he retired to Switzerland. Here he was to be a pastor for a short time.²⁵ In the end he lived a withdrawn existence in Eshowe on the northern coast of Kwazulu-Natal.²⁶ He died in 1989.²⁷

Stegen's behaviour led to fierce conflicts with the majority of the Claridge congregation. In mid-1968, eighteen months after they arrived, Redinger, Ximba and Mbambo left Mapumulo, on account of insurmountable differences of opinion. Stegen intimidated Redinger

2012.

²¹ David du Plessis was also called Mr. Pentecost.

²² Cf. W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, p. 14. Du Toit is wrong in saying that the split between them occurred because Anton Engelbrecht took the side of du Plessis.

²³ H. Bartels, former member of the Claridge congregation, interview 13 November 2004.

²⁴ N. Ximba, interview 14 November 2004; J. Redinger, interview 14 November 2004; H. Hirth, telephone interview 15 December 2005.

²⁵ E. Redinger, *Coup d'état*, 27 March 2000.

²⁶ H. Pape, *Hermannsburger Missionare in Südafrika*, p. 47.

²⁷ H. Bartels, conversation with Redinger 6 September 2009.

and Ximba, suggesting that they should take their own lives as Ntsibande did. Redinger is still alive, however, and Ximba died a natural death in early 2012 at the age of 82.

Some prominent congregation members have delivered eyewitness statements about their view of Stegen and have given him serious warnings.

In 1966 Heinz Bartels²⁸ resigned, because Stegen could no longer be followed and because he had lost confidence in him.

In 1968 Abraham Williams left, after he had pointed out to Stegen that he was forcing the Zulu religion onto Christians. Stegen had reacted angrily to this.²⁹ In 1970 Derryck Stone also left. He was concerned about the victims of Stegen's regime and tried for some time to mediate between them and Stegen.³⁰

Redinger claimed that the blueskirts (a nickname for Zionist groups), as at Mapumulo, received the Holy Spirit by getting a warm feeling from the inside. But Stegen rejected any association with the blueskirts by saying that they were wrong, because his outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the only genuine one.³¹

There was no escaping the fact that in 1967 the first exodus from the Claridge congregation began. In due course the majority of believers had disappeared in all directions.³²

²⁸ H. Barels (Heinz) is married to Stella Witthöft, a daughter of Leni Röttcher and Mannie Witthöft.

²⁹ A. Williams, interview 15 July 2006. He became pastor of the Wesleyan congregation in Boxburg.

³⁰ D. Stone, interview 2 July 2006. He knew Stegen from 1963. Stone was founder and leader of the Maranatha Community Church at Kempton Park in Randburg, and in later years was associated with it as senior pastor.

³¹ E. Redinger, interview 14 July 2006.

³² See Appendix 1, pp. 221-223.

Prominent members of Kwasizabantu

A number of families from the Claridge congregation remained loyal to Erlo Stegen. In the first place these were his parents, brothers and sister with their families, namely: Heino (1926), Friedel (1927), Bodo (1933), Manfred (1938) and Irmgard. Trevor Dahl and Koos Greeff, two full-time co-workers, later became sons-in-law of Friedel Stegen. Kjell Oslen, another full-time worker, also became a son-in-law to Heino Stegen.

The Stegen family, with a number of farmers of German descent, provided the daily necessities of life and were important for the structure of Kwasizabantu. Besides these, four of Anton Engelbrecht's children supported Kwasizabantu: Bruno, Ernst Erich, Werner and Ursula (married to L. Muller), all with their families. In addition, Waldemar Engelbrecht, a son of Gerhard Engelbrecht, had an important role to play.

Bill Larkan and Joe Newlands also contributed to the building up of Kwasizabantu. Prominent Zulus were: Fano Sibisi, Alpheus Mdlalose, Barney Mabaso, Michael Ngubane and Muzi Kunene.

Significant events

In 1970 Stegen acquired a piece of land which he gave the name Kwasizabantu. Here he brought into being a multiracial community and a group of businesses. Magasa's daughter Thofozi died after a long sickness in 1973 and was resurrected.

In 1975 the 11-year-old Lindiwe occasioned a sudden debacle on the farm of Ewald Witthöft in Kranskop.

In 1977 a reconciliation conference was held in Claridge, the aim of which was to reconcile ex-members with Stegen. The initiative lay with Derryck Stone, while the American Loren Cunningham of YWAM acted as umpire.

The English title, *God among the Zulus*, appeared by the hand of the German Dr. K.E. Koch in 1979 and was published in many languages. The consequence was that curiosity brought a stream of people to Kwasizabantu from all around the world.

Around 1980 Kwasizabantu became involved with the military secret service, a relationship which was to have far-reaching consequences. Around 1990 the collaboration turned into a defence commando in its own right.

From 1988 to 1990 Friedel Stegen was able to persuade dozens of Christians from South Africa and Europe to invest in the “Klipdam” diamond mine near Kimberley, promising extremely high profits. A short time later he said that he had been deceived by a confidence trickster. In the course of the financial transactions 50 million Rand disappeared, for which there did not even seem to be any administration. After the liquidation Friedel Stegen made a further attempt to exploit the mine. He asked the community members once again to invest so as to earn back the lost supposed money.³³

Around 1988 Annelie du Preez divorced her husband Kobus after he had expressed doubts about Kwasizabantu and had fallen into discredit.

In the latter days of the Apartheid regime, in 1990 Kwasizabantu set up Christians for Truth (CFT). With this association it aimed to be a champion of Christian norms and values. Shortly afterwards there followed the European countries in which Kwasizabantu had a presence. It is not impossible that Military Intelligence played a part in this.³⁴

Although families and individuals had left Kwasizabantu before, in mid-1993 Stegen suffered dissent in the family. The result was that his mother, Irmgard Stegen-Witthöft, his brothers Bodo and Manfred Stegen and his sister Irmgard van der Linde-Stegen took off with their families.

In late 1993 Koos Greeff, who had been a co-worker since 1977, left with his family. The motive for Greeff's departure was that he had

³³ *Natal Witness*, 5 February 2000, “Mission head lost follower's millions”.

³⁴ Vermaak was head of the “Hearts and Minds” department of Military Intelligence, whose task was to manipulate public opinion. Vermaak was later to become Stegen's secretary.

serious doubts as to the integrity of Stegen, the Zulu prophetesses and the teaching of Kwasizabantu.

In 1996 Trevor Dahl left. He had worked for Stegen from the beginning and might easily have been regarded as his natural successor. Stegen broke family ties with all those who had left him and demanded that his followers do the same.

After the political upheaval in 1993 Thofozi feared acts of retribution by people whom as counsellors they had betrayed to the Apartheid regime's Military Intelligence.³⁵ For her protection she was given a number of bodyguards and kept a few German shepherd dogs.

When one of the bodyguards was replaced by someone who did not meet Thofozi's requirements, in 1997 she laid a plot to contrive to have her way. She wanted to have herself kidnapped and to have the new bodyguard, Fikile Mkhabela, killed. By this means she aimed to show that her protection was inadequate. The plot failed and the wrong bodyguard, Thobekile Mhlongo, was injured.³⁶ Stegen appeared to be informed about this from 1998, but let Thofozi carry on, hushing the matter up until all sorts of rumours were circulating in 2000.³⁷

When Barney Mabaso, as the responsible co-worker, wanted to know more about this matter, Stegen took Thofozi into his protection and refused to allow an interview.³⁸ The shocking thing about this was that Stegen disregarded the civil legislation by not reporting Thofozi's violent plot to the authorities, whereas he demands extremely high standards of his movement. When Mabaso continued to call for more openness, Stegen attempted to damage Mabaso's reputation. The situ-

³⁵ J.W. Greeff, *Hand in Hand mit dem Geheimdienst des Apartheid-Regimes*, February 2000.

³⁶ *Natal Witness*, 7 August 2000, "Exodus from Troubled KZN Mission".

³⁷ www.ksb-alert.com, "Deceit–Deceivers–Deceived, Erlo Stegen, the Leadership of Ksb and Crime", 2000.

³⁸ B. Mabaso, article of 17 June 2000.

ation deteriorated in June 2000 to such an extent that Mabaso split from Kwasizabantu with the congregation of Tugela Ferry.

Through Thofozi's doing Kwasizabantu had got into an unsavoury situation. So many irregularities came to light that her position had become untenable and she had to go. But her banishment was not to last long, because later her name becomes associated once again with the "inner circle".

Around 1999 there was a commotion in the German branch of Kwasizabantu. Members who had doubts about the leaders were branded as enemies and were denounced to the elders of the congregation. Those who found themselves in a moral dilemma beat a retreat. Among them was the national leader of Germany, Martin Rost. Without his knowledge Kwasizabantu Germany was split into different regions with a leader at the top. He was reproached for having allowed his family to become worldly-minded.³⁹

In February 2000 a committee with the name *Concerned Christians* published a communiqué: "Urgent Plea to the Leadership of the Kwasizabantu Mission", dated 19 February 2000. The committee was represented by Prof. Koos van Rooy, among others.

Barely six months later a Commission of the Evangelical Alliance launched an investigation supported by delegates from many churches and congregations. A commission was set up under the chairmanship of Ds. Moss Nltha, and included Dr. Michael Cassidy⁴⁰ and Professor Calvin Cook,⁴¹ among others.

In the spring of 2001 Stegen took a number of former workers to the High Court on a charge of libel. Their behaviour was causing a marked reduction in gifts to him. Their names are Barney Mabaso, Mphangeni Mabaso, Matthias Lübke, Bodo Stegen and Trevor Dahl.

³⁹ J. N., *Die Gründe für eine Trennung von Kwasizabantu – Austritt aus Kwasizabantu Deutschland*, 8 June 1999.

⁴⁰ International team leader of Africa Enterprise.

⁴¹ Emeritus Professor of Ecclesiology at the University of Rhodes and minister of the United Reformed Churches of South Africa.

The accused were able to provide an impressive demonstration of their innocence. When Stegen was unable to prove his accusations, he withdrew his case and paid the legal costs,⁴² although he told his followers he did not.

The Swiss leader Hans Koller created great consternation in 2002. His family were for years living under great pressure, as a result of which all kinds of distasteful situations had transpired. In the end it had become an untenable matter which led to the departure of Koller's wife, followed by his daughters. Because a leader with a family history like this does not fit the image of the movement, he was removed of all his responsibilities and was dismissed shortly afterwards.⁴³

Like Germany, the Netherlands was secretly divided into two regions. The northern Netherlands was given a conference centre in 2000, which was given the name "De Cederborg", in which a community was accommodated. In Well, near Zaltbommel, a farm was purchased in 2001, which was named "De Jacobsbron". Here a second community was housed.

The Dutch leader Albert Pilon laid down his duties in 2002 after being associated with Kwasizabantu for more than 14 years.

Around 2003 the Zulu workers Sipho, Joseph Sishange and Jeffrey Zikhale left, after many years of service to the community. The stream of leavers continued both in South Africa and in Europe. In Germany, France, Switzerland and the Netherlands church members resigned and the number of supporters dropped.

In 2007 World Vision gave Stegen the Robert W. Pierce award, which was associated with a sum of 35,000 Rand. This prize was awarded to him in recognition of his compassion as a missionary, preacher and educator.

⁴² News from the Court: (a) Update on Court Case: Erlo Stegen and Mission Kwasizabantu vs. B. Mabaso and others, 9 May 2001; (b) Update on Court Case: Mission Kwasizabantu withdraws its court application and agrees to pay all legal costs, 30 May 2001; (c) Why have Erlo Stegen and Kwasizabantu withdrawn their court application?, 30 May 2001.

⁴³ H. Koller, *Gespräch mit Helga Koller*, 2002 (see ksb-alert).

In 2009 the church and school of Ozwatini separated from Kwasizabantu. There was talk of years of disagreement at leadership level. The church building, which the congregation had paid for itself, and in which the school was accommodated, had to be handed over to Kwasizabantu.

In the same year Mabizela, a prominent member and one of the main speakers of Kwasizabantu, laid down his function and left the movement. For years he had performed his duties until suddenly he was no longer given work and spent his time waiting. In the end he had no alternative other than to go, leaving his wife and child behind.⁴⁴

After 24 years of faithful service Thabo Qinqi left Kwasizabantu because his wife wanted a divorce from him. Since then he is forbidden to enter the site. He may only meet his wife and children at the entrance.⁴⁵

After the death of Josephina Ntsibande in 2004 and Magasa (Hilda Dube) in 2010, the vacancies they left in the “inner circle” were filled by Eunice Ngcamu and Busisiwe Hadebe.⁴⁶ With Thofozi Dube they now form the “inner circle”. Two women who also play prominent roles are Jabu Majola⁴⁷ and Phiwapi Shange.⁴⁸ It is noticeable that Stegen’s closest colleagues are women, with the exception of Nthokozo Nhlabathi, Stegen’s youngest confidant and leading man.

In January 2011 40 students were suspended from school without formal warning. Even their parents, many of whom are members of Kwasizabantu, were not told what their children had done wrong. Some months beforehand the students were informed by the school

⁴⁴ M.W. Mabizela, interview 6 February 2010.

⁴⁵ T. Qinqi, interview 25 March 2012.

⁴⁶ B. Mabaso, interview 24 March 2012. Thofozi Dube told those present at her mother’s funeral that her mother had said concerning her successor: “Appoint someone whom you think fit.” A few weeks later Stegen announced in a service that after prayer God had singled out Busisiwe Hadebe.

⁴⁷ Jabu Majola was formerly called Nala rather than Majola.

⁴⁸ Phiwapi Shange is counselor of the women’s section of the “hospital”.

governors that they should look for another school because it was evident from their behaviour that they did not feel happy there.⁴⁹ On the intervention of a lawyer and the ministry of education the school was required to take the children back after one week.

Fano Sibisi died after a long illness in 2011. He was the international chairman of CFT and one of the leaders of Kwasizabantu. His funeral was attended by approximately 80 former members of Kwasizabantu, while the CFT leaders from Europe were absent. In an address, M. Hadebe, a delegate of the provincial government and a former minister of social affairs, expressed heavy criticism of the state of affairs at Kwasizabantu.

In 2013 Stegen received a Chancellor's Medal from the North West University of Potchefstroom for, among other things, spiritual leadership, educational support and for his role in the development of poor rural communities.

In 2014 Sipho Zondi left the Mthaleni outpost. He once received a sum of money personally from someone, which he used to purchase two cars. On his departure he was forced to surrender them to Kwasizabantu.

In the same year Robert Maphanga and his wife left Magqogo, an outpost in the Tugela River area. They had had enough of the intimidation and falsehoods of Stegen and Thofozi. The chief summoned them both, Stegen and Thofozi, to make a public apology in front of the local Zulu community.

In 2015 a general revision⁵⁰ took place of the plot and the 'kidnapping' of Thofozi (1997), as described above in this chapter. This process

⁴⁹ *Natal Witness*, "Natal Witness school kicks out 'sinning' kids", 29 January 2011. In 2006 too, students were removed from Domino Servite School. Anyone who wanted to be readmitted had to undergo purification by confessing their sins. In the case of one young woman this process took as long as a full year.

⁵⁰ Historical revisionism often points to the phenomenon by which things in history are "rewritten". This occurs principally in radical political or religious movements. Negative information about the life of the founder, for example, is then omitted,

was prompted by the publication on the internet of an open letter by Jannie le Roux,⁵¹ a former colleague. In this letter he offers his apologies for believing in lies which he repeated as facts, having heard them from “other co-workers”.

In the service on Sunday 31 May 2015 the co-workers Marius Pretorius, Alpheus Mdlalose, Stella Hlongwane and her husband, Bruno Hlongwane, offered their apologies for believing lies which they passed on as facts, having heard from “other co-workers”. These lies also related to the plot and the ‘kidnapping’ of Thofozi.⁵²

As a result of le Roux’s apology he was allowed to return to Kwasizabantu in exchange for board and lodging.⁵³ The co-workers mentioned above publicly exonerated Thofozi of all blame, as if nothing had happened.

There is a significant detail in the fact that at the meeting in Tugela Ferry on 28 June 2000, Thofozi’s mother, Magasa, offered her apologies for her child’s behaviour.⁵⁴ The matters in question were the conception of the plot, an attempted murder and a kidnap which her daughter had organized. Fortunately things did not turn out as Thofozi intended.

altered or portrayed in a better light so that it appears to be less objectionable than was really the case. See ch. 9 n. 57.

https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historisch_revisionisme

⁵¹ Le Roux was occupied for many years as a cattle farmer at Kwasizabantu and later also became head of security.

⁵² Radio Khwezi dedicated a broadcast to this event.

⁵³ See <http://www.ksb-alert.com/?p=740>

⁵⁴ See <http://www.ksb-alert.com/?p=748>

CHAPTER 3

African Forms of Christianity in Southern Africa

Introduction

In the early centuries of the Christian church, the Christian faith spread along the northern coast of Africa as far as Ethiopia. After the appearance of Islam in North Africa in the 7th century, Christianity disappeared largely from the continent for a period of more than a thousand years, with the exception of Ethiopia and Egypt. When trade routes appeared along the Africa coasts from the 14th and 15th centuries on, Christianity slowly followed the European travelling merchants.¹ This also applied to the United Dutch East India Company which set up a staging post at Cape of Good Hope in 1652 for its ships *en route* to India. They were followed by the Dutch Reformed Church, which concentrated on spiritual provision for the colonists.²

There was very little sense of mission in those days. It took until the 19th century for Christianity to get going properly in South Africa. The number of mission posts grew to 380, as more and more overseas missionary societies sent out their missionaries. Examples of prominent mission posts are: Genadendal at Baviaanskloof, near Stellenbosch,

¹ C. Partridge, *Encyclopedia of New Religions*, 2004, p. 46.

² NG Kerk 350 jaar, 2002.

which was founded by the Moravians in 1792.³ Bethelsdorp, near Port Elizabeth, was founded in 1802 by the Dutchman van der Kemp. He worked among the Xhosa and worked towards fundamental equality for all races, with which policy he provoked much opposition.⁴ And finally the mission post Moffat at Kuruman, which was founded in 1816 and owes its fame to Moffat, who translated the Bible into Setswana.⁵

Preaching of the gospel in other parts of the world

When missionaries preach the gospel to peoples in other parts of the world, cultural barriers need to be crossed. The gospel seeks entry into the cultures of this world. This is expressed visibly, because all lives change as a result of its influence and authority. God himself is above all cultures and is *supra-cultural*.⁶ He sent his Son to save people by bridging the gulf between Himself and humankind.⁷ For this God's Son became a human being and culturally entirely Jewish. He communicated in a human language, Aramaic, Hebrew and probably Greek. He used the cultural reality to declare *supra-cultural* truths.⁸ In order to clarify cultural changes resulting from the preaching of the gospel, in missiology three terms are distinguished which will be dealt with in this chapter, namely acculturation, interculturation and inculturation.⁹

³ H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, 2007, p. 99; G. Schmidt began already in 1737 in Baviaanskloof. After differences with the authorities he returned to Europe in 1744.

⁴ H. Giliomee and M. Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, p. 99.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuruman_Moffat_Mission.

⁶ C.H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 1979, pp. 173, 174.

⁷ Philippians 2:5-11.

⁸ J.A. van Rooy, *Cross-Cultural Communication of the Gospel*, 1992, p. 3.

⁹ H. Bammann, *Inkulturation des Evangeliums unter den Batswana in Transvaal*, 2004, pp. 11-16.

Acculturation

Acculturation is the process of encounter between two cultures that creates friction and can result in violent clashes and disruption. A forced kind of transport takes place of cultural goods from one culture to the other. The former cultural or religious thinking and behaviour is up for discussion. Western industry, technology, urbanisation or acceptance of democracy can change structures in third world countries to such an extent that far-reaching social disruption is the consequence.¹⁰

Interculturation

When missionaries are in dialogue with the indigenous culture, an exchange occurs and various positions are misrepresented. This dialogue is a possibility to exchange views over faith, without changing one's point of view. Missionaries are not only prepared to give, but can also adopt certain customs from the indigenous culture. This must not happen at the expense of primary, unique Christian truths.¹¹

Interculturation presupposes mutual action, by which local contexts emerge, and goes further than neutral adaptations that missionaries are prepared to undergo. The Christian faith is particularly tested by these contextual theologies.

Inculturation

In inculturation the proclamation of the gospel has priority, and cannot be equated to a dialogue. Proclamation is primarily the call to repentance and depends on inviolable truths. With its divine statements the Bible faces the human individual with decisions. These are not expressions of sympathy and they do not admit of compromise.¹²

¹⁰ H. Bammann, *Inkulturation des Evangeliums unter den Batswana in Transvaal*, pp. 11-16.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-16.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

In inculcation we have one-way communication and there is talk of “indigenising”, occupying the heathen culture for Christ.

The emergence of the African Independent Churches

Unfortunately many missionaries did not have sufficient contact with African culture. The problem was that they loaded European customs onto the indigenous converts. Mostly they did not see the indigenous population as equals, which led to a lack of understanding. The reaction persisted when at the end of the 19th century indigenous Christians founded independent congregations of their own. They felt more at home in a church with indigenous leaders, because they adapted to the ethnic customs.¹³ Thus African Independent Churches were born (hereafter AIC's). The indigenous Christians integrated Christian doctrine, liturgy and worship into the indigenous religion and underwent a process of interculturation.¹⁴ Some scholars of religion see the AIC's as an institute in which the message of the gospel is incarnate in the African culture.¹⁵ Their founders received inspiration by which they felt compelled to begin a movement. They generally received visions and dreams and developed into dynamic preachers, prophet-healers, visionaries, or were elevated in some other way to a supernatural status. The movements have their own sacred mountain or place, symbolising the connection between heaven and earth; a place where God speaks and is present in a special way. Some of these locations¹⁶ became pilgrimage sites, which were visited regularly by thousands of people.¹⁷ To distinguish themselves from each other some wear white clothing and others brightly coloured robes, some-

¹³ M.L. Daneel, *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia*, 1970, p. 10.

¹⁴ B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 1961, p. 277.

¹⁵ H.J. Becken, *Hexham: The Story of Isaiah Shembe*, vol. II, 1996, introduction, p. x.

¹⁶ The use of the word “location” is neutral in this context and has no connection with the Apartheid legislation

¹⁷ J.W. Fernandez, “The Precincts of the Prophet”, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 5, 1973, p. 32.

times complemented by a pectoral cross and a staff. The guidelines for their equipment and clothing are made known by revelation.

The number of denominations is estimated at between 3,500 and 7,000,¹⁸ almost all of which use the words Zion and Apostolic in their name, with a combined membership approaching 7 million.¹⁹ It is almost impossible to maintain a list of the denominations, which are added or disappear each year.²⁰ Since the Zulus have a holistic worldview, some locations have integrated healing clinics as self-help projects in agriculture and industry.²¹

Syncretism

The question is how far mission can go in the encounter with traditional cultures, without parting company with the gospel. Some have gone so far unobserved in this process of encounter that they are balancing on the brink of syncretism.²² Others have deliberately opted for it and have fallen into it. Here one stands before the question: what is combined together and above all, what not? Syncretism is often a very deliberate strategy for this and dependent on “the will of the receptor”.²³

Method

Closer investigation of the early history of the schism movements is of great importance so as to establish their nature and function. Since Kwasizabantu arose as a movement in the same geographic and religious context as the Zionist movements, a concise description of Kwasizabantu and five other movements follows so as to establish

¹⁸ Statistics as to the number of denominations vary considerably.

¹⁹ C.G. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa*, 1987, p. 52.

²⁰ B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, p. 248.

²¹ C.G. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa*, p. 52.

²² D.J. Bosch, *Het evangeliel in Afrikaans gewaaid*, 1974, p. 14.

²³ C.H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, p. 225.

possible influences of African Traditional Religion on them.²⁴ To gain more insight into this process the Zulu religion is also described, where this seems helpful.

Zionist movements

The Zionist movements in Southern Africa²⁵ arose at the beginning of the 20th century through an interweaving of the Christian faith and African Traditional Religion. In no regard do they have anything at all to do with Jewish Zionism. African Zionist movements include:

The American *Christian Catholic Church in Zion*, founded in Illinois in the United States, by John Alexander Dowie²⁶ in 1896, blew shortly afterwards over to Johannesburg, where it took firm root. Despite their attempt to be authentically African, the indigenous believers were initially inspired by the Pentecostal movement of North America and Europe.²⁷ The accent is placed mainly on divine healing, revelations and anabaptism.²⁸

The *Zionist Apostolic Church* was the first Zionist church in Southern Africa. In 1903 P.L. Le Roux set up this church in Wakkerstroom and Volksrus. He previously served the Dutch Reformed Church as a missionary, working among the Zulus. He had a good awareness of Zulu culture and had a gift for communicating the Christian faith to the indigenous population. The emphasis lay on the supernatural, such as healings, prophecies and speaking in tongues. The majority of his followers was made up of Zulus. Le Roux was an enthusiastic but

²⁴ Note: in anthropology the interweaving of religions is studied under the rubric “syncretism”.

²⁵ On Zionist movements see: B.G.M. Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and Some Swazi Zionists*, 1976.

²⁶ A. Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, 1994, p. 500.

²⁷ C. Partridge, *Encyclopedia of New Religions*, p. 46.

²⁸ A. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century*, 2001, pp. 94-96.

unstable man who in 1908 joined the Pentecostal movement. Daniel Nkonyane became the head of the Zionist Apostolic Church.²⁹

Daniel Nkonyane in turn separated from the Zionist Apostolic Church and between 1917 and 1920 founded the *Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion*. He was principally interested in the adaptation of the Christian faith and hymns to the indigenous tradition. He placed the emphasis primarily on emotional aspects and picked up on the strong fear of witchcraft among the Africans.³⁰

The *Zion Christian Church* (ZCC) is one of the most important Zionist movements, which was founded in 1924 by Engenas Lekganyane. Previously he belonged to the Zion Apostolic Church. He was prompted to set up this church by a revelation from God. He obtained a piece of land near Polokwane (Pietersburg) in the province of Limpopo where he founded Zion City Moria, which became a model for many indigenous independent movements. Initially the influence of Dowie's Christian Catholic Church on Lekganyane was particularly strong.³¹ The ZCC places special emphasis on purification rites, dance, river baptism, prophecies and speaking in tongues. The ZCC has approximately 6 million adherents. A few times each year they journey in their hundreds of thousands to Zion City Moria to celebrate their festivals.

Isaiah Shembe (1870-1935) was the founder and leader of the Nazarite Baptist Church (NBC), called *Ibandla lamaNazaretha*³² in Zulu. Shembe believed that he was the black Zulu Messiah, who took the place of the biblical Christ specially to liberate the Zulu people from

²⁹ A. Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, pp. 499, 500.

³⁰ <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/ecumenical/aic-e.html> (accessed 19 May 2010).

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zion_Christian_Church

³² Literally: Nazareth congregation.

its perilous position of oppression by the English.³³ His reasoning was that God sends every people its own special saviour. Thus God sent Mohammed to the Arabs, Buddha to the Hindus and Christ to the whites.³⁴ Shembe linked the Old Testament Jehovah to himself as Zulu Messiah and placed the biblical Christ in the background.³⁵ Shembe received numerous visions and composed praise songs (*izibongo*) in a state of trance, simultaneously receiving the fitting words, which were written down by colleagues.³⁶ Shembe possessed great qualities of leadership, great eloquence and with his healing power he performed many miracles. In 1913 he obtained a piece of land near *Inanda* with a mountain on which he established his headquarters, *Ekuphakameni*.³⁷ He viewed this place as the New Jerusalem, taken up and elevated to celestial spheres.³⁸ In 1976 the movement was split between his family members, the smaller group retaining the name *Ekuphakameni*.³⁹ The majority left and founded *Ebhuhleni*, which means place of splendour. The *Ibandla amaNazaretha* are the largest AIC among Zulu-speakers in Southern Africa.⁴⁰ Each year they hold festivals in which thousands of adherents perform special dances in white robes and traditional attire.

The *Zion Christian Church* of Zimbabwe blew over from Transvaal in 1923. The movement was centred on Samuel Mutendi, who

³³ C.G. Oosthuizen, *The Theology of a South African Messiah*, 1967, p. 52.

³⁴ A. Vilakazi, *The Revitalization of African Society*, 1986, p. 75.

³⁵ C.G. Oosthuizen, *The Theology of a South African Messiah*, p. 52.

³⁶ E. Gunner, "Powerhouse - Prison House. An Oral Genre and its Use in Isaiah Shembe's Nazareth Baptist Church (NBC)". *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14/1, 1987, p. 205.

³⁷ C.G. Oosthuizen, *The Theology of a South African Messiah*, p. 3.

³⁸ C.G. Oosthuizen, *The Theology of a South African Messiah*, p. 136; cf. Revelation 21:2-4, the New Jerusalem will come down from heaven.

³⁹ H.J. Becken, *Ekuphakameni Revisited*, 1978, pp. 165, 171.

⁴⁰ C.G. Oosthuizen in Hexham, Oosthuizen & Becken, *The Scriptures of the amaNazaretha of Ekuphakameni*, 1994, introduction, p. xx.

championed the emancipation of his own people. As he was of royal descent, he saw the opportunity to win over the tribal chiefs through the Mwari culture and presented himself as a judge and rainmaker. He gained great fame as a healer, as a result of which the movement enjoyed rapid growth. The established churches and the colonial government saw Mutendi as a threat and he was imprisoned. Later Mutendi was banished to Gokwe, where he died in 1976.⁴¹

Daneel accused Mutendi of eradicating witchcraft, by giving his prophets prior to baptism the task of tracking down and removing uroyi-witchcraft medicines.⁴² Nehemia Mutendi followed his father and in 1981 moved the church back to the original area.⁴³ In 2010 he opened the Mbungo Conference Centre to the east of Masvingo, with a capacity of 15,000 seats. Mutendi's vision is to spread the gospel over Africa and the West, as he aims to show "how God has manifested himself in Africa". His message is simple: he promises prosperity on earth, and after this life, heaven.

In Stegen's case at *Kwasizabantu*, in the beginning of the revival experiences of warmth or fire (in the body), healings, deliverances, exorcism, speaking in tongues, dreams and visions flooded in like an avalanche. Stegen claimed that the experience of warmth or fire was the last outpouring of the Holy Spirit before the second coming of Christ, which would pass through him over the whole world.⁴⁴ In the meetings earlier it was not the Word of God that was preached; rather, visions, dreams and trances were explained. Everyone had to write down their dreams and give them to Stegen so that he could see

⁴¹ <http://www.victoriafalls-guide.net/zimbabwe-churches.html>

⁴² M.L. Daneel, "Shona Independent Churches and the Eradication of Wizardry", in *Conference on the History of Central African Religion*, 1972.

⁴³ <http://relzim.org/major-religions-zimbabwe/african-indigenous>

⁴⁴ D. Stone, interview 2 July 2006; A. Williams, interview 15 July 2006; E. Redinger, *Comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001.

if they came true.⁴⁵ To him, the dreams of Thofozi had equivalent value to a word from God. Although she was still a child (14), Stegen followed up the interpretation of her dreams in detail.⁴⁶ Since the appearance of the book by K.E. Koch in the late 1970s, each year hundreds of foreign adherents come to Kwasizabantu to test their lives in the light of the “revival”. Several times a year Kwasizabantu organises conferences which are attended by hundreds or even thousands of young people.

Sects and cults in the African context

The AIC's are seen in very divergent ways by scholars. In the publications of the 1960s and 70s, some researchers in particular are full of praise. Thus, for example, H.J. Becken saw the *Ibandla lamaNazaretha* as an institute in which the message of the gospel was incarnate in African culture, mentality and social life.⁴⁷ Oosthuizen spoke of the indigenous churches as sects or cults, because he concluded that the *Ibandla lamaNazaretha* Shembe as the chosen Zulu Messiah, who functions as mediator between God and the Zulus.⁴⁸ Sundkler claims that the founders of indigenous churches in Africa are the so-called Bantu prophets who begin their own movement for reasons of their specific inspiration.⁴⁹ Critical Zulu preachers of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Kwazulu-Natal call Stegen “the white Shembe”

⁴⁵ E. Redinger, *Comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001.

⁴⁶ E. Redinger, *Reflections on the Early Years of Ksb*, 2000.

⁴⁷ H.J. Becken, in I. Hexham, *The Story of Isaiah Shembe*, vol. II, 1999, introduction, p. x.

⁴⁸ G.C. Oosthuizen, *The Theology of a South African Messiah*, p. 52; through an analysis of the *izibhlabelelo* (hymns) he was able to set out the theology of the *amaNazaretha*. According to I. Hexham, introduction, p. xix: The leaders of the *amaNazaretha* have stated several times that Oosthuizen is the only one who has correctly interpreted their theology.

⁴⁹ B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, p. 248.

(after Isaiah Shembe) and regard him as a sort of sect leader who is difficult to place in terms of churchmanship.⁵⁰

Zulu religion

God is *Unkulunkulu*, and his name is the source from which everything in human memory derives. His name relates to his age, as he is ancient. His power runs through the successive generations and is both positive and negative. God has life in himself; he causes life to flow to the ancestral spirits (*amadlodzi*) and to family.

The spirits of the ancestors are the messengers of *Nkulunkulu*⁵¹ and mediators between God and man. His life (*impilo*) and his life force (*amandla*) equip the medicine-men and –women to heal the sick and to deal with the accidents that befall the community. *UNkulunkulu* makes medicines effective. Without *Nkulunkulu* the ancestral spirits would be powerless. The mediate between *Nkulunkulu* and bring the prayers of the people before him, as he is too great and too remote to be approached directly.

Zulu life is holistic, unlike that of Western-oriented societies in which religion, work and home life are disconnected. The living world of the Zulus is an integral part of a supernatural dynamic power which permeates all aspects of life. The invisible forces have to be kept in balance, as otherwise the wellbeing of the community will be endangered and people will fall victim to adversity. The Zulus try to gain the favour of the ancestral spirits or neutralize them.

There are many mysterious forces in their hostile world that have to be taken into account. Their reasoning adapts effortlessly to the circumstances.

Medicine-men and diviners have their power from *Nkulunkulu* and the ancestral spirits (*amadlodzi*) and it is by this power that they

⁵⁰ G. Lademann-Priemer, *Heilung als Zeichen für die Einheit der Welten*, p. 187.

⁵¹ The name *uNkulunkulu* is also used by Zulu Christians in reference to the God of the Bible.

function. The *abathakathi* have their power from the “darkness”. No one knows where the darkness comes from and no one tries to rationalize it – people do not seek any contact with it.⁵²

Ancestral spirits

The Zulu believe in a continuing existence after death, life's journey being continued non-physically. The dead are not punished or rewarded. They remain what they were previously: thieves, *chiefs* or whatever they may have been. Thus a good person will be a good ancestral spirit.

The spirits of the deceased are called the living-dead and become the guiding spirits of the living. They mediate between the Zulus and the Supreme Being, with whom no personal relationship is possible. The ancestral spirits (*amadlozi*) and the living family are interrelated. The ancestral spirits can bring happiness or adversity depending on the attitude of the living family. The ancestral spirits communicate with their people especially during crises, sickness, or death in the family by means of dreams and visions, which can be interpreted by diviners (*izangoma*). As a rule the spirits use women as a bridge between the visible and the invisible world.⁵³

The Zulus make sacrifices to honour the ancestors, defend themselves against adversity and ensure blessings. When adversity afflicts a person, this means that the ancestral spirits are displeased. In such cases the person will visit a diviner, whose job it is to track down the cause and help him get his strength back.⁵⁴

⁵² For reading on Zulu culture and religion: S.A. Thorpe, *African Traditional Religion*, 1994; A.I. Berglund, *Zulu Thought-patterns and Symbolism*, 1976; W.D. Hammond-Tooke, *Rituals and Medicines: Indigenous Healing in South Africa*, 1989; H. Ngubane-Sibisi, *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine: An Ethnography of Health and Disease in Nyuswa-Zulu Thought and Practice*, 1977

⁵³ H. Ngubane-Sibisi, *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine*, 1977, p. 142.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

White magic: medicine-men and diviners

From inexplicable little things to important events, sickness, adversity or when signs appear, the Zulus wonder who is responsible. They continually look for solutions from the medicine-men (*izinyanga*) and diviners (*izangoma*). They can diagnose patients and free them from injury by means of white magic.

The *inyanga* is often a herbal doctor, who can break the spells of the witch (*umthakati* or *umloyi*), working with the power of the ancestral spirits. He can make objects, which can defend against sickness or calamity.⁵⁵ He can heal or liberate anyone who puts himself in his hands. As proof of the victory he demonstratively displays a piece of bone, a tooth, a toad, a beetle, pieces of glass, needles, or stones, which he appears to have removed from the patient.⁵⁶ Botha, who did research among Xhosa's, claimed to be informed about this phenomenon, but that he was not personally an eyewitness.⁵⁷

The diviner (*isangoma*) will seek contact with the ancestral spirits, possibly going into a trance (*ukuquleka*) and speaking in languages (*izimili*) he she has not learned. She can see into hidden things and provide treatment for a person's life (*ukubhula*).⁵⁸ The diviner investigates which ancestral spirit is responsible and writes out a prescription. She also indicates what sacrifice is expected and whether a goat or a cow needs to be slaughtered. These days civilized Zulus in the cities also take grilled chickens to sacrifice to the spirits. If they have convinced themselves that they have done well, they expect the ancestral spirits to fulfil their wishes.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, pp. 19-24.

⁵⁶ H.A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, 1962, p. 512. According to Junod this may be a trick, but actually we do not know what is happening.

⁵⁷ L. Botha, in correspondence with A. Pilon on 30 November 2005.

⁵⁸ M. Zulu & G. Lademann-Priemer, *Evangelium und Zulu-Bräuche*, 1992, p. 22.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

The isangoma has a counterpart in de AIC's, called a prophetess (*umprofeti*). She may work together with an envoy who says what prayers must be said and for whom. The prophetess then goes into a trance and speaks in tongues and prophesies (*ukuprofeta*). She says what is spoken in heaven.⁶⁰

The isangoma and the prophetess have the same roots, but they must be interpreted differently. In the former case it is the ancestral spirits that are involved while in the latter case it is a matter of the Holy Spirit (or what is thought to be).

Black magic: witches

In Zulu religion there are witches, called *abathakathi* (pl.). They occupy themselves with black magic. The *umthakathi* (sg.) is asked to do something bad to a supposed opponent. He is suspected to give a person something to eat or drink which contains a certain magic ingredient. For this purpose normal-looking corn flour or beer is used. It is said that immediately after it is taken, the magic ingredient is transformed into a snake, beetle, toad or a large fly. This is said to result in asphyxiation or death. The familiar spirits of the *umthakati* are baboons, birds, bats, cats, dogs and snakes.⁶¹

Conclusion

In AIC's, dreams, visions and trances are viewed as Christian, whereas this phenomenon occurred in Zulu religion long before Christianity was heard of here.⁶² There are AIC's in all shapes and sizes: some are close to the Christian church and others are often heathen and in some cases have little notion of what the Christian faith entails. The leaders and their followers are heavily influenced by supernatural

⁶⁰ *Ukuprofeta*: AIC prophets claim to prophesy by the Holy Spirit; the mainstream churches regard *ukuprofeta* as *ukubhula*, the divination of the traditional isangoma.

⁶¹ G. Lademann-Priemer, *Heilung als Zeichen für die Einheit der Welten*, p. 137.

⁶² B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, p. 248.

phenomena, which come from Traditional Religion.⁶³ Many AIC's have Africanized Christ to make him acceptable to the people of Africa. Usually Zulu Religion functions as a basis and Christ is given a place among the ancestral spirits, as the great ancestral spirit of the whites.⁶⁴

Kwasizabantu has its basis in the Christian faith, but in the process of encounter with Zulu religion a contextual theology came into being and Stegen inflicted damage on the gospel. Through the charisma of his Zulu prophetesses he is open to supernatural influences and through him, his followers. In the next chapter we shall look into this further.

⁶³ B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, pp. 265, 266, 271.

⁶⁴ M. Zulu & G. Lademann-Priemer, *Evangelium und Zulu-Bräuche*, p. 17; J.A. van Rooy, *Missiology, Cross-Cultural Communication of the Gospel*; J.A. van Rooy, *Christus-prediking vir Afrika*, 1992.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Supernatural Phenomena

Introduction

As will be evident from the earlier chapters, special customs have developed in the Christianity of Southern Africa in consequence of the encounter with indigenous cultures. Supernatural inspiration led many a founder to a breakthrough, by which he preached the newly acquired insights with fire and gained authority as his proclamation of the word was confirmed by “signs and wonders”.⁶⁵ Inspired by dreams and visions each movement developed patterns of its own. Since Kwasizabantu also has its own special customs, an investigation of their background is needed. By means of analysis of the author’s fieldwork data and internet correspondence⁶⁶ an attempt is made to provide an accurate picture of the supernatural phenomena of Kwasizabantu.

Method

To begin with, an analysis of the supernatural phenomena at Kwasizabantu will be made in relation to a number of special miracles, trances and contact with supposed Satanists. Next a treatment is given of the

⁶⁵ For miracles associated with Stegen, see the book by K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, 1979.

⁶⁶ See www.ksb-alert.com.

barbaric beating of children during the Kranskop conference. After that comes a description of the traditional Zulu wedding. An account is then given of how a boy should court a girl and of the separation of the two sexes as part of the upbringing. It is further shown how the leaders arrange and manipulate marriages. A description is also given of the undermining of marriage and family, as well as sexual abuse. A number of conclusions are drawn.

Special miracles

Reports of resurrection from death are commonly found in literature about the AIC's.⁶⁷ Anyone who reads Hexham's publications on the *Ibandla amaNazaretha* is struck by the regular occurrence of so-called miracles, such as resurrection from the dead.⁶⁸

Kwasizabantu has its own variation on this topic. In 1973 Thofozi died after a long sickness and came back to life.⁶⁹ In a vision she was climbing a steep and narrow mountain path that seemed almost impassable, and anyone who fell off it ended up in hell. In her world of experience this steep mountain path corresponds to the round mountain of Kranskop. After much trouble and difficulty Thofozi arrived in heaven, but because one more task awaited her on earth, she was sent back. There are no doctor's records or police statements regarding her death and resurrection.⁷⁰ Despite the fact that Stegen seemed enchanted by her, others had their doubts about her. Her testimony was not consistent; she was unstable and displayed mysterious behaviour.⁷¹ Despite all her heavenly experiences, she later plotted, among other things, an abortive attempted murder.

⁶⁷ J.W. Fernandez, "The Precincts of the Prophet", 1973, p. 32.

⁶⁸ I. Hexham, *Sacred History and Traditions of the amaNazaretha* (vols. I, II and III), 1996, p. 83; 1999, pp. 25, 31, 66, 677; 2001, pp. 15, 17.

⁶⁹ K.E. Koch, *Im Paradies* (no date), p. 68.

⁷⁰ J.W. Greeff, interview 23 November 2004.

⁷¹ B. Mabaso, interview 15 November 2004; H. Hirth, telephone interview 15 December 2005.

Supernatural miracles occurred at Kwasizabantu, in which objects or live animals left a human body. The Dutch broadcasting company, Evangelische Omroep, broadcast images of a young woman who was bewitched by an *umthakathi* (witch). In the broadcast it can be seen how needles emerge one by one from her swollen hand.¹

Another young woman was vexed by evil spirits and went through physical and mental suffering. This was supposedly caused by worship of the ancestral spirits and contact with supposed Satanists. She sought help from an *inyanga* (medicine-man) and tried various magic potions consisting of snakeskin and tortoise fat. Out of curiosity she went to Kwasizabantu and confessed her sins. After a prayer various live animals appeared out of her body, such as snakes, a tortoise, a frog, a locust; but also such objects as safety-pins, needles and a bent teaspoon.²

The Trances

As Stegen saw that he had success through the trances, he consulted Magasa for every decision that had to be taken.³ Whenever he had Magasa let herself fall into a trance (*ukufukamela*), he could ask her questions in different languages, even in languages she did not know, and she would answer. Stegen noted and carried out instructions that Magasa pronounced each day.⁴ Later Magasa could remember none of her pronouncements during the trances.⁵ She and her daughter

¹ O. de Bruin, “Omega” programme by the Evangelische Omroep broadcast 17 May 1997 under the title “the power of magic”. Original recording Robert Mäder Kwasizabantu.

² German-language newsletter of Kwasizabantu of 5 September 2005.

³ E. Redinger, testimony point 36.

⁴ In New Age the term “channeling” is used for the belief that living persons (“mediums”) receive messages from spirits; <http://nl.wikipedia.org>; E. Redinger, testimony point 34.

⁵ E. Redinger, testimony point 37; H. Bartels, declaration of 21 March 2000 presented to the Commission of the South African Evangelical Alliance (see paragraph 6).

Lindiwe were also able to reveal who was living in sin and who was pure.

Redinger was present at a meeting on Joosten's farm where everyone had to take off their shoes and sit on the floor against the wall.⁶ Magasa spoke in tongues and said, "The Lord is very pleased with Friedel, he has such a pure heart, but the Lord is displeased about Erwin Freese because his heart is full of sin."⁷ Revelations like these can only be described as extraordinarily heathen in nature.⁸ Because God alone knows what goes on inside a person.⁹

In Mapumulo there is no secrecy about the trances. Stegen promoted them in the Claridge community and even far afield. Every member of the Claridge congregation was *au fait* with the trances of Stegen and Magasa (see Appendix 1, pp.221-223). When Stegen later realized that the trances were not accepted by everyone as being biblical, he deliberately left new members in the dark about them. As the turnover of members in the movement is high, no one now knows anything about them. In fact, even the existence of them is rejected by members as lies.

On the trances Koos Greeff states the following: "Anyone who does not belong to the 'inner circle' cannot, according to them, confirm the functioning of the trances."¹⁰

Kobus du Preez put together a document in 1980-1981 setting down all available cassette recordings of Stegen's talks on the origins of the "revival". No reference whatsoever was made to the trances. After du Preez had left Kwasizabantu in 1986, he heard of their existence.¹¹

⁶ The removal of one's shoes is a well-known custom among the Zionists.

⁷ E. Redinger, testimony point 37.

⁸ J.A. van Rooy, interview 8 November 2004.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 1:12.

¹⁰ J.W. Greeff, email 30 January 2004.

¹¹ K. du Preez, email 1 November 2013.

A number of former members did, however, surprise Stegen during trances with Magasa or Lindiwe. They make statements about them, some of which are given here: Redinger, Mabaso and Röttcher¹² were eyewitnesses of trances.

Redinger once witnessed a trance in Claridge. Magasa pronounced a few words of instruction in tongues, which Stegen wrote down. When they then departed for Durban by car, on the way someone made a comment about the words Magasa had spoken. She was very pleased to hear it, because she said that she never knew what she was saying. This means that when in a trance she is totally absorbed. The late Mr. Gerard Engelbrecht and others also witnessed such sessions.¹³

In addition, Bartels, Williams and Bodo Stegen are important people who confirm the existence of this practice.¹⁴ Stegen said that Magasa was his personal gift from God, because she was willing to go into a trance on his behalf so as to make the word of God known to him.¹⁵

At the Claridge reconciliation conference in 1977 it was established that by the speaking in trance “messages from God” were received, which had a considerable influence on the leadership of Kwasizabantu and through them on the workers and congregation members.

The commission of the South African Evangelical Alliance set up for this purpose in June 2000, declared that Magasa (Hilda Dube) received “messages from God”, which Stegen considers genuine and imposes on his congregation. For the commission this was unacceptable and not compatible with the biblical norms.¹⁶

¹² L. Röttcher; H. Bartels, conversation with Redinger on 6 September 2009.

¹³ E. Redinger, testimony point 36.

¹⁴ H. Bartels, interview 13 November 2004; B. Stegen, interview 24 November 2004; A. Williams, interview 15 July 2006.

¹⁵ C.N. Peckham, Assessment of Kwasizabantu, 19 February 1999.

¹⁶ Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, point 4.1, 23 June 2000.

Contact with Satanists?

Some people are said to have had contact with Satanists, such as the young woman mentioned in the context of special miracles. Another woman, who was one of the key people at the girls' school, is said to have had contact with supposed Satanists. She gave the following testimony concerning this, anonymously.¹⁷

"In 2010 the 14-year-old Imbali Mxolo was sent to Kwasizabantu to infiltrate the movement. She was supposedly a "top Satanist" but had apparently been converted. Because of her background she was able to identify certain children as Satanists, as she recognised them from "encounters under the sea",¹⁸ we were told. Imbali was extremely vulgar and was guilty of blasphemy. Despite that, Stegen and the so-called aunts Thofozi Dube, Eunice Ngcamu, Jabu Majola and Phiwapi Shange hung on her every word. She was even asked to speak in front of the staff, while I was wondering why they would let her speak.

Even in the night some girls were roused from their sleep and accused of "Satanism". None of the children were allowed to breathe a word of this to the parents. Some children were traumatised by the tremendous psychological pressure, fear and confusion. It is not surprising that children leave Kwasizabantu at the first available opportunity and many left the Christian faith. When I told my counselor (Olsen) about this he said that Westerners find it very difficult to understand the African way of doing things.

At special meetings led by the aunts, Imbali Mxolo and Elaine Moodley, the question was asked: "Which of you has spoken to Satan recently?" I was quizzed about my credentials. The aunts wanted to

¹⁷ This testimony was placed in parts on <http://www.ksb-alert/forum>, from 31 May to 11 June 2013. The forum was not granted a long life, and was suspended some time after the launch.

¹⁸ 'Encounters under the sea' are notions that occur in myths and sagas about water gods, West African in origin (for the watergod uManlanbo, see: *Kronos* 30, pp. 184-199). Conceptions of the underwater realm have also become familiar in South Africa, even though Zulus regard Ulwandle, the sea, as dangerous.

force me to admit that I could feel demons leaning over my shoulders.¹⁹ At another meeting a man was introduced to us who was at the services from the beginning. He was a “sponge”, someone who had had an out-of-the-body experience.²⁰ The “sponge”, Imbali and Elaine said that they regularly met each other outside their bodies. The “sponge” went and stood in front of me that evening, looked me straight in the eyes and said: “I met you ‘under the sea’ in 2003.” My first reaction was to laugh and deny this of course, as in 2003 I was a captain in the Salvation Army.” I told the aunts: You can put me in front of choir one and let the Holy Spirit reveal the truth, because I have nothing to hide.²¹

The misgivings against me persisted, because suddenly I was removed from the choir to think about my life. It became more and more clear to me that the “aunts” were false, changing colour like chameleons. My world fell apart and I wondered if they really were in contact with the Christian God. I was prepared to confess my sins, but how could I prove that I had nothing to do with “encounters under the sea”? I am convinced that Thofozi pulls the strings at Kwasizabantu. Together with the “aunts” she reveals all sorts of secrets. The people are so blinded that they do not see what power has given her this authority.”

The Kranskop debacle

In 1975 Lindiwe Dube arranged for months of sensation which were to go down in history as the debacle of Kranskop. The children had to improve their lives, because despite the revival they still had rac-

¹⁹ This is a view from traditional Zulu religion which is called *ukaguliswa uMoya*. When anyone who experiences pain (tingling) in the shoulders it is said that the spirits are trying to make contact with them. In traditional Zulu religion anyone whom this happens to is viewed as a candidate to become an *isangoma*.

²⁰ T.K. Oesterreich, *Der Okkultismus im modernen Weltbild*, cited in K.E. Koch, *Seelsorge und Okkultismus*. When something or someone is caused to disappear entirely and to reappear, this is called dematerialisation and rematerialisation.

²¹ This choir acts as a kind of tribunal.

ist tendencies. When in a state of trance, Lindiwe summoned the children and some adults to a conference on Ewald Witthöft's farm near Kranskop.²² One of the adults summoned was Helga Hirth, from Germany. On the repeated insistence of Stegen she came and witnessed the bizarre way in which the children were treated.²³ Someone was also persuaded to come from abroad.²⁴ Neither of them had any benefit from it whatsoever; it was a complete waste of time. This shows the extent of Stegen's hold over his followers.

When Mabaso brought his son Simanga, he saw how Lindiwe lost consciousness and fell into a trance and revealed the sins of toddlers and children. Stegen wrote down all the details carefully. As punishment the children were beaten black and blue by Arno Stegen, Thofozi and Lindiwe; in fact they were thrashed until they bled.²⁵ Thofozi even took toddlers of 3 and 4 years of age and placed their hand on the stove to feel how hot hell is. Before the beating Stegen had the children pray and afterwards say thank-you for the punishment. The children were tormented for days and were only allowed to leave when Lindiwe had given permission in a trance. Nine victims have made statements about this.²⁶ Some literally bear the scars to this day, and others still suffer from the traumatic consequences of Stegen's horror. Almost all the victims have turned their back on the

²² B. Mabaso, interview 15 November 2004; E. Redinger, interview 11 November 2004.

²³ H. Hirth, telephone interview 15 December 2005

²⁴ W. Mhambi, testimony.

²⁵ D. Stone, interview 2 July 2006; Lorentz Freese, email 17 March 2004 to his brother-in-law E. Redinger concerning a warning addressed to Stegen about the beating of children; H. Hirth, testimony during the conference of former members in Kirchenkirnberg, 7-8 October 2000.

²⁶ see Appendix 3, pp.227-231. – testimonies of victims, or their parents, of the Kranskop debacle.

faith.²⁷ The inhuman corporal punishments continued among the schoolchildren into the early 1990s.²⁸

Until a short time ago, leaders and counsellors advised men to beat their wives and children when they were disobedient.²⁹ The beating of children is an accepted custom in Zulu culture,³⁰ and is a way of driving out evil spirits.³¹ This story can be read in the book by K.E. Koch, *God onder de Zoeloes*, but without the horror stories.³²

Marriage in the Zulu context

To Western eyes, Kwasizabantu has a unique stance on preparations for marriage. It may be asked what influences played a part in this. In order to gain an insight into this we shall present a short description of the traditional Zulu marriage, followed by a description of the customs of the Hermannsburg mission in the indigenous churches.

The traditional Zulu marriage

Zulu culture gave young people space to fall in love and to grow towards each other. Even children who had not yet reached the age of puberty were already familiar with a particular form of dealings with each other. The young girls were, however, strictly monitored as to whether they were still virgins, by a group of older girls or women (*umhlanga* ceremony). This custom was operative until after puberty.

If a Zulu youth had his eye on a girl, his parents opened negotiations on the *lobola* (dowry) with the parents and tribe of the prospective bride.

²⁷ B. Mabaso, interview 15 November 2004.

²⁸ Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, 23 June 2000.

²⁹ Testimony of Neville and Byrill Laing, 30 May 2009.

³⁰ Mangosuthu Buthelezi, IFP leader, *Natal Witness*, 4 February 2000.

³¹ B. Mabaso, interview 15 November 2004.

³² K.E. Koch, *God onder de Zoeloes*, pp. 314, 315; Erlo and his team withdrew for prayer in Kranskop and held a conference for adults and children. It was at that time that the Lord spoke again to the team through the eleven-year-old Lindiwe.

If the young man had been accepted and the engagement had taken its appropriate course, from three months before the wedding it was quietly permitted by the girl's parents for the pair to sleep together, occasionally having only "external" sexual contact. After completion of the wedding ceremony the bride came to live in the hut of the bridegroom.³³

In Nqutu the *umhlanga* ceremony was re-introduced by the chief. The investigation brought to light that only one of the dozen girls was a virgin. Each year King Zwelithini calls the young girls to come voluntarily to Nongoma (a royal kraal of King Zwelithini) for the so-called *umhlanga* ceremony and dance.³⁴

Despite the large number of Zulu tribes, their customs are the same as long as they remain in Kwazulu-Natal. In moral respects, in recent decades the Zulus have undergone a process of adaptation to modern culture.

Marriage at the Hermannsburg mission

In the indigenous churches young people and engaged couples were not permitted even to touch each other or to be together in a bedroom before their wedding. Any physical contact such as holding hands or kissing was forbidden. Indigenous Christians thus had nineteenth-century morality imposed on them, which the Hermannsburg missionaries had brought with them from Europe.³⁵

³³ E. J., Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*, 1962, pp. 105f.

³⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umhlanga_\(ceremony\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umhlanga_(ceremony)). Anyone who wishes to participate in the royal dance is obliged to undergo the *umhlanga* ceremony. In recent years the tests have taken place against a background of some protest.

³⁵ M. Mabaso, interview 7 September 2014. Correspondence with G. Lademann-Priemer 14 July 2014.

Marriage at Kwasizabantu

Dreams about marriage

A young man told Stegen of his feelings for a girl. Not he but Stegen spoke with the girl, whom he informed about the young man's feelings. Stegen advised her to pray about the matter. Shortly afterwards she had a dream in which she found herself on one side of a large room. There was a table in the middle with a splendid vase on it, symbolising the marriage. Suddenly the young man in question came in through a side door, placed something in the vase without taking any notice of her and left the room. The girl heard a voice telling her to take the object in her hand and put it into the vase, too. When she looked she saw half a crown³⁶ in her hand and one also in the vase. The moment she put her half crown in the vase, the half crowns suddenly became one whole crown. She then went to Stegen and told him that the dream had made her sure she should marry the young man.³⁷ This dream is supposed to play an important role in how a boy and a girl should court one another in Kwasizabantu.

Arranging and manipulating marriages

Shrouded in mystery, and elevated to a supernatural status, marriages now need to be arranged by him, Stegen believes. Anyone who wants to marry with the blessing of Kwasizabantu now takes the route via the leader, who has forbidden mixed marriages. If he gives his authorization for a marriage, it is only then that the parents are informed and an engagement service immediately follows, Stegen standing between the marriage candidates to indicate that they are not yet one. In the service the future couple do not sit next to each other, do not hold hands, and there is no kiss after the engagement. Before their wedding lovers are not allowed to get to know each other or meet

³⁶ The "half a crown" is a survival from British rule in South Africa.

³⁷ C. Peckham, *Assessment of Ksb*, 19 February 1999; cf. K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, pp. 249-250.

each other. Other than for making preparations for the honeymoon and the home and such things they are allowed to see each other only in the presence of the leadership. The wedding is conducted shortly afterwards so as to protect the young people from temptation. Kwasizabantu thinks in this way it can guarantee sexual purity.³⁸ When procedural mistakes are made, the marriage candidates are ignored and cold-shouldered, until in the end they go away. In other words, their engagement and wedding may not be held at Kwasizabantu.³⁹ From an early age the children are forbidden to communicate with the opposite sex. In the schools of Kwasizabantu transgressions are severely punished. This code of behaviour is so important that after school vacations Zulu girls, in line with traditional custom, were inspected to see whether they were still virgins.⁴⁰

Undermining of the institution of marriage and the family

On the other hand Stegen urges divorce when one of the marriage partners has doubts about the course being taken. Just a few examples follow from South Africa and Europe.

1. The first incitements to divorce occurred during the revival in Mapumulo and affected the married couples Ntsibande and Ximba.⁴¹
2. In the same period pressure was put on Constance Masango to marry a man Thofozi had seen in a dream. The man proved to be unfaithful and after a short time they got divorced.⁴²

³⁸ W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, p. 87 (African edition).

³⁹ Bullying is the specific indication of this.

⁴⁰ *Natal Witness*, 2 February 2000: "Dozens tell their own stories of abuse at KZN mission".

⁴¹ N. Ximba, interview 14 November 2004.

⁴² E. Redinger, testimony.

3. Around 1988 Annelie du Preez divorced her husband Kobus, after he had expressed doubts about Kwasizabantu.⁴³
4. Former members who wish to remain anonymous and testified to the commission of the Evangelical Alliance, said that some were not allowed to marry the person they loved but had to be joined in matrimony with someone else.
5. Further, situations are known of women who were encouraged by the leaders to divorce if their husband would not submit.⁴⁴
6. One woman declared that she was no longer tied to her marriage vows because her husband had split from Kwasizabantu.⁴⁵
7. There are also known cases in which marriage requests were not passed on to the women concerned.⁴⁶
8. In another case a woman was not permitted to know who wished to marry her and had to be married out “blind”. For four years Stegen bothered her with approaches from an unknown man.⁴⁷
9. Stegen furiously resisted young members who wanted to marry in Kwasizabantu style in a local church, because he saw this as his exclusive right.⁴⁸ The young people had to be converted or their parents were to renounce them.
10. Children were called upon to separate from their parents if they did not follow “the way”.⁴⁹
11. In one case, an outsider was forbidden to marry a member of Kwasizabantu.

⁴³ K. du Preez, testimony 23 June 2000; M. Frische, H. Trauernicht, J. Trauernicht, *Een huwelijk gaat stuk op Kwasizabantu*, 2000.

⁴⁴ Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, 23 June 2000.

⁴⁵ L. Schönfelder, interview 10 June 2006.

⁴⁶ www.ksb-alert.com, “Ihr Herz sagt nein”.

⁴⁷ www.ksb-alert.com, “Bruidegom onbekend”.

⁴⁸ D. Lütfolf, interview in August 2007.

⁴⁹ F.H. Stegen, during a youth conference in 1998 (France).

It became quite clear how marriage and family were undermined in the past (and still are). Bitter divisions and divorces were the result, and families and clans were torn apart (even within the Stegen family) in consequence of the leaders' bizarre ideas.⁵⁰

Relationships between husband, wife and children are exposed to serious danger. Parents and children, husband or wife may not speak to each other about confidential matters that are occupying them but have to report to a pastor. The counsellor "looks" into the families with them, so that the members live in fear of being informed upon. Husband and wife do not rely on each other: between them stands the counsellor. Children do not trust their parents for leadership and protection.

Excesses and sexual misdemeanours among young people

Through the interference of the leaders and interventions in people's love lives sexual indiscretions have taken place. It is known that girls were forced by a counsellor to perform sexual acts and that afterwards they were made out to be whores. Another girl was raped by a boy from the movement and afterwards branded as the guilty party.

There is even a known case of murder: the perpetrator regularly had sex with a young woman. When she indicated that she no longer wished to continue and planned to tell a counsellor about it, he strangled her to death.⁵¹

A case is also known of a white girl who became pregnant by a Zulu boy. She had the child elsewhere and gave it up for adoption.⁵² She returned some time later.

⁵⁰ *Concerned Christians*, 19 February 2000, point 2.9.

⁵¹ *Natal Witness*, 12 August 2003, "Man strangled victim after sex".

⁵² Mixed-race children born from extramarital relationships between white and black had to be given up for adoption. From the point of view of Kwasizabantu this is a case of double transgression, namely premarital sex between two different races (see the *ontugwet* of 1927 and completion by the Apartheid government in 1950 – which prohibited sexual relationships with a member of another race).

Births outside of marriage are also generally blamed on women. The leaders blame women and let the men off scot-free.⁵³

Unfortunately the victims are not believed. If someone asks the leaders about the men's behaviour the answer is: "Why do you ask this question? If God has forgiven a brother, it is terrible that you do not forgive."

Conclusions about sexuality and marriage

In relation to customs to do with sexuality and marriage Stegen principally followed the moral notions which the Hermannsburg missionaries had brought with them from Europe and exaggerated them. He also relied on a dream, regarding it as authoritative in the same way as those that occur in Zulu religion are regarded as authoritative. The virginity tests were also compulsory for some time.

The moral pressure through the demand for purity and sanctity is so great that sexual transgressions are kept quiet as if they had never happened. And instead of punishing the transgressors, the victims are blamed and generally thrown out of the movement.

A wedding preparation that quickly leads to forced marriage brings no extra happiness and has no particular inherent sanctity. The opposite is true: in Kwasizabantu the same sins are perpetrated as are committed by other Christians and unbelievers. The way in which a boy and a girl must do their courting and must marry is one of the sacred doctrines of Kwasizabantu. Anyone who raises objections is excommunicated. This applies both to the marriage candidates and to their parents. Any attempt to change this point of view is seen as trampling on the sacred doctrine and tradition of the movement. If this rule is not followed then the whole movement will be thrown

⁵³ B. Stegen, interview 24 November 2004: D. Stegen had a child out of wedlock by a Zulu woman.

into ruin. A relevant detail is that Shembe's *Ibandla lamaNazaretha* (in KwaZulu-Natal) have the same custom and also apply punitive measures when there are transgressions.⁵⁴

The young people have to marry in the prescribed manner, *as if this method were instituted by God*. Despite Stegen's view that women must submit to their husbands, he has incited people to divorce, *even though marriage is a divine institution.*⁵⁵

Obedience to Kwasizabantu comes before obedience to the Word of God.

General conclusions

The emergence of live animals and objects from the human body is understood by Kwasizabantu as a sign of liberation or healing. This phenomenon is a rare occurrence these days, but the indigenous population accept it and believe it without question.⁵⁶ In anthropology these phenomena are associated with the activities of diviners.

In Kwasizabantu notions and influences from Traditional Religion and other supernatural ideas are mixed together. There is no question of Satanism, but some people are suspected of maintaining contacts with so-called Satanists. The question is to what extent people are able to separate reality from fantasy. What is clear is that Stegen has deliberately tied his spiritual leadership to the charisma of his Zulu prophetesses. The spiritual messages that have to be carried out without question have permanently changed the course of the lives

⁵⁴ Cf. A. Vilakazi, *The Revitalization of African Society*, 1986, p. 122.

⁵⁵ The fact that we must follow Christ above our husband or wife is subtly replaced by the lie that a husband or wife must obey the leaders of Kwasizabantu, even if this is at the price of their marriage – despite the fact that in the law of God it is written “You shall not divorce” (Exodus 20:14). This is an abundantly clear case of misuse of spiritual power.

⁵⁶ L. Botha, exchange of correspondence with A. Pilon, 30 November 2005.

of members and ex-members. Innumerable lives have been ruined by the interventions of the leader in marriage, family and the love life of young people. In this way Stegen exerts enormous pressure to keep the movement in tow.

In the comparisons below the intention is not to compare the African worldview with that of Europe. The concern is not with Europe's encounter with Africa but with that of the gospel with both. On the basis of the comparisons below members and ex-members of Kwasizabantu can gain an insight into the origins of the customs.

Influences of Zulu religion on Kwasizabantu

de Zoelocultuur

Kwasizabantu

1. Clash of cultures

Zulu religion has good inherent qualities such as humility, respect for parents, family ties, etc. Kindness, obedience, adaptability, flexibility, respect for parents, modesty are concerned with relationships with one's fellows and the avoidance of conflicts or overcoming them with the goal of having peace in the community (J.A. van Rooy, *The Traditional World View of Black People in Southern Africa*, 1978).

Obedience, humility, kindness, respect for the elderly and adaptability have priority.

The leadership has a double agenda and tries in this way to avoid conflicts, and it is inscrutable to its followers and outsiders.

2. Putting up a pretence

Qualities that are not developed in children are: honesty, openness, integrity, reliability and tenacity (J.A. van Rooy, *The Traditional World View of Black People in Southern Africa*). This difference in attitude often leads to a lack of understanding and conflicts between white and black.

Honesty, openness, truth and justice are not so important. For a good relationship it is fine to put up a pretence and in particular never tell anyone the truth. Members and outsiders are left in uncertainty by the leaders.

3. Communication

Because the whites are open and speak directly, the indigenous population find them uncouth. The whites regard the Zulus in turn as deceivers (J.A. van Rooy, *The Traditional World View of Black People in Southern Africa*). Despite the fact that the Bantus have acquired knowledge of Western culture, for them the muntu wisdom of Africa has priority (P.C. Tempel, *La Philosophie Bantoue*, 1945).

4. Attitude to criticism

If there is a difference of view between the Zulus which leads to disputes, they no longer receive one another, no longer eat together and break all contact (Hilde Dube, statement in the course of discussion with the congregation at Tugela Ferry, 28 June 2000).

5. No written documents

All important contacts are oral and among the Bantus must be conducted in front of witnesses (F.P. Bruwer, *Die Bantoe van Suid-Afrika*, 1963, p. 176).

Overview of agreements between Kwasizabantu and Zionist movements

Features of Zionist movements

Features of Kwasizabantu

1. their own “sacred history”

Alongside the Bible Zionist movements have recourse to a carefully described sacred history. They have a strong moral code and trace themselves back to the early Christian church (M.L. Daniel, *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia*, 1970, p. 14).

Stegen refers to the first church with the term “original church”. In the first chapters of his book, many times he uses the words “the first church”, “the first Christians”, “the first love” and “the first works” to indicate how closely related he is to the “original church” (E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, 1998, pp. 29-31).

2. Place of pilgrimage

Many movements have a sacred mountain or place which symbolises the connection between heaven and earth. Isaiah Shembe gave *Ibandla lamaNazaretha* the mountains *Nhlanganazi* and *Ekuphakameni*. The Zionists have Zion City Moria, which hundreds of thousands of adherents visit each year.

Stegen's followers see the Kwasizabantu settlement, near Kranskop, as “the open heaven”. A place where God is present in a special way. Kwasizabantu is regularly visited by thousands of people.

3. Healing clinic

The message of healing is an aspect that is closely integrated into the Traditional Religion, as it belongs with their holistic ideology (G.C. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa*, 1987, p. 51a). Stegen says that at the beginning of the revival God healed people in a miraculous way. When that became known, people streamed in from far and near to be healed. To accommodate these sick people a hospital was built (video *Fire in South Africa*, 1987 Evangelische Omtoep, The Netherlands).

4. Pastoral hospital

The whole Zionist “hospital programme” is pastorally oriented. Each day there are two prayer meetings which culminate in the laying-on of hands on the sick. Contact with the ministers at fixed times brings the patient back into a personal relationship with God and the world of the spirits (M.L. Daneel, *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia*, 1970, p. 33). The approach looks at “the whole person”, at all aspects of the entire human existence (G.C. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa*, p. 51b).

5. Resurrection from the dead

Daneel describes how a child is resurrected from the dead by an apostle called Samuel. Samuel then returned the child to the parents. Whether believers or unbelievers, the people believed in God as a result (M.L. Daneel, *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia*, 1970, p. 15).

No healing services are held in the Kwasizabantu hospital, but daily services are held which are devoted to confession of sins. Pressure is exerted for this purpose. Without the confession of sins no prayer is made for the sick. The devil would have a right to the patient as a result of unconfessed sins.

6. Subtle psychological pressure

Members are subjected to subtle psychological pressure, of which they are completely unaware. They are completely absorbed in a community with a daily programme that occupies them fully (M.L. Daneel, *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia*, 1970, p. 31).

Thofozi was supposedly resurrected from the dead. A former worker asked one of the witnesses to this event: “When did Thofozi die, and when did she come back to life? What was the date, was there a doctor present, or a police officer?” No confirming answer could be given.

Members and visitors are unaware of the subtle psychological pressure that is exerted on them. People participate single-mindedly in the daily programme and do not deviate from it.

7. Self-support projects

The indigenous evangelists are self-supporting and are assisted by their followers, who as a service of love cultivate their land and bring in the harvest for them (G.C. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa*, p. 51c). They teach that the church and economic development are separate worlds, but that material protection is an important part of human existence (G.C. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa*, p. 52g). The full-time prophets who are resident in Zion City Moria sometimes help the farmers to cultivate the land, and advise the church assembly in the case of Johane Manami, who trained artisans (M.I. Danel, *Zionism and Faith-healing in Rhodesia*, p. 36).

Kwasizabantu has built up a chain of businesses in South Africa with a turnover of millions. “Silverstreams” makes products that are sold on the open market. “AQuelle”, a producer of mineral water, is the third-largest producer of mineral water on the South African market. There are also all kinds of other activities: cattle farming, poultry farming, pig farming, chicken and egg batteries, avocados, paprika and kiwi plantations, bakery, carpentry, technical services and a garage.

8. Collaboration between white and black

There is a warm relationship between white and black leaders. From the earliest days the black leaders were actively involved in decision-making (G.C. Oosthuizen, *The Birth of Christian Zionism in South Africa*, p. 52).

In the early days at Mapumulo Stegen’s closest colleagues were almost exclusively Zulu women. Black and white co-workers were later integrated at all levels in the organisation.

9. Adoration of the leaders

The leadership of the Independent Churches is a copy of kingship in the Zulu people. The leader, “Bishop”, “Overseer”, or “President” is the king (*inkosi*) and the church is his tribe. In certain situations this pattern is taken over concretely from the indigenous Zulu model. But in other cases this pattern is “Christened”. One of the principal factors which help someone to attain a high-ranking position of leadership in an Independent Church is his relationship with the royal family (B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, p. 102).

Kwasizabantu has an unelected hierarchical structure in pyramid style. The loyalty of the leaders is such that their followers cannot bear or listen to any divergent opinion on the part of outsiders. Any attacks on the leaders are seen as rebellion against God. On one occasion during a meeting Muzi Kunene spoke. He praised the “victories” of Stegen, in the way that the traditional Zulus sing their praises in the *izibongo* before their king (1985, K. du Preez).

10. Use of corporal punishment

IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi declared that the beating of children is part of the accepted practice of Zulu tradition. He was reacting to accusations that children are beaten at the Kwasizabantu location in Kwazulu-Natal (*Natal Witness*, 4 February 2000).

Ksb has inflicted dreadful punishments on adults, teenagers and even small children. Children and toddlers were beaten until they bled. They presume, as in Traditional Religion, that evil spirits can be beaten out of a person. One young man who had written a letter to a girl was beaten until he eventually died. The affair was subsequently “sorted out” with the police (J.W. Greeff, *Hand in Hand mit dem Geheimdienst des Apartheid-Regimes*, February 2000).

11. The Old Testament prevails

The differences between the Old and New Testaments are seen as a problem. The Old Testament prevails. European monogamy is just an invention of Paul, etc. (B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, p. 277).

There is a tendency to preach more from the Old Testament, possibly because of the legalistic approach of the faith.

12. On sacred ground

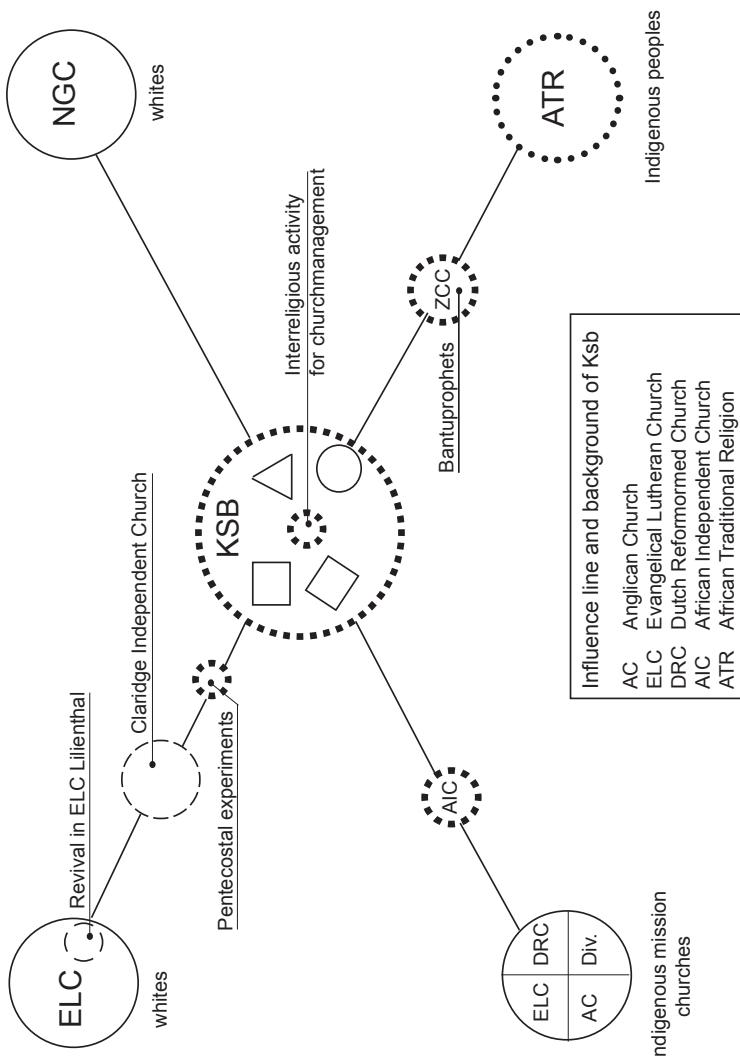
Many Zionists carry out in detail the law of Moses, such as removing their shoes before they enter the place of meeting (B.G.M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, p. 191).

In meetings with Magasa those present had to take off their shoes before she began speaking in trance (E. Redlinger, *Reflections on the Early Years of Ksb*, 2000).

13. Investigations of virginity

This is an indigenous tradition of the Zulus. Ms. Andile Gumede of the “Isivane Samasko Nolwazi” saw much that is good in this cultural practice (“Virginity Testing is our Culture”, Commission on Gender Equality – Virginity Testing Report 12-14 June 2000).

In the past, Ksb also held virginity investigations among the children of the Domino Servite School. The annual inspection was performed by older women after the school vacations.



figuur 3 -Influence lines and background of Kwasizabantu

CHAPTER 5

Testing Kwasizabantu's Own Historiography against New Sources

Introduction

Stegen realised that if he wanted to be successful he had to publish books about the revival. For this purpose he compiled all sorts of events and miracles from the past. The first book, *God among the Zulus*, by K.E. Koch, tells of signs and wonders from 1966 to 1976 and in the second, *Revival among the Zulus*, Stegen gives an account of his own experiences and draws connections between “the revival” and the early Christian church.¹ Since new source material became available around 2000 and fieldwork has been conducted, there is now a possibility of a comparative investigation. In this regard the interviews with eyewitnesses and the articles by Redinger² have proved to be highly significant.

The question is whether justice is done to the historical reality in the historiography of Kwasizabantu and what basic facts form the backbone of it. Remarkably enough, Stegen’s facts come mainly from a limited number of people, namely the Stegen and Dube families, their friends and their most intimate and loyal co-workers.

¹ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, pp. 29-31.

² E. Redinger, *Comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001; E. Redinger, The book ‘God among the Zulus’ – true or not true, 30 January 2005 (for all Redinger’s articles see www.ksb-alert.com).

Anyone who wants to form a good judgment of these books must ask who the author and witnesses are and what motive they have for supplying information. Up until the moment when new sources became available, for knowledge of that time we were dependent on their selection of facts.

Until 1999 reputable theologians from various countries and denominations had written largely positively about Kwasizabantu. In the academic world different articles appeared in scholarly journals. For them, Kwasizabantu was an interesting object of study because of its growth. The theologians based their research mainly on the preaching and judged it from the perspective of Western theology. It is not clear whether they conducted research into the history, anthropology and interculturation. What is certain is that none of them was able to track down the supernatural experiences.

Method

The comparative investigation relates to the above-mentioned books, as they go back to the origins of the revival. To the extent that the eyewitness statements of Ximba, Mbambo, Mabaso, Redinger, Bodo Stegen and Hirth can provide illumination, a new picture of the history will emerge. Three theologians give an evaluation of their findings with regard to these books: Dr. Jantzen made a number of discoveries concerning the book *Revival among the Zulus*, Ds. Krol finds the evidence presented in *God among the Zulus* incomplete and Ds. Maritz personally asked the leaders questions about the miracles. After this the numbers of visitors from the beginning and today are investigated. Finally the effect of the Kwasizabantu revival is tested.

Review of the book *Revival among the Zulus* by E. Stegen

Stegen leaves us in no doubt: thousands of Zulus and Xhosas were converted.³ The first heathens appeared from nowhere and, moved by an inner compulsion, came to confess their sins in Mapumulo.

³ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, p. 68.

Among them was a witch who ran a training school for witches 7 km further along and was terribly tormented by evil spirits. She said: "If Jesus does not save me now, then I will die today and go to hell." On her deliverance it was as if dogs were barking and pigs screaming.⁴

Stegen goes on to say: "From that moment witches, *izangoma*, diviners and possessed people streamed in. They stood by the door and waited for us. Hard, bloodthirsty men who before that time wanted nothing to do with Christianity, were weeping like little children, as if they had been beaten with canes. At every hour of the day a hundred or two hundred people stood waiting, weeping with remorse in front of Stegen's house."⁵

To the question whether Redinger, Ximba and Mbambo, co-workers right from the beginning saw hundreds of Zulu or Xhosa converts, they all answered unanimously: "Sometimes we saw 10 or at most 20 Zulus who had appeared. Others were picked up with Stegen's Land Rover. Perhaps some of them had a spiritual conversation with Stegen, and no one is aware of permanent conversions." When I asked Ximba whether this was really true, he answered: "Did you see those people, then?"

According to Friedel Stegen, the many hundreds or thousands turned out later to be a misprint that could no longer be changed.⁶ No one could remember anything of a witch being converted in 1966. There was knowledge of the witch Phontsekile of Cibini, who had a training school for witches. She was converted and delivered in 1960 during

⁴ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, pp. 62-64.

⁵ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, p. 66.

⁶ E. Redinger, interview 24 November 2004: This information derives from a conversation between Redinger and Bodo Stegen. Bodo Stegen explained that when he asked his brother Friedel, where the hundreds and thousands came from that are mentioned in the books of Kwasizabantu, Friedel answered: "That is a printing error which unfortunately it is too late to change."

evangelism by Stegen.⁷ She played no part in the revival of 1966 and had never had contact with Stegen's Zulu prophetesses.⁸

The conversion of other witches, *izangoma* or diviners is unknown. Magakanye is the only *isangoma* mentioned in Koch's book,⁹ but all others are unknown. In the services at Mapumulo Stegen mentioned no names and never pointed to converted *izangoma* or diviners. So already at the beginning no one was able to verify the stories. Moreover, Stegen would not tolerate any questions. Anyone who asked questions was immediately branded as an opponent.¹⁰

Redinger met the mother of a possessed girl on the Sandspruit farm of Hogart Joosten. After the service she asked if Jesus was really the Same and still performed miracles. Redinger answered that it was really true, whereupon she asked for prayer. The following day he visited them and found the girl, Malheni, tied with wire to a mulberry tree in the garden (not to a post in the hut as Stegen says¹¹). To prevent the wire from cutting into her flesh cloths were wrapped around the wire. Redinger's wife bandaged the wounds. During the prayer she was really delivered (N.B. Stegen was not present). Unfortunately she later reverted to the old condition.¹²

In 1966 H. Jantzen spoke at a conference in which he was asked questions about Kwasizabantu.¹³ He informed the conference that he had received the first and second printings of the book *Revival among the*

⁷ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, p. 63.

⁸ N. Ximba, interview 14 November 2004; E. Redinger, interview 12 November 2005.

⁹ K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, pp. 136-139.

¹⁰ O. Mbambo, interview in 2001; N. Ximba, interview 14 November 2004; E. Redinger, interview 14 November 2004; E. Redinger, email to A. Pilon 25 December 2005.

¹¹ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, pp. 10-12.

¹² E. Redinger, *Comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001.

¹³ Herbert Jantzen (1922) was professor of dogmatics at the FETA (now STH) in Basel. He lives in Europe (Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland) for about 50 years and returned to the country of his birth, Canada, in 1999.

Zulus by chance. Both editions had the same title and cover, but on examination he observed that they differed in content. The reprint had been purged for the public so as to remove possible doubts.¹⁴

Maritz visited Kwasizabantu many times in the period from 1980 to 1990. Groups of interested Christians travelled with him, who received a blessing. Some noted that there was little talk of grace and forgiveness. When Maritz asked someone to speak who had personally experienced a miracle, the leaders did not agree to it and made no effort to find the person. He had the impression that they did not want questions to be asked.¹⁵

Review of the book *God among the Zulus* by K.E. Koch

When Stegen came into contact with Koch in the 1970s, he was able to persuade him to write a book on the revival. In the end he was to write more than nine books about Kwasizabantu. In the introduction Koch says he conducted careful research into the background of the first ten years of the revival. He claims to have been careful to avoid exaggerations and to have conducted fieldwork with the greatest care.¹⁶ He warns in advance that anyone who doubts his book will be accusing him and Stegen of lying.

Nonetheless there are witnesses who cast doubt on the reliability of Koch's assertions. One particular day Koch asked to be permitted to record someone's conversion story, to which agreement was given. When he showed up with the manuscript, it turned out not to be faithfully presented. The person insisted that the manuscript be adjusted; otherwise no permission would be given for publication.

¹⁴ Mp3 files of this book review can be found on the internet at <http://de.dwg-load.net/play/3091?q=stegen> (5 February 2013).

¹⁵ E. Maritz, then minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Stampriet (Namibia) where he experienced a revival, interview 28 November 2004.

¹⁶ K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, p. 15.

Koch's reaction was astonishing: it was normal for an author to add or omit things, he claimed.¹⁷

The report of the conference at Kranskop is astonishing. Here Koch did not undertake any careful research whatsoever. The story begins: "In a church under the supervision of Stegen no spiritual demands were made. At a conference in Kranskop it became clear in prayer that God would give a revival here. In these days of self-examination the 'Lord' spoke again through the 11-year-old Lindiwe. The fear of God came over the congregation." As Lindiwe was 11 years old in 1975, this event is to be identified as "the Kranskop debacle".¹⁸ The church concerned is Kwasizabantu itself. Evidently, despite the 1966 revival, things were still in a poor way in spiritual life, so that another revival was needed.

Helga Hirth wrote down three events for Koch, her testimony being that the content rested entirely on truth. It was notable that Koch adopted these stories in the book without permission.¹⁹ The first story is about Helga's own healing: after she had been given up by doctors, she was cured of internal bleedings. The second is about Mercia, who fell into a coma after a fall. Her consciousness immediately returned after Stegen's prayer. But Mercia was not fully healed, because her parents did not serve God as they should have done.²⁰ In the second printing this is omitted so as to avoid criticism. The third is about healing of complications after an operation.²¹

A paralysed girl by name of Anna Gretha was brought to Stegen lying on a stretcher. After he had prayed it was as if an invisible force caused a rustling which lifted the girl from the stretcher and made

¹⁷ P. Itzacker, email to A. Pilon 24 March 2006.

¹⁸ K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, pp. 322, 324.

¹⁹ H. Hirth, telephone interview 29 December 2005.

²⁰ K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, pp. 102, 103.

²¹ K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, pp. 180-183.

her walk.²² But what really happened? Stegen's helpers stimulated her into sitting and standing up. With help and with difficulty she took a few steps. The following day she was still not able to walk normally. If Koch had not mentioned the name Anna Gretha, Redinger would never have recognized this occurrence.²³

In Tugela Ferry, 11 blind people were supposedly healed shortly after the event with Anna Gretha. According to Martin Stegen God's power was present in such force that some blind people, as they came into a room, called out: "I can see." The others were healed after prayer.²⁴

Unfortunately, eyewitnesses cannot remember any of this. They do remember Stegen's prayer for the blind father of Alpheus Mdlalose. He was prayed for behind closed doors. When some cheering was heard, everyone thought that the man was healed. But he left as he came: with a stick in his hand, led by a boy.

The "room" was a room in the house of Bill Larkan (this is the house where B. Mabaso now lives), where the witnesses were present. Around the year 2000, Redinger made contact with Martin Stegen, who initially thought he could remember the names of three blind people. On further questioning by Redinger, who wanted to visit these people, he answered that he could only remember one, and then finally no one.²⁵

Checking the number of people attending in South Africa

The numbers at the beginning

From the beginning Stegen let it be known to the outside world that this was a mass event. Ximba relates: "He put together fictional lists

²² K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, pp. 90-93.

²³ E. Redinger, *Comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001.

²⁴ K.E. Koch, *God among the Zulus*, pp. 94, 95.

²⁵ B. Mabaso, interview 15 November 2004; B. Stegen, interview 24 November 2004; E. Redinger, interview 11 November 2006.

with co-workers and needs, so as to gain money from churches and institutions. He was capable of anything when he wanted money. Sometimes Stegen even set up long lists of preaching venues when trying to get money together, and did not speak the truth.”²⁶

From 1979 onwards Stegen took Mabaso with him on overseas tours. Stegen told the public that around Tugela Ferry thousands of Zulus had been converted. Mabaso’s first thought was that he must have been absent that day. However, he later believed it, until it gradually dawned on him that it was not true. At that time his congregation had no more than 40 members (5 men, and the rest women). Mabaso was fully convinced that at the slightest hint of contradiction Stegen would no longer tolerate him.²⁷

Kobus du Preez had to organize a service for Stegen one particular morning, the reason being that a VIP visitor had arrived. Stegen wanted to go ahead, but when he stood at the door of the hall, he asked, “Where are all the people?” He was rather surprised to see only 20 people. Du Preez explained that at that moment these were all the visitors that had come. The same evening I looked for Stegen to consult him about something. Suddenly I heard his voice from the mamas’ room and stopped in the corridor to listen. I heard him call out, “We have a huge number of people attending!” He wanted Robert Mäder, a worker who was staying in Switzerland at the time, to think that there were far more visitors than normal.²⁸

Current numbers

When large conferences are held with a few thousand people, these are invited people who are given free transportation, accommodation and food. Very few attendees come from the local neighbourhood of Kwasizabantu. Most of the Zulus come from far afield and are brought by trucks, pick-ups and busses.

²⁶ N. Ximba, interview 14 November 2004.

²⁷ B. Mabaso, interview 15 November 2004.

²⁸ K. du Preez, email 24 November 2014.

The auditorium can accommodate around 8,000 people. At the opening in 1990 the auditorium was full. The annual youth conferences held in the auditorium attract an estimated six to eight thousand children. They are given free transport, accommodation and food. Among them are street children, who come for the vacation and others are sent by their parents. Children also walk away from the conferences out of lack of interest.

The outposts and workers

The total work of Kwasizabantu is reputed to have 140 outposts throughout South Africa, with 130 workers, 150 part-time staff and 20 projects to attract income.²⁹ For a survey of outposts and an account of the estimated number of participants, see table 1.

After extensive research insiders can point certainly to no more than 15 outposts. It is not known what Kwasizabantu understands by outpost, but certainly not a church plant. If one adds together all the Sunday services of Kwasizabantu in South Africa they amount barely to 1,250 people.

Table 1 Overview of centres in South Africa with Estimated number of people attending

Claridge	20
Cibini	35
Elandskraal	32
Escourt	10
Kwasizabantu	800
Mahlaba	22
Malelane	10
Malmesbury	20-30
Mpumalanga	10
Mthaleni (Pomeroy)	20

²⁹ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, 1998; E. Stegen, *Beproef jezelf, de weg tot opwekking*, 2006.

Table 1 Overview of centres in South Africa with Estimated number of people attending (*continued*)

Mtunzini		10
Smithfield		20-30
Wasbank		15
	total	1,250

Check of the number of people attending in Europe

Stegen organized mass international conferences in Europe with thousands of participants. His tactic was to simulate a revival. But the total number of members or regular attendees in Europe on a Sunday are certainly not more than 1,500.³⁰ In Germany around the year 2000 a report appeared that is supposed to have reduced the number of adherents by half. Of the 40,000 members worldwide there are apparently only 20,000 left in consequence of the negative publicity.³¹ This huge number is not based on serious research but rests on pure nonsense. If one adds together all the Sunday services of Kwasizabantu in Europe they amount barely to 1,400 people.

Table 2 Overview of centres in Europe with Estimated number of people attending

Belgium	Watou-Poperinge	40
France	Paris, Strasbourg, Montmiral	550
Germany	Lindach, Bielstein en Bispingen	450
The Netherlands	Middelstum en Well	60
Switzerland	Bilten en Kaltbrunn	300
Russia		?
Romania	Voiteg	?
	total	1,400

³⁰ This number is on the high side, bearing in mind that these are not institutional churches.

³¹ *Idea-Spektrum* (German Christian newspaper), 9 March 2000.

Check of the effect of the Kwasizabantu revival

If Stegen claims the greatest or best revival of all time, the question is justified as to how great the effect of his revival is.

In comparison we take the revival of South Korea, which is regarded as the largest in recent history. Around 1860 there were around 23,000 Roman Catholics in the country.³² Since the Pyongyang revival in 1907 the country has been visited by several revivals and Christians now constitute 26% of the population. Many Christians hold high-ranking positions in politics and society. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of Protestants in the country doubled. Next to the Philippines, South Korea now has the largest Christian community in East Asia.³³ Given its small scope, Kwasizabantu is insignificant by comparison with the South Korean revival.

Conclusion

To the extent that comparative research was possible, it is clear that not all of Koch's witnesses were "extremely" reliable, even if some of the witnesses did speak the truth. As the ultimate editor, Stegen selected all the witnesses and stories for Koch. Stegen is guilty of shifting stories to 1966 and of purging reprints of objectionable passages.

³² <http://www.pomnada.com/historyofmissionaries.html>

³³ In July 2013 the Korean churches commemorated the 1907 revival in Pyongyang, which grew to become an important Christian centre with approximately 300,000 converts. As Pyongyang was in the north, where the Communist regime seized power, most of the Christians fled to South Korea. In the 1960s and 70s once again there is talk of a considerable growth in Christianity in South Korea on account of evangelistic campaigns followed by revivals. From 1970 to 1980 the number of Protestants doubled, while in recent years the number of Roman Catholics has seen a tremendous increase. Of the South Korean population (50 million) 26% are Christians, 24% Buddhists, 1% subscribe to one of the various religious minorities and the rest, 49% are not religious.

http://www.indexmundi.com/south_korea, <http://www.byfaith.co.uk/paul20102.htm>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Korea.

Things are even more complicated when Koch thinks it is normal to make additions or omit details.

Some events are unrecognisable if the names are not given. Other occurrences, such as those of Helga Hirth, will have a basis in truth. But many questions remained unanswered. “The questions who, what, where, when and how many are inadequately answered by Koch. Phrases like ‘in a remote village’ and ‘many came to faith’ are too vague. It is as if the writer wants to tell a happy story but also wants to prevent anyone from trying to verify his story.”³⁴

The particularly large numbers mentioned in the Kwasizabantu publications almost equate to those of the Day of Pentecost in the book of Acts. None of the witnesses in the books is representative of the thousands of unnamed people who were converted or experienced a miracle.

The documentary basis of the official historiography of Kwasizabantu is thus built on shaky foundations.

Like the AIC’s Kwasizabantu has a rich inherited tradition of miracles and healings. When such stories are later written down, they cannot be interpreted as objective historical facts. For the adherents the search for truth is not the most important thing but belonging to the group. For them, the stories fulfil an essential function in the creation and support of a new group consciousness and reinforce the unity of the group.³⁵

³⁴ A.J. Krol, interview in *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, 5 October 2000.

³⁵ Cf. E. Gunner, “Powerhouse – Prison House. An Oral Genre and its Use in Isaiah Shembe’s Nazareth Baptist Church (NBC)”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14/1, 1987, p. 204.

CHAPTER 6

Sermon analyses

Introduction

This chapter examines a number of representative sermons, in order to define the theology of Kwasizabantu. The sermons are all based on “tricky” Bible topics and verses. The question is whether the preaching is based on a balanced proclamation of the Word, in which relevant biblical topics are regularly discussed.

Method

The sermons we shall deal with come from the internet and from cassette tapes. Use has also been made of collections of Stegen’s sermons, as these have been tidied up for public consumption.¹ The reader needs to be aware that Kwasizabantu makes use of a vocabulary of its own and has given certain words new content, which is known only within the movement.²

The topics dealt with are: confession of sin; marriage; inspiration by a vision; the authority of Stegen; and no criticism is tolerated.

¹ E. Stegen, *Opwekking begint bij jezelf* (Revival begins with you), 1993 and *Beproef jezelf* (Examine yourself), 2006 (both were first published in Russian).

² See Chapter 10, section 5, “A special vocabulary”, and “New content for words”.

Topic 1: Confession of sin

- Title: “Is the world in our hands?”
- Preacher: E. Stegen
- Bible text: 2 Chronicles 7: 13-15
- Date: 28 August 2014
- Recording: downloaded from the internet

www.kwasizabantu.com

This verse contains a call and a promise. God speaks directly to his people, not to the heathen, but to believers. “If my people return to me and humble themselves, they will receive forgiveness of sins.” God sees the sin and if people repent of it, God will heal their land. This text is a source of inspiration for every believer. The challenge is that the world is in our hands. If we repent and get right with God, our land will be restored and healed. God wants us to humble ourselves.

If people listen to God, He can change their lives. Anyone who gossips about someone is killing him with words. It is better to say, “Lord, I lay bare before you the sin of my heart” than to concern myself with the wrongs of other people. If you do that, the Lord will work in the hearts of other people and he will send rain on the dry ground. If you want to help other people, you need to get right with God, even if these are old sins – put things right with Him now.

Colossians 2:15 says that Jesus has put Satan to public shame and disarmed him. The symbolism behind this comes from the Romans. If there was a revolt in a remote part of the empire, Caesar sent men to put it down. They arrested the leader and took his weapons off him. After that he was tied to a cart and dragged like that all the way to Rome, being made a public example.

Sodom and Gomorrah were in the grip of all sorts of perversion. Three angels went to Abraham and said that the cities would be utterly destroyed. Abraham asked God: “Would you destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if there are 50 righteous persons?” God answered: “No”. Abraham asked again: “If there are 40, then 30 and finally 20

righteous people living there, would you destroy the cities then?" God answered: "Even if there are 10 righteous persons, I will not destroy the city." Abraham was sure that there would be 10 righteous people there. When the angels came, they couldn't even find 5. The only ones were Lot and his two daughters" [The Bible also mentions Lot's wife].

The land can be destroyed or saved because of you, if your life is right with God. Ask God to show you what you have done wrong, from your youth right up to the present day. It is so difficult to say that we have sinned. This is the reason why God will not send revival, if people are still living in their sins. Then we are never going to reach the goal. It is God's commandment that we examine ourselves and confess our sins.

Analysis

Stegen's slogan is: "God sees every sin that is unconfessed." Believers therefore need to repent of sin. In itself this would appear to be a realistic assumption. But this claim has a negative emotional value, because believers are constantly preoccupied with themselves. With the statement: "The world is in our hands," he places responsibility firmly with believers, again provoking guilt feelings. Believers find themselves in an endless cycle of confession of sins.

Topic 2: Marriage

- Title: none; the occasion is an engagement service in Melchtal
- Preacher: E. Stegen
- Bible text: none
- Date: 10 August 1997
- Recording: cassette tape

A woman came up to me and said she agreed completely with me except for one thing. She thought it was a pity that I was robbing young people of the joy of being intimate with each other. A few months later the woman had an illegitimate child. You know what:

if I am not allowed to proclaim the truth, I might as well stop. We live in grave times and the days are short. If you don't like it, it's best if you leave.

In this service the engagement will take place of Jochem and Sara, who stayed as a guest at our mission station³ in South Africa. She worked with Khwezi Radio for the German programme, until one day she returned home. My daughters thought this was strange and thought there must be something wrong. What they did not know was that an engagement was imminent. Even Jochem's friends had no idea.

In the Bible the church is presented as the bride of Jesus Christ who enters into marriage as a virgin. When God shows us by the Holy Spirit what the church ought to be like, He compares it with an unmarried young woman. Can we appreciate the high standards Christ sets for His bride? Research in a church in Pretoria revealed that 73 % of the young women were no longer virgins. The devil of immorality has been given a seat in the church. Jesus said to the prostitute who anointed and dried his feet in Matthew 26:6: "Go and sin no more". Anyone who is not living a pure life can repent and stop.

The young people should be examples of chastity and purity. When I was young, I thought white people didn't do such things, only blacks. But these days whites even have lesbian and homosexual relationships. They learn about it in schoolbooks, and this is wrong.

Our young women show the world how things should be and know the way they should behave. Be an example to the whole world, because when the heavenly police come ... On one occasion a bride came to get approval for her bridal gown. But the décolleté was too low. That sort of thing will not do: a pure and chaste girl knows how she ought to dress.

Things have gone wrong for many young people during their engagement. It is perfectly normal that you ought to flee from the

³ Kwasizabantu is not, in fact, a mission station. See Chapter 7, note 7.

lusts of the flesh. Marriage must be a foretaste of heaven and children a blessing. We see that the devil has twisted everything and young people are behaving like wild cows. Daughters come home with children but no husband. This brings the wrath of God. Just look at Sodom and Gomorrah. Flee the lusts of youth. What does that mean? If you see a snake or a lion, what do you do? You get out of its way as quickly as possible, don't you? The same thing applies to girls.

Parents can be proud if they have children like Jochem and Sara who are getting engaged today. In a few months they will be married. But the young people of the world do everything before marriage. I am not taking away their enjoyment of life, but they should have joy in marriage. The husband honours his wife by entering into marriage pure.

In our situation the young man goes to a pastor and says that he has feelings for a certain girl. The pastor then prays about it and advises the young man to keep praying until he is certain. If, in due course, he is completely convinced, he informs the pastor, who then tells the girl about it. It is now her time to pray about whether the young man is to become her husband. If she is sure of the young man, she tells her pastor. After that the parents are informed and after a few months the wedding takes place.

Now I'm going to ask the engagement couple to come to the front. These days the ring is the symbol of faithfulness. When Sara accepts the ring she is saying: I will remain pure and live a chaste life, and the same thing applies to Jochem. At this point I am standing between you, but when the marriage takes place I will no longer do so. Be a good example to others and avoid all appearance of evil. So that no one can accuse you of anything. This means that the engaged couple will meet only when things to do with the wedding need to be discussed. Conversations like this are led by a pastor, and the parents are also permitted to be present.

On the wedding day the bride wears a white bride's dress, which means that no man has touched her. The veil means that you are a

virgin. So it is wonderful that the bride's father comes in with his daughter and removes the veil.

Analysis

Both sexes must remain completely separated until the wedding. That is to say: young men should as far as possible stay away from the girls and vice versa.

Topic 3: Inspiration by a vision

- Title: “The narrow way”
- Preacher: E. Stegen
- Bible text: Matthew 7:13 and 14
- Date: unknown
- Recording: cassette tape

“The narrow way” of Thofozi Dube is one of the most important events in the history of Kwasizabantu. Why? “The narrow way” describes the visions of Thofozi which K.E. Koch has written about in his book, *Im Paradies*.

The interpretation of these visions has had serious consequences for the faith and life of the movement. Koch comes to the conclusion that with a thousandfold certainty he would not have passed the tests of the vision of Thofozi.⁴

What follows is Stegen's testimony about the sickbed, the death and resurrection of Thofozi. Although she was visibly deteriorating, she received visions about the narrow way. Stegen, who did not leave Thofozi's side, remembered the visions and later spoke about them a great deal.

“Thofozi had to overcome a large number of obstacles on the narrow upward pathway. She saw a few women with soiled dresses. God sent them back because he demands a spotless dress. A short

⁴ K.E. Koch, *Im Paradies*, no date, p. 68.

time later a man arrived with a long rope on his leg, tied to a former friend, with whom he had committed theft before his conversion. As he had never asked this friend for forgiveness, he was unable to move on, as the wrath of God was resting on him.⁵ After this Thofozi saw three men laying pilgrims in black coffins. Their sin was that they had talked about other people's sins.

There were sharp stones lying on the pathway, so that Thofozi could not move a foot. Only if the Lord appeared was it possible. There were also dangerous, slippery places and anyone who slipped there fell straight into the abyss. After that she came to a dark wood, where God left her on her own, waiting for her on the other side. The wood proved to be full of people, deafening one another with instruments, radios and televisions. They danced, drank or smoked and said that Thofozi should not be so narrow-minded. It was all so tempting that she became confused, but she called out to the Lord and He helped her. When Thofozi came out of the wood she was followed by three men. She prayed for help and saw a dog chase the men away. While Thofozi ran through she saw the people arguing and hitting each other. She did not want to get involved, but she had to get through. By looking to the Lord, she succeeded.

The top of the mountain turned out to be much further off than she had thought. It seemed easier to climb up a three-meter high wall than to continue. But she carried on through and came to the next wood, larger and darker than the one before and with many parallel paths. Thofozi chose a path that later turned out to go straight ahead. The other paths turned off and people there were running in circles, having the same experiences over and over again. With God's help Thofozi came through this wood. She followed the path and noticed that other people had also walked along this pathway before her. The pilgrims had had enough of it and were living in little houses they had

⁵ This is seen as spiritual bondage: because the man did not confess this sin to his fellow thief, he could not be saved. This shows how important it is to the movement always to confess sin.

built alongside the path. People called to her, saying that this was far enough. They had also set traps to trip up the pilgrims. Despite this, Thofozi went on.

Anyone going further now had to go along the path on their hands and knees or crawling. Everyone had to forget the past and head for the goal. Anyone who was tempted to rest, immediately fell straight into the abyss. But Thofozi managed to keep going.

Finally she came to a checkpoint, where the last tests were to take place, before one could enter paradise. The entrance door had a spiritual measure with a certain height, through which Thofozi was allowed in.

Many people were trying to go by way of the checkpoint, which meant the end of their journey. After entering the checkpoint everyone was given a pass and was examined by judges and doctors. The president was a man with a belt around his chest. It was the Lord Jesus who was presiding over the last great examination. Anyone who was not spiritually healthy was set aside. By God's grace Thofozi passed the test. After that everyone was taken to a race track, where there was a competitive race.⁶ Fortunately Thofozi passed this test too. But this was not the end of the whole examination. The pilgrims took their turn according to their profession. Ministers, teachers, doctors, judges, business people and technicians.”

The day Thofozi died, she told her father that, for her, to die was gain. She was looking forward to meeting the One who died for her on the cross. Not long after that Thofozi died. When she later came back to life, she told us about her experiences in heaven. She could not express it in human language. In heaven everything is as clear as crystal. Nothing is hidden. In the period after this the preaching was only about the Light; many came to repentance and conversion. Light brings everything to the light and out of that comes fellowship.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 9:24: “Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it.”

When Thofozi came back to life, she sat up straight and tried to eat and drink something. We asked her whether she wasn't disappointed that she was back on earth. Thofozi answered that she had asked God to be allowed to be just such a one as in heaven, so that nothing should come between God and her.

Analysis

In her vision Thofozi had to exert herself to the utmost to be deserving of heaven. This vision is one of the most important pillars of Stegen's message of salvation by works. As a result preconditions are placed on justification and atonement. The human individual becomes the one who takes the initiative for his or her redemption. One might therefore say there are extreme Arminian⁷ ideas in Kwasizabantu.

Topic 4: The authority of E. Stegen

- Title: "An example to believers"
- Preacher: E. Stegen
- Bible text: 1 Samuel 12
- Date: 18 November 2014
- Recording: downloaded from the internet
www.kwasizabantu.com
- Note: the following text is a summary.

There are people who destroy themselves through disobedience, when each of us ought to be an example. Even believers need an example; otherwise they will depart from the right path. If you want to know whether someone is a Christian, ask the heathen. They can read us. You are an open letter that is read by everyone, so be a letter from Christ for the people. During the meal this evening I was listening to a recording about 1 Samuel 12. Samuel had in the meantime become old and grey and had arrived at a higher level.

⁷ Since its origins Arminianism has influenced many movements, including Wesleyanism and evangelical Christianity.

“... I have led you from my youth until this day. See, here I am: testify against me before the Lord and before His anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you.” And they said, “You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taking anything from the hand of anyone.” And he said: “The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.” And they said, “He is witness.” Samuel was not frightened of making himself vulnerable before the people and he was not afraid of the answer either.

[Samuel saw the thunder and rain as an answer to his prayer, even though it was very unusual for that season in the area in question. But he did not want “all that were dead” to be washed away in the rain. Yes, he could have blamed the people – there were good grounds for this. But instead of that he encouraged them and said: “Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you...”]

Stegen ended the service by saying: “The destroyer came unexpectedly. We can only pray that God will come down like a mighty rain and wash away those that are dead.⁸”

Analysis

Stegen thinks he is a man of God who must proclaim judgment against those who are “dead”. Samuel saw the thunder and rain as an answer to prayer, but he did not want anything bad to happen to anyone and encouraged them. Samuel feared the Lord and sought the best for his people, but Stegen prays that those who are “dead” will be washed away and disappear.

⁸ To be “spiritually dead” means rejecting Stegen’s interpretation of the Bible.

Topic 5: No criticism is tolerated

- Title: “Saul’s revolt”
- Preacher: A. van Eeden
- Bible text: 1 Samuel 12
- Date: 18 May 2014
- Recording: downloaded from the internet
www.kwasizabantu.com
- Note: the following text is a summary.

Saul sacrificed to the Lord, but not as he had been told. He did not do it in faith and did not want to wait until Samuel came.⁹

Our faith can be shipwrecked and despite that we keep serving the Lord. Many people abandon God’s work for a spiritual reason and afterwards become completely unfruitful. The first sign that people have taken the sacrifice from the altar is when they are critical of those who are placed in authority over them. They no longer give “godly” advice to people who come for help, but passively accept the situation in which they find themselves. Instead of dividing joints from marrow.¹⁰

Perhaps your life is lying on the altar. See that it stays there. The moment that someone takes his sacrifice from the altar is always when pressure is being put on him by other people. You were dealing correctly with a situation until you added words spoken in the flesh. The best test of whether someone is still really serving God, is whether others are coming to faith through him.

There was still hope for Saul if he had acknowledged his fault and asked for forgiveness. But he looked for excuses. Even if someone’s life is destroyed by sin, but he suffers remorse and acknowledges his sins, he will find an abundance of grace. Saul reigned for another 42 years.

⁹ 1 Samuel 13.

¹⁰ Hebrews 4:12.

Analysis

Van Eden ties “serving the Lord” indissolubly to Kwasizabantu. Anyone critical of the leaders is taking “the sacrifice from the altar” and can no longer give “godly” advice. Godly means: following the Kwasizabantu line. Anyone who leaves Kwasizabantu has suffered shipwreck and becomes unfruitful.

Conclusion

Kwasizabantu sees itself as the sole, exclusive way to serve God. Stegen regards himself as a man of God who demands absolute respect. He passes judgment without any mercy. With his preaching against sin, he constantly burdens people with guilt feelings, which end up in an endless cycle of confessing sins. The human being thus becomes the initiative-taker in his own redemption. One may say this is an extreme form of Arminianism.¹¹

¹¹ See also the report of the Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, 23 June 2000.

CHAPTER 7

Theological Aspects of the Doctrine

Introduction

It is not the intention here to give a full picture of Kwasizabantu doctrine. Only those theological aspects that diverge most acutely from biblical teaching will be discussed. In general it is the case that Kwasizabantu is rather reticent in publishing confessional writings. “The Bible only” is the motto, because what is on paper is fixed and one has to be accountable for it. But when around the year 2000 public discussion of its faith position ignited, suddenly a Kwasizabantu statement of faith appeared on the internet.¹ To give more precision to its profile Kwasizabantu did everything possible to present itself as part of the classical evangelical movement and mission. It is therefore important to examine Kwasizabantu’s doctrines more closely and investigate them further.

Method

We shall first look into whether the addition of the word “mission” in connection with Kwasizabantu is justified. Following this we shall investigate the organizational model, the New Testament offices, and the code of behaviour for mission during political instability. After that we look into how the work of the Holy Spirit is to be understood in the context of Kwasizabantu. Finally, the role of prayer and Stegen’s succession will be given consideration.

¹ See Appendix 2, pp. 225, 226.

What is mission?

The word mission derives from the notion of “sending” as found in the Bible, and gives expression to the commission set by Jesus: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”² For the preaching of the gospel the word “evangelism” is used in addition to the term “mission”. Formerly mission was understood as “the crossing of borders of countries and cultures where the gospel has not yet been heard”, and evangelism as “bringing the gospel into one’s own surroundings and culture where it has been heard but has disappeared and been forgotten”.³ This view, which was generally held throughout the past century, was apt to split the world into two parts, a Christian part and a non-Christian part.⁴

In recent decades attempts have been made from various sides to reach a redefinition of evangelism and mission. Evangelism comprises “crossing the boundary of unbelief to faith” and mission “evangelization through proclamation by word and deed”.⁵ Proclamation by deed means carrying out social programmes in support of the proclamation of the word. This can take place in one’s own country as well as in other parts of the world.⁶ Mission is a task of the sending church. The sending church offers spiritual and material support. The missionary must give an account of his or her actions to the sending church – in contrast to Kwasizabantu, which is self-reliant.

The addition of the word “mission” to Kwasizabantu is not justified. It does little work in places where the gospel has never been proclaimed and limits its activities very much to aid programmes. Contacts are generally made with Christians of existing churches and congregations, in Africa, Europe, and also in America. The use of the

² John 20:21.

³ J.H. Bavinck, *Inleiding in de zendingswetenschap*, 1954, p. 83.

⁴ *New Dictionary of Theology*, 1998, pp. 434-436.

⁵ D.J. Bosch, *Heil vir die wereld*, 1979, p. 21.

⁶ M.A. Kruger, *Evangeliseer*, Festschrift in honour of Prof. L.J. Botha on the occasion of his retirement in 1988, Potchefstroom, pp. 1990-1999.

word “mission” is therefore open to question. Since Kwasizabantu is self-sufficient, and furthermore makes a great deal of profit, it does not wish to submit itself to supervision by the Body of Christ.⁷

The organisational model

In order to carry out the supernatural instructions Stegen needed a strictly disciplined organisation. For this, a non-elected hierarchical structure, following the pyramid model, seemed a logical choice.⁸ At the top of the pyramid Stegen exercises authoritarian leadership and lower down “lower leaders” have their place, until at the base the ordinary members are found. According to Mathe, a former worker, directly below Stegen there is an “inner circle” which is responsible for the general management and the Zulus. Alongside this there is an *ad hoc circle* which bears responsibility for whites. Below these circles there is a council of pastors and leaders of the different choirs.⁹ There are at least two choirs, each of which has its own rank in the organisation. The choirs are indicated by number: Choir 1 and Choir 2. Choir 1 is the top choir, regarded by the community as a kind of spiritual elite. The other choir follows in importance and prestige.

But no one knows how the organisational model is structured and why a person is a member of a particular circle and how long that person will be a member. It is a “fluid” situation and the exact rank and role of each worker is determined exclusively in a supernatural way.¹⁰ Among them are Zulus, whites and coloureds, who settle at Kwasizabantu for an indeterminate period. Stegen’s helpers are called

⁷ Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, point 1, 23 June 2000.

⁸ Theologians who have researched the organisational model of Kwasizabantu are: C.J. Oosthuizen, *Ksb-Sending. 'n Ondersoek na sy ontstaan en funksionering*, 1985, pp. 50-52; J.L. du Toit, *Herlewing te Ksb in 'n Sendingsituasie*, 1986, pp. 79-80; P.F. Hugo, *Die bedieningstruktuur van Ksb*, 1988, pp. 27-31.

⁹ K. Mathe, *Open letter to the Natal Witness*, 17 February 2000.

¹⁰ Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum Faszinieren Sekten?* 1998, p. 14: Many groups have “an inner circle” and secret circles, so that the organisation is not transparent.

co-workers, who are distinguished according to spiritual or practical work.

In the course of the almost fifty-year history of Kwasizabantu boundaries of Christian leadership and authority have been crossed. The result was misuse of authority and the creation of a subculture of fear and manipulation.¹¹ Stegen does not apply any ordered system that cannot effectively deal with and solve these uncertainties. People are unnecessarily hurt by uncertainty and instability.

Through the lack of an independent parish ministry there is also a lack of financial transparency. The many millions of profit that have been made at Kwasizabantu and flow through to the Stegen family stand in stark contrast to Paul, who provided for his own livelihood as a tentmaker so as not to be a burden on anyone.¹²

The New Testament form of organisation

The New Testament form of organisation is made clear in the book of Acts on the basis of the developments that followed the proclamation of the gospel. Through the dissemination of the gospel groups of believers came into being at different places. The occasion for this was the persecution of the community in Jerusalem. The believers were scattered as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. They proclaimed the gospel and God's hand was with them, as a large number believed and turned to the Lord.¹³

When this rumour reached the Jerusalem community, Barnabas was sent out to take the pulse of the situation. He then took Paul out of Tarsus and they remained together in Antioch for a year. In Anti-

¹¹ Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, point 4.1, 23 June 2000.

¹² Acts 18:3.

¹³ Acts 11:19-21.

och the name Christian was first used.¹⁴ Later this group of believers is called a church with prophets and teachers.¹⁵

The Bible distinguishes the offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip believers for the work of ministry, to build up the Body of Christ. The objective is to attain the unity of the faith and to become mature in the faith.¹⁶

Listening to the gospel and studying the Word of God daily is extremely important.¹⁷ Anyone who wants to grow towards Christ, the Head of the church, will keep to the truth in love.¹⁸ Growing in faith entails that the Christian becomes increasingly impervious to deviant influences and false teaching.¹⁹ Those who are not careful can fall prey to false apostles who in setting about their work dishonestly pretend to be apostles of Christ.²⁰ Through the Spirit of Christ they can be distinguished from the offices given by God. These false apostles can be recognised by their biased approach to the Bible and their emphasis on half-truths. They use God for their own ends, lead people away from God and bind their followers not to God but to themselves and their movement.

Conclusion regarding organisational forms

The lack of the New Testament form of organisation has led to great chaos at Kwasizabantu. Stegen cannot get along with the biblical ministries because he sees them as a threat to his supernatural

¹⁴ Acts 11:26.

¹⁵ J. van Eck, *Handelingen, de wereld in het geding*, 2003, p. 203. The prophets and teachers are important enough to be named by name and surname. In practice the boundary between prophet and teacher is not sharply drawn.

¹⁶ Ephesians 4:12-16; Romans 12:4.

¹⁷ Acts 17:11.

¹⁸ Ephesians 4:15.

¹⁹ L. Floor, *Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament – Efzeïërs – één in Christus*, p. 158.

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.

inspiration. The so-called inner circle and also other high positions are occupied mainly by women.²¹ They lead the movement together with Stegen. In the Christian church from the beginning elders and deacons were elected. The first deacons were elected at the request of the twelve apostles.²² Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the congregations.²³ In other places, too, we read that the church is involved in the choice of the office-holders.²⁴

Kwasizabantu during the political upheavals

In the early 1970s the political upheavals in Southern Africa caused unprecedented misery. In the coming decades Southern Africa was to feel the grip of the Cold War, as the communists set foot in Mozambique and Angola. Indigenous Christians were persecuted because they were regarded as lackeys of colonialism. From Angola the Swapo invaded Namibia to destabilise the country, and tribal chiefs and members of the government were killed. In South Africa the comrades of the ANC created enormous chaos with their people's courts. Tens of thousands were murdered, many of them by "necklacing".²⁵

For Kwasizabantu also, with all its Western advantages and social interests, the future in the latter days of the Apartheid regime looked extremely unfavourable. For these reasons Stegen, who was terrified of communism,²⁶ began to work with the Apartheid regime and Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party.²⁷ Minister Vlok and Chief

²¹ These are Eunice Ngcamu, Busisiwe Hadebe and Thofozi Dube. Jabu Majola and Phiwapi Shange also play an important role.

²² Acts 6:2, 3.

²³ Acts 14:23.

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 8:19; Titus 1:5.

²⁵ A car tyre was placed around the person's neck and petrol poured over them. They were then set alight, being cremated as a result.

²⁶ E. Stegen, talk at the day for the Underground Church at Veenendaal, Netherlands, 29 September 1990.

²⁷ K. Mathe, *No grave is deep enough to bury the truth*, February 2000; K. Mathe, *Open letter to the Natal Witness*, 17 February 2000.

Buthelezi were guests seen at Kwasizabantu, who according to Olsen were looking for advice on how to achieve a non-racial society.²⁸

Stegen abandoned non-violence and set up a defence commando with the name G8, which maintained new links with Military Intelligence. It consisted of whites and Zulus, both men and women. Some had a rank in the reserve army. They were trained in the use of semi-automatic and automatic weapons. The defence commando provided courses in self-defence for other co-workers and offered protection to the VIPs of Kwasizabantu. Kwasizabantu also had secret weapons depots at its disposal.²⁹

Reformed mission during the uprising

The mission community of Richmond suffered deep wounds during the uprising. Six Reformed church leaders and evangelists were murdered, not because they supported Inkatha but because they refused to become party members of the ANC. After that the churches were threatened that there was no longer any place for those who did not permit ancestor worship.³⁰

Mission during political instability

The question is how Christian mission must relate to decolonisation and nation-building. In the last century many missionaries found themselves in this area of tension. Mission should face cultural and national currents in a non-partisan way³¹ and be politically neutral.

²⁸ *Independent Online*, “Mission was agency for a security branch”, 5 February 2000.

²⁹ J.W. Greeff, *Hand in Hand mit dem Geheimdienst des Apartheid-Regimes*, February 2000. While a co-worker with Kwasizabantu, Greeff worked for the secret service from 1982 to 1993.

³⁰ J.A. van Rooy, email of 12 March 2015: In this environment the ANC was responsible for the deaths of approximately 2,000 people. T. Mseleku, *The New Dictionary of South Africa Biography*, vol. II, Pretoria: Vista University, 1999. Nkabinde was later suspended, but Gwala was never censured. In 1992 he received the “Isitwalandwe”, the ANC’s highest distinction. Mandela said in his address at Gwala’s funeral in 1995 that it was because of his tenacity that the ANC granted him this honour.

³¹ J. Verkuyl, *Inleiding in de nieuwe zendingwetenschap*, 1975, p. 73.

Where was Stegen's Christian conscience prompting him to speak out against wrong motives on both sides? Where was his prophetic sincerity in unmasking the true basic motives? Through its biased approach Kwasizabantu lost its prophetic and priestly ministry at a time when it was most needed. As a result it allowed itself to be gagged.³²

The Holy Spirit in the African Context

uthole uMoya (receiving the Spirit)

Countless leaders of African Independent Churches receive their inspiration through the outpouring of "the Holy Spirit". What is meant by supernatural inspiration is the sudden awareness of a connection with the invisible world. In these moments a person receives flashes of inspiration or insight which are called revelation.

In the invisible world two sorts of domains are distinguished, namely that of the Holy Spirit, which emanates from God,³³ and that of the evil one, which in the African situation manifests itself through ancestral spirits, witches, sorcerers, medicine-men and diviners. Which source of inspiration the leader or prophet healer gets into contact with depends on his insight, choice and the power of attraction that a source of inspiration exerts on him.

Stegen's search for the Holy Spirit

In the period after the revival in Mapumulo Stegen tried out various kinds of charismatic methods. For the members of the Claridge congregation he prayed in tongues for filling with the Holy Spirit. Generally prayer was made in a circle, with the person standing in

³² A.J. Krol, interview in *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, 5 October 2000.

³³ *Christelijke Encyclopedie*, 1958-1961: By divine inspiration is meant the process by which God makes his plans known to people through the Holy Spirit, so that they receive redemption, direction and guidance for their lives (and possibly for others too). The content of this communication, which can occur through dreams, visions or the hearing of God's voice, is called revelation.

the middle. It also transpired that the person was obliged to lie on the floor or on a bed. Stegen then prayed in tongues and touched the person with his fingertips from the forehead to the feet and toes.³⁴

After the revival Magasa became the chief medium for helping the candidates. In trance she indicated in detail sins of which the person was unaware, which still needed to be confessed. Sometimes demons were driven out. People who experienced the process and had experienced a physical sensation of warmth or fire, had received the Holy Spirit. The various actions could also occur in an arbitrary sequence. Anyone who had not received a feeling of warmth or fire had not yet confessed all their sins. The consequence was that everyone was afraid of Stegen. He claimed to have received the special task with his co-workers of making known “the last outpouring of the Holy Spirit”, as he called it, throughout the world.³⁵

uMoya and speaking in tongues at Kwasizabantu

The Zulus were arbitrarily selected for the receipt of “the Holy Spirit”. No one knew why or when they would be selected. Notification by a co-worker would be sufficient. The candidates had to kneel down in groups of 5 to 10 individuals, after which co-workers laid hands on them. They had to experience a physical sensation of warmth or fire or scream when *uMoya* fell upon them. This ritual took place in secret and was hidden from white co-workers.³⁶

The question is how the *izilimi* (tongues) of Stegen’s Zulu prophetesses should be interpreted, because in the Zulu language it can refer to the Holy Spirit or to Zulu religion.

This “consulting God” occurs out of sight of the congregation behind closed doors, so that no one can check what is going on. We

³⁴ E. Redinger, testimony, points 22 and 23.

³⁵ D. Stone, interview recorded 2 July 2006; A. Williams, interview recorded 15 July 2006; E. Redinger, *Comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001.

³⁶ B. Mabaso, interview 9 July 2006. Alpheus Mdlalose, Michael Gubane, Mandla Mvu and Thofozi Dube selected the candidates.

find the gift of tongues in the church with spontaneous interpretation in public in the First Letter to the Corinthians.³⁷ By this means testing is possible, as the Pentecostal Christians still do this. In the Kwasizabantu meetings the gift of tongues, deliverances and healings are not practised in public services. Stegen's view is that speaking in tongues in the Pentecostal Movement is incorrect and he regards the *izilimi* of his Zulu prophetesses as purely Christian.³⁸

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament

In the book of Acts we read of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.³⁹ As it is a fact of salvation, the Spirit does not need to be poured out again and again, as is presumed in Mapumulo. Christians are equipped with God's Spirit as the result of the outpouring on the Day of Pentecost. God granted the gifts and the fruits of the Spirit⁴⁰ as a means to make the gospel known throughout the world.

Christians are inspired by the Holy Spirit as and when the Spirit grants it.⁴¹ They received direct revelations from the Spirit, through which God makes His will and plans known to people.⁴² The revelation of the Holy Spirit is thus not reserved to go-betweens, because with God there is no distinction or personal preference and He distributes His gifts to whoever He wants.⁴³

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:19, 21-33.

³⁸ E. Redinger, testimony, point 24; K.E. Koch, *Die Geistesgaben: Rundbrief* 107, pp. 130-136, no date: Koch dismisses the speaking in tongues of Pentecostal believers out of hand.

³⁹ Acts 2:1.

⁴⁰ Galatians 5:22.

⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 12:11.

⁴² Ephesians 1:17; *Christelijke Encyclopedie*, 1958-1961, p. 310.

⁴³ Romans 2:11.

Biblical prophecy

Biblical prophecy has never come from a human initiative: people who spoke in the name of God were always moved to do so through the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴ The life of Jesus in the New Testament shows that He appeared as a Person and did not function as a channel for supernatural inspiration. He did not make his disciples a channel, without a will of their own, for messages from the Beyond, as in the African Traditional Religions.⁴⁵ Prophesying through the Holy Spirit is laid in the spirit and the mind of the prophet. The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet *himself*.⁴⁶ In the Bible the human being is seen as a unique person who is responsible for his or her personal actions and who can place boundaries on outside control.

Conclusion regarding Stegen's inspiration

Stegen's inspiration is in no way comparable with the experience of Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:4, where he says he was taken up into heaven, where he heard unspeakable words which no human can utter.⁴⁷

The question is, why would *Stegen* then be able to speak them? The answer is that he is not coming to the Christian God and what is spoken he did not hear in heaven. Christians do not hear words direct from heaven (with rare exceptions). They receive the Holy Spirit, because he leads them in ideas they can grasp and words they can understand. It is the Holy Spirit who puts into believers what they must speak. Heaven is the Lord's, but the earth He has given to humankind.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ 2 Peter 1:21.

⁴⁵ G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sekten?*, p. 232.

⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:32; 2 Peter 1:21.

⁴⁷ The meaning of the text is not that it is inappropriate to pronounce these words but that it is simply impossible to utter them.

⁴⁸ Psalm 115:16.

Prayer

From interviews relating to different periods, it appears that prayer does not have an important role to play in Kwasizabantu. Concerning the time in Mapumulo Ximba says that there was a serious lack of true fellowship in prayer among them. And barely any discussions were held for co-workers. Ximba was invited once only for a prayer meeting but then all that happened was chat.⁴⁹ Redinger cannot remember any sessions of prayer either.⁵⁰ Greeff, who stayed at Kwasizabantu as a worker for 17 years, attended only two prayer meetings in 1982.⁵¹ In Mapumulo Stegen was occupied mainly with long meetings which he devoted to the interpretation of dreams and visions. According to Stegen, God would then not even be bound to His own Word.⁵²

Wicker, of the German CFT section, notes that communal prayer was not regarded as essential and was even discouraged. Stegen always said: "You can pray as much as you want, but because of your unconfessed sins the prayer will not go higher than the ceiling."⁵³ He sees a danger in communal prayer because people then share experiences with each other. For the same reason he rejects the leading of discussion evenings, Bible studies or cell groups. If one only goes to the counsellor for questions and prayer, the organisation has a hold of all the information. Communal prayer by co-workers who do not belong to the inner circle is of subordinate importance.

Stegen's succession

Kwasizabantu has not yet gone through a change of leadership. At the moment Stegen does not have a capable successor, on account of an exodus of co-workers who were there at the beginning. Koos Greeff left Kwasizabantu in 1994, followed by Trevor Dahl in 1996,

⁴⁹ N. Ximba, interview recorded 14 November 2004.

⁵⁰ E. Redinger, interview recorded 14 November 2004.

⁵¹ J.W. Greeff, interview 23 November 2004.

⁵² E. Redinger, interview 14 July 2006.

⁵³ K.H. Wicker, "Statement regarding my separation from KSB", 20 February 2000.

after being associated with Kwasizabantu for 25 years and was viewed as Stegen's intended successor. Barney Mabaso from Tugela Ferry was involved with Kwasizabantu for around 30 years. He separated from Kwasizabantu with his congregation in 2000. The same year a worldwide exodus set in.

The question is to what extent the future successor of Stegen can count on the support of the whole movement. Associated with the issue of the successor is the matter of supernatural inspiration. If the future leader makes a break with the latter, then the possibility arises that the movement will undergo a transformation from indigenously oriented Christianity to New Testament Christianity, while another section will stick to the Dube family, the original source of inspiration.

General conclusions

Revival

For decades Stegen has successfully made a worldwide impression with his revival, with which he has amazed the public. His revival, as he calls it, still continues. When the Kwasizabantu revival is examined in detail all that remains are stories for people who want to believe in it. The Kwasizabantu "revival" cannot be reconciled with the understanding of revival that is accepted among Christians.

As Stegen superficially conforms to Christian theology, for European believers it is difficult to recognise the influence of the Zulu tradition on the habits of the revival movement, especially as they take these habits to be the result of the revival, and in accordance with God's will. The heartbeat of this so-called revival lies outside of Christian spirituality.

***uMoya* in Kwasizabantu**

The encounter between Stegen and his prophetesses led to an entanglement of the Christian faith and Zulu religion. For a Christian

context trances like the Zulu prophetesses' are strange, because in anthropology they are associated with the Zulu religion. Magasa's help in exposing the past sins of third parties is a clear indication of white magic. This cannot be accepted as "normal" within the Christian experience of faith. The Bible leaves no room for a diversity of sources of inspiration. The Christian faith allows no compromise and rests on inviolable, unique Christian truths, which places people before decisions.⁵⁴ The trances must therefore be forcefully dismissed as unbiblical.⁵⁵

Warning

Christians from different backgrounds who had been looking for revival for many years found themselves deeply impressed by Stegen and joined his movement. They were convinced of the genuineness of "the revival" by virtue of the stories of miracles, which they never actually saw, and the special way in which they were treated (love-bombing). As a result they lost their ability to think critically, lost objectivity and laid themselves open to manipulation. Gradually the Holy Spirit in them was quenched, they were no longer corrected and their conscience became distorted.

⁵⁴ H. Bammann, *Inkulturation des Evangeliums unter den Batswana in Transvaal*, p. 16.

⁵⁵ The experience of Paul who was "caught up to the third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2) is of quite a different order and cannot be compared with the trances mentioned above.

CHAPTER 8

The Effect of the Communication of the Christian Message

Introduction

This chapter deals with the communication of the Christian message at Kwasizabantu. From the preceding chapters it has emerged that the beating heart of the “revival” of Kwasizabantu lies outside the Christian faith. The assumption of outsiders that Kwasizabantu came about from a pure biblical revival and later deviated from the biblical truth is incorrect.

Similarly, the members, most of whom have a church background, lack knowledge of the beginning of the revival. The question is to what extent they are influenced by (the supernatural inspiration of) Stegen and whether they are reasonably familiar with the key biblical concepts of the Christian faith. Or have they allowed themselves to be seduced away from the biblical truth, to become thoroughly blinded and to have reached a dead end?

Method

On the basis of a questionnaire with 12 multiple choice questions participants give an insight into how they thought about key Christian concepts during their membership and how they experienced their faith¹. In addition they were asked about their age, the length of their

¹ See Appendix 4, pp. 233-236; Appendix 4a, pp. 237-239; Appendix 4b, pp. 240-242; Appendix 4c, pp. 243-245.

membership and how long ago they left. Their comments are assessed in this chapter. On the basis of the survey a picture will emerge of the doctrine of Kwasizabantu.

The questions relate to:

1. the confession of sin
2. the receipt of grace
3. justification by faith
4. faith in the Word of God
5. the will of God
6. spiritual counselling

Participants in the survey

Former members of Kwasizabantu from Europe and South Africa cooperated with the survey. They have remained faithful to God after leaving, have reoriented themselves to the Christian faith and are members of a Christian church or congregation. As they have already had some time to distance themselves from the ideas of Kwasizabantu, they are considered to be reasonably capable of objective evaluation. But would it not have been better to have present-day members conduct the survey? The answer is that they are not allowed to participate in anything that is critical of Kwasizabantu.

The number of participants in subdivided into two main groups, namely that of the Rock of Life Church in Tugela Ferry, South Africa, and individual Europeans in South Africa and Europe who are members of different church communities. The number of participants, respectively, is 54, 10 and 7. The explanation for the relatively high number of participants from the Rock of Life Church lies in the fact that the survey was introduced and explained during a weekday service. Afterwards people were given a chance to ask questions. The meeting took place under the auspices of the church leadership, so that the participants knew they were being supported. Their response amounted to about 85%.

The explanation for the low number of European participants lies in the fact that they are largely single individuals in life. They have tried to integrate themselves in church communities and prefer not to talk about the past, or forget it. Within their new circle there is generally no understanding of their past. Years later, many still live in fear of bringing something to light because they are afraid of the curse of God which Stegen has pronounced over them. The response among the Europeans was less than 10%.

Overview of participants according to age and time of leaving.

Table 1 Overview of participants according to age and time of leaving

Rock of life Church, Tugela Ferry, South Africa			
Age when joining	leaving*		
Age	%	Years	%
21-35	55	1-4	5
16-20	17	5-9	4
01-15	28	10 >	91

Europeans in South Africa and Europe			
Age	%	Years	%
21-35	53	1-4	11
16-20	18	5-9	41
01-15	31	10 >	48

* the number of years ago that someone left Kwasizabantu (date of survey 2012).

Comments on the overview

The 21-35 year age group joined Kwasizabantu out of their own conviction. The second group, 16-20 years of age, would perhaps be less convinced, but that is not always the case. Among them are people who joined out of their own insight. The last group, 1-15 years of age, came with their parents and the very youngest grew up entirely within the life world of Kwasizabantu. The percentage of people joining of the Rock of Life Church and the Europeans differs only little according to age category.

The time of leaving among participants from the Rock of Life Church is striking, in that 91% of those surveyed left ten years or longer ago. This can be explained by the fact that the Tugela Ferry section of Kwasizabantu separated in 2000.

Discussion of the responses

Each participant gave a correct answer to one or more of the 12 multiple choice questions.² In total the number of right answers is 23%. It is possible that in response to a different form of question an alternative percentage would have emerged. Apart from that the questions are worded in such a way that the problems of Kwasizabantu are clearly revealed.

1. The confession of sin

Kwasizabantu

The preaching at Kwasizabantu is directed against sin. The motto is: “If just one sin is still in your life, you can’t call yourself a Christian.” There is sometimes reference to a statement by Fletcher, a co-worker of John Wesley’s.³ Or “Don’t say you’ve been born again if there is still one sin in your life.”⁴

At the end of almost every service you hear the words: “Do not leave the meeting if there are still unconfessed sins in your life.” The result is that believers feel guilty and compelled to track down their sins meticulously and confess them.

² “Correct” means that the answer is based on the Bible.

³ This statement was made by J.W.T. Mout, the present leader of Kwasizabantu in the Netherlands during a sermon on 10 October 1999 in Zeist. He was referring to a statement by Fletcher, a co-worker of John Wesley’s. In a conversation with co-workers on 21 December 1999 at Urk, F.H. Stegen and F. Sibisi opposed the author, who rejected this view, and confirmed that the quotation from Mout was correct.

⁴ G. Grau in J. Rosenthal, *Ksb – Erlo Stegen und die Erweckung unter den Zulus*, 2000, p. 62.

C.N. Impeta gives a clear refutation of this theology in his dissertation. “If there is no permanency for the born again, there is no status as God’s children; if, instead, there is always the possibility that someone who calls himself a child of God today will tomorrow be a child of the devil, then in principle we can no longer speak of regeneration or conversion.”⁵

The result is that believers feel guilty and forced to track down their sins and confess them. For Kwasizabantu sin is in the first place not following the instructions of the leaders. Sinning against the Ten Commandments comes in second place (answer 1b and c). Everyone is called upon to confess committed sins to their counsellors. The overemphasis on the confession of sins leads to the conviction that anyone who sins loses their assurance of faith and must come to Christ again (answer 4a).

The believer feels emotionally separated from Christ and so no longer a child of God (answer 4b). Each year Stegen’s followers travel many kilometres to attend his conferences and bring their lives back to being “right with God”. To “walk in the light” with the counsellor and to be completely transparent before him is more important to them than being born again (answer 8c). Believers can thus have an inadequate knowledge of God or be in inadequate touch with him.

Comments by survey participants

- The heart of it was that I was not allowed to be as I was, for me sinning was a combination of 1a to 1d.⁶
- The recurrent sin had to be confessed as quickly as possible in connection with the return of the Lord Jesus.
- In the services sin was emphasised, as it was seen by Kwasizabantu; this was not in agreement with the Bible.

⁵ C.N. Impeta, dissertation, *De leer der Heiligung en Volmaking bij Wesley en Fletcher*, 1913, p. 413.

⁶ The character of the person is distorted and a loss of personality occurs.

- I confessed “so-called sins”, because I thought that it was in them that I found the reason why I was feeling unhappy.
- I doubted whether Stegen’s exposition of the gospel was the truth, but I still believed out of fear of being judged.

What does the Bible say?

The Bible says that everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.⁷ People cannot free themselves from sin through their own efforts, for that is the way they are. Jesus said, “Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”⁸ Since Adam chose sin in Paradise, the whole creation and everyone with it have fallen into sin. And just as sin by one person led to all being condemned, so too the righteousness of one single person will lead to all who believe in Jesus Christ being declared innocent, and therefore will live.⁹

This person is the Second Adam of whom Paul speaks: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”¹⁰ Whoever confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord glorifies God the Father.¹¹ By confessing Him and accepting his work perfected on the cross, a person is saved.¹² This can go hand in hand with the confession of sins.¹³ During one’s life the confession and leaving of sin stays necessary as the Spirit convicts of it. Through this the relationship between man and God remains intact. In the Bible the confession of Christ is central, not the confession of sin.

⁷ Romans 3:23.

⁸ John 8:34.

⁹ Romans 5:18.

¹⁰ Romans 8:1.

¹¹ Philippians 2:11.

¹² Romans 10:10.

¹³ Acts 19:18.

2. The Receipt of Grace

Kwasizabantu

In Kwasizabantu grace is a vague concept and not really relevant for the life of faith (answer 6a). God does not see man out of grace in Christ, but only in the sinful nature (answer 7c). Through confession of sin in counselling sessions forgiveness is received, but the grace only lasts until the next sin (answer 5b). Many of those questioned have no assurance about grace or forgiveness and others think that God grants it arbitrarily (answers 9a and 9b). And for anyone who sins too much, the time of grace is over (answer 7b).

The receipt of forgiveness itself is of significantly less importance than the confession of sins to a counsellor. Obtaining the approval of the counsellor and having a good feeling about it is the more important thing (answers 2b and 2d, 3a, 3b, 3d).

Comments of respondents

- I had no concept of grace. For me God was the strict Judge, standing ready to judge me if I made a mistake.
- Through my own fault God was a long way off.
- Grace was dependent on the degree to which I met the criteria.
- Anyone who did not live a holy enough life would lose grace again.
- In principle you were saved at one moment and then not saved at another (you walked in and out of heaven).

What does the Bible say?

Grace is God's loyalty on the basis of His promises, which are given in Christ. In Christ God comes to a lost world to enter into fellowship with those who accept Christ. Despite the fact that God and humans are unequal partners, God remains faithful to his promises; even if a person acts unfaithfully, he is allowed to return. Grace is unmerited,

abundant,¹⁴ and a high price has been paid for it.¹⁵ It is a trustworthy, permanent kingly rule which determines the fellowship between God and man, until eternal life.¹⁶ Christians stand under grace¹⁷ and are not just called to grace as the beginning of fellowship with God,¹⁸ but also to remain in grace.¹⁹

The basis for forgiveness rests on conversion to God and belief in His Son Jesus Christ,²⁰ the acceptance of His sacrifice on the cross and our confession of guilt.

3. Justification by Faith

Kwasizabantu

The concept of justification by faith in Christ from the Letter to the Romans is completely ignored by Stegen, because it would remove the most important foundation of his doctrine of faith: namely the persistent confession of sins in counselling (1ob and 1oc). This process supposedly began spontaneously at the beginning of the revival.²¹ C.N. Peckham remembers that Stegen introduced the teaching of the continual confession of sins at Claridge and thereby put tremendous pressure on people.²²

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:7; Romans 5:20.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:20.

¹⁶ Romans 5:21.

¹⁷ Romans 6:15.

¹⁸ Galatians 1:6, 15.

¹⁹ Hebrews 4:16; 1 Peter 1:13.

²⁰ Acts 20:21.

²¹ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, p. 66.

²² C.N. Peckham, “An Assessment of Kwasizabantu”, 19 February 1999. Unfortunately the consequences were fatal: Peggy Porrill, a Claridge co-worker, became so distressed in her soul over this that she took her own life. E. Redinger, letter to C.N. Peckham, point 10, 1999; E. Redinger, interview 14 November 2004.

Stegen celebrates the virtues of the traditional Zulus, whose morality was good and who were above reproach (answer 1b).²³ He views the good qualities of Zulu religion as a kind of “Old Testament”, as it were, supplemented by rules which “God has shown through the revival”. Believers aim to please God through their own righteousness and so consciously or unconsciously place their hope in themselves.

Comments by respondents

No comments were made on this subject. It is possible that the ex-members were not well enough informed about justification by faith.

What does the Bible say?

The New Testament teaches that an individual is justified by faith, because no righteousness can come from the works of the law.²⁴ The moment a person comes to faith in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to this person.²⁵ It is the new relationship in which God places the person facing him in Jesus Christ. The human being needs this to be acquitted in the divine judgment. The righteousness of God brings about acquittal and is the opposite of condemnation. This acquitting righteousness is not only the beginning of life with Christ, but a relationship of belonging emerges and a growing together with Christ in His death and resurrection.²⁶ The former is the status that is granted to us, the latter is the process of sanctification through which in practice we grow into what is already given us in Christ. Paul says, “Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”²⁷

²³ Anonymous testimony before the Commission of the Evangelical Alliance.

²⁴ Romans 3:20-28.

²⁵ Romans 4:5; 1:17; H. Schrenk in G. Kittel, ed., *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, II, p. 207: It is not a matter of an impartation of a moral quality or an ethical change.

²⁶ Romans 6.

²⁷ Philippians 3:12.

4. Belief in the Word of God

Kwasizabantu

Faith is concentrated primarily on the leadership figure of Stegen as the man who is used by God. He is the great intercessor and lead-man, the Moses who leads his followers from sin out of the land of Egypt and brings them to the Promised Land. They are saved by believing in the gospel as expounded by Stegen and following the way which he indicates (answer 11a).²⁸ Anyone who wanders from “the way”, Stegen sends straight to hell (answer 11b).

Comments by respondents

- I believed in the Bible and felt forced, out of fear, to accept Stegen’s interpretation of the Bible.
- I had to accept Stegen’s criteria, but resisted them and was a rebel.

What does the Bible say?

The biblical faith is visible in the world through the testimony and confession of Christians.²⁹ Faith is not optional and does not go outside the human will. Faith is self-giving, trust, and therefore includes assurance of salvation.³⁰ The New Testament talks about increasing in faith,³¹ pressing on towards the goal,³² and what is missing in the faith must still be perfected.³³ Anyone who believes has a share in the power of God,³⁴ which emanates from Christ and is given to

²⁸ Cf. M.-L. Martin, *Kirche ohne Weisse*, 1971. There is a striking similarity with Simon Kimbangu, who imposed a number of customs alongside the gospel. At the beginning of the previous century he founded the Kimbanguist Church in the Congo, which attracted millions of followers.

²⁹ Luke 12:8.

³⁰ Ephesians 3:12; Romans 8:15, 16.

³¹ 2 Corinthians 10:15.

³² Philippians 3:12-14.

³³ 1 Thessalonians 3:10.

³⁴ Colossians 1:11.

the believer through the Spirit. Faith stands between today and the future. Even though salvation is present, it still awaits completion.³⁵ Finally, faith is not an individual matter; it brings us into fellowship with the body of Christ.³⁶

5. The Will of God

Kwasizabantu

Stegen's followers never know for sure what the will of God is, only Stegen and the counsellors, and those that know it from the Zulu prophetesses. They believe they know God's will through trances, dreams or visions. When counsellors are not in agreement with a believer they let this be felt in a subtle way. The advice then is: "Pray about it again, come back later and tell me what God has said." This happens so often that the person surmises what the counsellor expects of him. He has to "read his face", so to speak, to see what he wants of him. By this means the believer is manipulated to take his "own" decisions, for which he will later be held responsible. Believers feel powerless and accept what is laid upon them. Through the counselling Stegen's followers are brought back psychologically to the level of a child, so that they again need "parental help" and have to ask about everything.

Comments by respondents

- I knew that God could make His will known to me. But I always felt judged and sinful, because I was not worthy to know His will.
- I had no confidence whatsoever in what felt good. It led to an unhealthy dependency on the opinion of leaders who did know God's will.
- I wanted to become a missionary and get out and preach God's Word. The leaders told me that this was a romantic idea and did

³⁵ Galatians 5:5; Colossians 1:23; Romans 6:8.

³⁶ 1 Corinthians 12.

not come from God. It was only God's will if it chimed with their will.

What does the Bible say?

What is the will of God? The Bible is God's revealed will. God is sovereign and can manifest himself in a supernatural way as in biblical times. However, that is not the general rule but the exception. Christians walk by faith and not by sight.³⁷ God makes His will known through Bible-reading and prayer. The indwelling Holy Spirit keeps the will of God alive in the heart of the believer and shows him the way.³⁸ In order to avoid going astray revelations need to be tested against the Bible. If with our whole heart we want God's will to be done rather than our own, then we can live without tension.

6. Spiritual counselling

Kwasizabantu

The counsellors are the central point of contact for the members of the congregation. For prayer, needs and questions and so on they are expected to contact the counsellor. The leaders have set up a network of counsellors who stand in close contact with them. The leaders and counsellors exercise rule over the lives of the members, subtly give them advice on the choice of marriage, education, work, and influence the course of their lives.

They deal with the past and the future of the believer: committed sins must be confessed (answers 3a and 3d) and every decision has to be prayed about. Each member has to have a counsellor to whom they "may" confess their sins. God will only answer prayers and intervene or heal if all sins are confessed.

Anyone who wants to become (and remain) a co-worker is duty-bound to confess their sins regularly. If a counsellor is not satisfied

³⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:7.

³⁸ John 16:13.

with someone, then he may put him or her under pressure so that the person remembers sins (answer 3b). For someone who cannot think of anything more to confess there are even notes with sins circulating. Now and again someone is sent to the counsellor to confess sins of which the person concerned is totally unaware. The victim has to take a path of deep humiliation: stop working and go and confess their sin to everyone (answer 3e).

Kwasizabantu does not tolerate the possibility that someone may be led by God outside the mediation of the counsellors. Without being aware of it, believers slowly find themselves under mental observation. They also become completely psychologically dependent on the counsellor by gaining his favour (and God's) over and over again so as to be sure that they are still on the right path. Confidential information that serves the interests of the movement must be passed on to the leaders.³⁹

Comments by the respondents

- The way I saw it, the counsellors had access to the Lord Jesus; I wasn't able to approach Him myself, and there was no question of praying freely and openly with one another.
- As school children we had to hand over a signed letter from our counsellor as proof that we had visited him. We had absolutely no say in it.

Counselling in relationship to the “revival”

For the origins of counselling at Kwasizabantu we have to go back to the “outbreak of the revival” in Mapumulo. There the first heathens are supposed to have turned up by inner compulsion to confess their sins, at least according to Kwasizabantu's own publications.⁴⁰ Red-

³⁹ M. Kästli, testimony, on www.ksb-alert.com: “One of the leaders asked me to tell him everything that happened at Claridge, even the sins of those people who had confessed to me in pastoral care. I was not able to do such a thing.”

⁴⁰ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, p. 66.

inger explains that Stegen “introduced” the confession of sins to the Claridge congregation. It need not, therefore, be viewed as something acquired by the revival. In this way heavy psychological pressure was laid on the believers. There is no question, then, of inner compulsion and spontaneity. Here we see a parallel with Zionist movements which exert similar pressure on their followers to confess sins.

T. Visser, who did research into awareness of sin in the revivals of George Whitefield, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Charles G. Finney and Erlo Stegen, came to the following conclusion: counselling and asking forgiveness for any hurt done in the past, can be characterized as features of Kwasizabantu. It did not appear to be the case that these factors played any part in the other revivals.⁴¹

What does the Bible say?

The term counselling or pastoring indicates that someone is given spiritual care. Another word for pastoring is shepherding, and a pastor is correspondingly referred to as a shepherd. In some circles there is indeed also a link between counselling and confession or the confessing of sins.⁴² Making counselling compulsory is a human notion which has no basis in the Bible. The authority of binding and loosing⁴³ is a task given to Christians who are filled with the Spirit.⁴⁴ Prooftexts quoted for this cannot support the weight they are made to bear.⁴⁵ These texts are more suggestive of the communion of saints than the institution of counselling or confession of sin. But even where there is question of forgiveness by the Lord himself, it is not always concrete

⁴¹ *Opwekking en zondebesef – een zoektocht naar Gods werk in opwekkingsperioden*, 1999, p. 277.

⁴² *Christelijke Encyclopedie*, 1958-1961, p. 696.

⁴³ Matthew 16:18-19; 18:15-17.

⁴⁴ C. Riemers, *Luther en het sacrament van de boetvaardigheid*, 1967, pp. 7-12.

⁴⁵ 1 John 1:9; James 5:16.

sins that are confessed.⁴⁶ In Paul's letters to the Corinthians discipline is explicitly mentioned, but he is not speaking about counselling.

Through the legalistic approach of Stegen, Moses has to go further with the believer where, so to speak, Christ is side-lined. There is a striking parallel with the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches that a person is not justified only by being reckoned with the righteousness of Christ.⁴⁷ Just like in the Roman Catholic Church, the believer at Kwasizabantu has to be reconciled to God through the hierarchical institution to which God has entrusted His authority to forgive. The counsellor is thereby performing a juridical function: "Whoever's sins you forgive, they are forgiven." Luther on the other hand stated that pardon from punishment and guilt in the Roman Catholic Church is not the same as pardon by God.⁴⁸ The same thing is true of Kwasizabantu: it cannot ascribe the power of forgiveness to itself and on the other hand hinder those who have left it from receiving God's grace.

Conclusion

The distance between the pastor (clergy) and the lay person is reminiscent of the pre-Reformation period. In subscribing to this view Kwasizabantu is turning precisely against the starting-point for the Reformation: the universal priesthood of all believers.⁴⁹

Questionnaire

The questionnaire reveals that legalistic preaching provokes fear of transgression and punishment. We see that the disciple himself

⁴⁶ Matthew 9:2.

⁴⁷ Council of Trent, 6th session, canon II.

⁴⁸ C. Riemers, *Luther en het sacrament van de boetvaardigheid*, 1967, pp. 15-35.

⁴⁹ 1 Petrus 2:9.

becomes the person taking the initiative for the assurance of faith, losing sight of the completed work of Christ.

Encouraged by the preaching, disciples strive for sinless perfection. By following special rules they try to get their lives more securely and tidily under strict self-control.⁵⁰

The mysticism of Thofozi Dube and her helpers owes much to a legalistic and perfectionistic faith. The combination of rigid legalism, perfectionism and mysticism is like gravel, sand and cement forming hard, solid concrete.⁵¹ The God of Kwasizabantu is a self-made God, hard as nails.

The key biblical concepts into which research has been done have had their meaning altered by Kwasizabantu and are therefore anti-evangelical. This applies to confession, forgiveness, grace, justification, interpretation of the Bible, God's will and pastoral care. When a biblical term is given extra-biblical content, the unavoidable result will be an unbiblical view of God. In such cases "biblical terms" give an impulse for going astray and seduction. This is visible in counselling, where all the key concepts treated melt together in the crucible of the counsellor, who acts as mediator between God and man, and manipulates and dominates the believer. The idea that one has to accept everything that happens, willy-nilly, tends towards a fatalistic view of life.

⁵⁰ Cf. T.G. Mahne, *Legalisme en gebed in die werk van Andrew Murray en die invloed van William Law*, 1992.

⁵¹ E. Stegen, 10 August 2000, summer conference in Melchtal, Switzerland. In the following statement we can see the concrete in practice: "It is crazy to leave the spiritually renewed Christians (Kwasizabantu), it is absurd. If someone says God is leading me out, then it is the devil that is his god. We want nothing to do with such a person."

CHAPTER 9

Theoretical Foundations of Cults

Introduction

Anyone who consults the international literature on sects and cults cannot escape the fact that there are still a variety of views on this topic. The terms sects and cults were generally used by theological researchers until the 1970s. In recent decades sociologists of religion use the label “new religious movement” because this is a neutral term which can embrace both sects and cults.¹ In the understanding of sociologists of religion there is little difference in principle between the Christian churches, the other world religions, sects and “new religious movements”.² In Southern Africa theological researchers initially called the Zionist movements cults.³ In distinction from Western sects and cults they are now referred to as “African Independent Churches” or “African Initiated Churches” (AIC’s). Sociologists of religion regard these movements in turn as “new religious movements” (NRMs).⁴

In America sects are viewed as separatist movements within “a conservative religious tradition (church)” and cults as “deviant religious traditions”. The need to make a distinction between sects and cults emerges from the fact that for more than a century sects have in large

¹ P. Schnabel, *Tussen Schisma en Charisma*, 1982, p. 84.

² L.L. Dawson, *Comprehending Cults. The Sociology of New Religious Movements*, 1998, p. 8; C. Partridge, *Encyclopedia of New Religions*.

³ B.G.M. Sundkler and C.G. Oosthuizen.

⁴ See e.g. E. Gunner, J.W. Fernandez, A. Heuser or R. Rapini.

part determined the face of religion in America and are no longer regarded as an intrusive or objectionable sideshow, at least as long as they derive from the Judaeo-Christian tradition.⁵ The starting point for this chapter is the social features of religious cults as established by H.G. Stoker in his research into the Jehovah's Witnesses.⁶ It has emerged from this that the term cult has a more specified meaning than the term sect.⁷ The difference lies in the fact that a cult has a "prophetic" leader.⁸ In other regards it displays the same features as a sect.

Method

For his dissertation Stoker collected the features of groups that are labelled by the experts as cults, concluding that they dominate their adherents' thinking, behaviour, emotions, information, language, norms, understanding of history, God, the Bible, doctrine, salvation, and membership. In the chapter that follows, the features of Kwasizabantu will be measured against the criteria described here.

Features of cults in practice

1. Thought control

Reversal of negative thoughts

Cults make use of "thought-stopping" techniques by which members repel critical thoughts that may come to mind about their organisa-

⁵ Stark and Bainbridge in P. Schnabel, *Tussen Schisma en Charisma*, p. 84.

⁶ H.G. Stoker, *Die Jehovah-Getuies: 'onchristelijke' culte?*, Potchefstroom. The treatment of the material and footnotes mentioned in this are borrowed from ch. 2 of Stoker's book.

⁷ A.A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, 1963, pp. 373, 374.

⁸ R.A. Tucker, *Another Gospel: Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement*, 1989, p. 16.

tion.⁹ To be a good member, the person must learn to manipulate his or her own thought processes.¹⁰ Members think that they will fare better and better if they abandon their “negative” thoughts, and settle in the delusion that they are growing in the faith,¹¹ whereas in reality they become more and more enslaved to the organisation.

Compartmentalised thinking

The boxed-in situation of cult members is described as closed-mindedness. What happens here is that although they like to pretend they are interested in a rational and reasonable evaluation of facts, they nonetheless defend against questions that are felt to be negative. With consummate ease, however, members can critically apply to others criteria that are not relevant to their own organisation.¹²

Anyone who tries to engage in argument with them finds that a conversation is possible up to a certain level. After that it is as if the conversation gets stuck at a mental roadblock. Mental roadblocks are a common feature of cults.

A new sense of reality

Unfortunately a new reality can unconsciously come into being, so that someone thinks they are in possession of the truth. On the other hand their critical capacities are limited to the level where they need the safety of an elder’s source of authority. A new sense of reality is created among the members, so as to be sure that they will subsequently make their decisions against the new background.

⁹ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, 1988, pp. 61-63.

¹⁰ G. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1966, pp. 56, 217, 218.

¹¹ H.G. Stoker, *Die Jehovah-Getuies: ‘onchristelijke’ culte?*

¹² W.R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 2003, p. 26.

2. Control of behaviour

Influence of leaders

An outsider can see that the behaviour of cult members is strikingly similar to that of other members. What one sees is the personality and behaviour of the leader as it is imitated from top to bottom in the hierarchy.¹³ When a member sees a fault or shortcoming, then the member must look for the fault and the shortcomings in himself rather than criticising the leader or the organisation. The obedience that is expected of members can better be described as dependency. The authority of the leader extends far beyond the boundaries of that which a church community may have over the behaviour of its members.¹⁴

Suppression of the personality

Cults force their members to become people they are not and to give up their freedom.¹⁵ Differences in personality, temperament, interest and talents are subordinated to what the group considers important. Members can do no other than acquiesce to the leader, who decides what is best for them. In addition, the higher objectives of the movement are given precedence over personal (so-called selfish) goals. All this contributes to someone's personality being suppressed and developing unaccustomed patterns of behaviour.¹⁶

¹³ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 81.

¹⁴ P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, 1993, pp. 64-65: cults demand dependency, calling it biblical obedience.

¹⁵ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 73: some members of a cult develop a dual personality. Their behaviour alternates between the person that they are and that of the cult member they have become. This can be compared with someone who acts normally or professionally, as is demanded by the situation.

¹⁶ O.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, pp. 122-124.

Elitist mentality

As cults regard themselves as “chosen”, they develop an elitist mentality. Members are prepared to work extremely hard for the ideas of the group and are extraordinarily self-sacrificial.¹⁷ The elitist mentality leads to fanaticism and fundamentalism. The fact that they regard themselves as more spiritual and more in God’s favour than other believers, has an enormous influence on their behaviour.¹⁸ Outsiders and former members are “enemies of God” and it is not wrong to lie to them and to avoid them at all costs.

3. Governance of emotions

The power which cults exercise over their members’ emotions is described by researchers as emotional abuse.¹⁹ A reign of terror dominates emotions, thinking and behaviour.

Fear

Fear can be described as a power (a phobia) which deprives members of their freedom.²⁰ Cults constantly draw a negative picture of the world around them, frightening their members so that they will be too afraid ever to leave the group. Their literature is generally laced with references to the imminent judgment that is coming upon the world. Only membership of the cult can save a person from the impending

¹⁷ H.G. Stoker, *Die Jehovah-Getuies: ‘onchristelijke’ culte?* p. 16: The Moonies, for example, are taught that one day monuments will be set up to commemorate their sacrifice. The Mormons in turn believe that a married couple that remain faithful will inhabit new planets as gods.

¹⁸ P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, p. 69; R.J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of Brainwashing in China*, 1961, p. 433: Group behaviour is expressed in fanaticism and is clearly perceptible to outsiders and former members. These people are viewed in the terms of the Chinese revolution as “nonpeople”.

¹⁹ P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, p. 73.

²⁰ P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, p. 196: A phobia is an intense reaction of fear someone has towards something or someone and which is generally the result of a traumatic experience. Cults cause a phobia in their members by constantly making it clear to them how dangerous it would be ever to leave the group.

judgment. Some people join a cult because they think that it is only possible to lead a meaningful life if one is a member of the cult.

Guilt feelings, loyalty and devotion

Cults are also past masters at dominating their members by feelings of guilt. Anyone who feels guilty will do almost anything for the organisation out of guilt. Lifton maintains that the cause of guilt feelings among members lies in the overemphasis on purity.²¹ As even the best people cannot live with 100 percent purity, everyone feels guilty and ashamed towards the organisation. With the organisation members find forgiveness and through hard work they try to make good their misdeeds.

Persecution complex and hate

Another feeling that is masterfully exploited by leaders is that anyone who holds a different opinion from them and is against them, is persecuting the cult. One might call this a kind of persecution complex, as in the case of Jim Jones, who managed to persuade the 913 members of his People's Temple to commit suicide, so as to get away from their "persecutors". The fortress set up by David Koresh where 75 people died with their leader in 1993 is another clear example of this.²²

Love and friendship

The reason why people feel attracted to cults is the warmth of the fellowship that they radiate. The members have a close bond between them and they all think and feel alike.²³ The love which a new member initially receives is boundless and seems unconditional, and he or she is walking on air. It is literally like being in a utopia, because everyone is concerned about you and shows interest in you. It is clear

²¹ R.J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, p. 424.

²² D. Klompeen, *Koresh Craziness: Are We Immune to Cults?* 1993, p. 12.

²³ A.C. Barnard, *In Gesprek met Sektes*, 1980, p. 53.

that cults make use of love-bombing.²⁴ When someone has become a member of the group, the attention and flattery for the newcomers disappear. The group's love is not unconditional but depends on the members' participation and results.

Security and personal crisis

To the question what makes someone susceptible to a cult, different answers may be given. In times of crisis when there is great uncertainty after disasters or wars the attraction of cults is greater than normal.²⁵ People are also susceptible to such movements immediately following personal crises, such as the death of a loved one, a divorce, loss of work, or events such as rape, burglary or other forms of violence.²⁶ The importance of the feeling of security that cults offer cannot be over-emphasised. In a society where everyone must decide for themselves what is good or bad, many people are looking for a fixed scale of norms and values. The certainty and security that cults provide are based on a false scale of values.

Hyping up

Being emotionally hyped up into a trance state plays an important role in some cults. Members thereby become part of the great uni-

²⁴ Jeannie Mills, a former member of Jim Jones's People's Temple who was later murdered, warned people with the following words: "When you meet the friendliest people you've ever seen, and they bring you into contact with the most loving people you have ever met, and you find the most inspirational leader you have ever met, who is helpful, sympathetic and understanding, then you hear that the reason for the group's existence is based on something you had never dared hope you would ever be able to attain yourself and everything sounds as if it is too good to be true, then never give up your education, your hope and your ambitions for it to follow a rainbow," cited in P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, p. 73.

²⁵ A.C. Barnard, *In Gesprek met Sektes*, p. 52.

²⁶ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 77: Hassan states, further, that most people are recruited at a time of unusual personal tension, when an important change has taken place in their life.

versal truth and deity.²⁷ Although it does not happen like this at all in rational groups, there members are whipped up in a different way, namely by the constant emphasis on how successful the organisation is around the world and how fantastic the growth figures are. Success and growth serve as proof that they are “God’s organisation” and possess “the truth”.

4. Control of information and outside influences

How do cults control information and outside influences?

Cults make use of a diversity of measures to ensure that their members do not accept the “poison” of those who hold a different opinion from theirs:²⁸

- a. by keeping the “poison” of the media, other religious groups or critical material by former members out of reach of members;
- b. by making members afraid that the devil will rob them of the “truth”;
- c. by compulsory daily or weekly attendance on programmes of indoctrination;
- d. by occupying members’ time with activities of the movement so that there is no time for critical thought or for consideration of other points of view.

People who tear themselves away from cults form a considerable danger. Former members in particular are regarded as apostates to whom one must not speak. They are regarded as people who have become lovers of the world.

²⁷ P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, pp. 353-361.

²⁸ This survey can be found in S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 65; R. Watters, *Do Cults Follow the Same Patterns?*; P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, pp. 185-186.

Thinking, behaviour and feeling in cults

Anyone who wants to dominate a person's thinking, behaviour and feelings will have to ensure that only selected information is made available to him or her. The reason is that a person makes decisions on the basis of the information at his or her disposal. The cult wants to get him to allow himself willingly to be placed in a "prison". It monitors what someone sees, hears, reads, writes and discusses; even what someone says needs to be checked.²⁹ That is why cults control information and the environment.

5. Control of the use of language

A special vocabulary

Every cult has its own vocabulary, which may consist of familiar terms to which new content is given.³⁰ Language consists of a vocabulary with which a person thinks. To a certain extent one can get a person under one's control by controlling his or her vocabulary. If a newcomer is curious about what is being spoken about, this encourages him to study hard to be able to "understand" the truth. By making this use of language their own, in reality people learn not to think for themselves but to believe clichés.³¹

New content to words

Cults give familiar words and sentences a whole new content of their own. As a result, new members think that the teaching of the organisation is in line with what they always thought. The new content is gradually passed through to them. Misuse of terms by giving them new content also occurs in the reinterpretation of biblical vocabulary. The singing of familiar traditional Christian songs also makes them

²⁹ R.J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, p. 420.

³⁰ W.R. Martin, ed., *The New Cults*, 1980, p. 21.

³¹ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 77.

believe they are a Christian church.³² Despite their redefinition of biblical terms, cults aim to create the impression that their teaching is confirmed by the Bible.³³

6. Control of norms

Commandments and prohibitions

The leaders claim to exercise divine authority and so have the power to say what is good or evil. In accordance with the cult's interests and ways of thinking, the world and all moral questions are divided into black and white categories, with little room left for personal decision-making.

Cults typically have a long list of do's and don'ts, which form part of their own system of norms. If the regulations do not cover something, the leader has to be consulted. There is a whole diversity of rules, such as: no one may miss a meeting, feel tired, show anger, or wear make-up. And with the great quantity of rules for holy living, members are so busy that they have no time for critical thought.

*Holy and unhol*y

Some cults have a tendency to regard themselves as perfect. Their members have a feeling of superiority towards members of the Christian churches, especially with regard to holiness. Feeling superior in ethical respects is reinforced by the leadership so as to ensure that no member will resign. Despite all their supposed holiness, cults nonetheless tend to favour an end-justifies-the-means approach.

Among new movements that came into being in the 1960s, there is a taboo against the regulations of society, parents and the church. Despite this attitude they insist on a series of absolute rules that have to be followed.

³² H.G. Stoker, *Die Jehovah-Getuies: 'onchristelijke' culte?* p. 30.

³³ W.R. Martin, ed., *The New Cults*, p. 21.

Ambivalence

Members of a cult must be loyal to it, because the suggestion is that it has the truth, the word of God, and the leader has been sent by God, etc. A member who finds out about an unfortunate situation will at some point generally develop an ambivalent attitude towards the cult. The consequence of this is that a member on the one hand believes the movement, but on the other has doubts about it. This ambivalence is of course unwelcome to the cult, and can ultimately lead to a member leaving.

In retrospect, too, many people judge their former movement ambivalently. They are able to indicate precisely what they did not like and why they left the movement, but they also think they gained positive benefits from their former membership.

7. Control of history

Personal history

Cults tend to reinterpret history, so that it ties in with their teachings. This also applies to members. The cult changes the attitude of its members towards their own past, present and future. The past is coloured by how the leader makes them think about it. The present is manipulated by a constant feeling of agitation because the last minutes of the earth are ticking away. The future brings members the reward for all their work for the organisation.

The history of the movement

Cults see themselves as the only true believers of the present day. In consequence they make it appear that their history goes back to the time of the first New Testament communities and thus make their teachings acceptable to their members. The problem is usually that no one in church history can be found who thought as the cult thinks.

Some believe that they, after a gap of centuries, are the continuation of the one true church.³⁴

Unlike cults which see themselves as the only true Christians and keep apart from other groups, the Christian churches recognise that they all came from one another and that Christ's church has been preserved through the centuries. They regret the divisions between them.

8. Control of their followers' views of God

God's organisation

In religious cults it is customary for the leaders to ascribe to themselves, their teaching and tasks, divine authority. Hundreds of leaders claim to be God's anointed prophet, even if their ideas are totally divergent. They think they are God's own movement, which is led by Him. In fact it is the other way round: the leaders dominate God and use Him as a stamp of approval upon everything that the organisation is and conceives. Someone who bows out, or is expelled, can expect God's punishment and eternal damnation.³⁵

God's channel of communication

One of the most important features of religious cults is their claim to be God's exclusive channel of communication for the world. They have a "prophetic" founder, who is "called" by God to pass on a special message which cannot be found in the Bible.³⁶

Cults manipulate history by changing prophecies from their past which did not come true, as if they meant or said something different.³⁷ What they teach, decide or do comes from God. Their

³⁴ A.A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, pp. 374, 375.

³⁵ R.J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, p. 422.

³⁶ R.A. Tucker, *Another Gospel: Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement*, p. 16.

³⁷ S.A. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 83.

revelations and their prophecies are from God, even if they do not come true.³⁸

Acceptance of the insights

Cults monopolise God for themselves. They are not interested in what God expects of people but in what they want God to demand of people. As evidence of their authority cults place God's stamp of approval on their teaching and customs. Members must above all believe that their salvation and restored relationship with God depends on their relationship with the organisation.

Anyone who wants to be a member must accept the leader as the mouthpiece of God and submit to his (new) insights, which entail changes. The old and new apostolic church go so far as to claim that, not the Bible, but the spoken word that comes from the lips of their apostles is the Word of God. The Mormons also ascribe divine authority to what their present-day apostles say.

9. Exercising “control” over redemption

Redemption through membership

Cults exercise governance over the redemption of their members. Leaders who are able to convince people that they have authority over their redemption and eternal life, can ask whatever they like of their followers: even murder, suicide, sex, theft, long days of hard labour, and so on.

The salvation of a member depends on whether he or she belongs to the specific movement and lives in accordance with the rules. Anyone who breaks away from a cult loses God.³⁹

³⁸ P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, pp. 112, 113.

³⁹ R. Watters, *Do Cults Follow the Same Patterns?* p. 1.

Redemption through work

The idea that redemption can only be obtained from the organisation concerned gives rise to sanctification by works. Oddly enough, sanctification by works does not bring about any certainty of redemption. God accepts an individual more and more as His child, the more and the longer he or she lives in accordance with the will of the organisation. The more a member becomes the slave of the leader, the more “favour” he will find in God’s eyes.

For the *Christian Scientist* a person gains redemption from sin by stopping sinning. Redemption lies in what someone achieves and not in the grace of God. This rejection of the *sola gratia* principle is diametrically opposed to the biblical teaching of grace. The *Mormons* also reject the doctrine of “through grace alone”, even regarding it as the cause of the decay of the church.⁴⁰

Redemption through confession of guilt

Many cults lay emphasis on the open confession of sins in front of the group. This serves as personal “purification”, also symbolizing self-sacrifice and the member’s willingness to be open in front of the group.⁴¹ After the sins have been confessed, they are not forgiven and forgotten. If a member steps out of line or threatens to leave the group, the confession of sin is used to force him or her to turn back. Everything a person has said in confidence can and will be used against the member if the movement considers it necessary.⁴²

10. Exercising “control” of the interpretation of the Bible

Non-biblical revelation

It is striking that members of a cult appear to know the Bible and are serious about studying it. However, the question is how honest and

⁴⁰ A.A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, p. 380.

⁴¹ R.J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, p. 426.

⁴² S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 64.

straightforward cults are in the use and interpretation of the Bible. In dealing with the Bible they do not let the Bible speak for itself but make the Bible repeat their dogma. They reject the method of interpretation of Scripture on the basis of grammar, the chronological historical trajectory and the context, because this will bring them to the same conclusions as Christianity. So the leaders appeal to extra-biblical revelations which shed “new light” on the interpretation of biblical truths (on this see point 8).

Extra-biblical explanations

Leaders of Christian cults make it appear that they recognise God and the Bible as the supreme authority. They convey their explanations of the Bible with authority, though these are nothing other than their own ideas, so that members think that they are being obedient to God. The interpretative methods of a cult must fit with their specific doctrines and change according to how they turn out. They ascribe that to progressive insight. Another feature of this is simplification of the Bible to make the message easier to understand.

Extra-biblical quotations

Most leaders have had little or no theological training. Some like to be called “reverend” or “minister”. To compensate for their lack of training they are inclined to look for scholars who appear in some small degree to agree with them. Routinely these scholars are quoted completely out of context. The leaders dismiss interpretative errors as suspicion-mongering. Among members the impression is created that their teaching has scholarly backing and that their organisation is interpreting the Bible “rightly”.

11. Exercising “control” of doctrines

Inviolable doctrines

Any religious group has its own doctrines. Each member is expected to be conversant with the teaching and to know on what it is based. The

difference between the Christian churches and the so-called Christian cults lies in the source of authority. The members are not permitted to query the doctrines, because this would mean placing the leader under suspicion, and he is God's anointed.⁴³ They are prepared to adapt the "truth" according to circumstances, because they believe that the end justifies the means. They are prepared to do this in order that people will be "saved".⁴⁴

Scholarly teachings

Members' enquiries into more knowledge are appeased by teaching them that the cult has a logical doctrine, which has been put together with scientific accuracy. It is therefore not only "immoral" but also illogical to oppose the doctrine in any way. Members are not permitted to conduct any research into the teachings, as these teachings are the only truth.⁴⁵

Christian teachings

In the Christian church members may conduct critical research into its teachings in the light of Scripture. Cults teach that they are the only ones who have the truth and they adapt their teachings as they see fit, appealing to God's continuing revelation. They falsify biblical Christianity and are essentially unchristian, even though they claim to be Christian.

12. Control of the membership

Recruitment

Membership is the last and most important criterion against which to judge whether or not a group is a cult.⁴⁶ The misleading of new

⁴³ R.J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, pp. 427-429.

⁴⁴ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, p. 99.

⁴⁵ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁶ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, pp. 99-104.

members is a typical feature of these movements. In their view it is not wrong to mislead people because it is in their best interests. Initially people are shown “the same” as in the Christian churches. Gradually people are initiated into the full doctrines, which they had no notion of at the beginning.

A cult’s success depends on its recruitment. By preference they look for people who are intelligent, talented and successful and who can in turn become good “salespeople” for the cult. They are recruited when they are at a low emotional ebb and later learn to see the best side of the cult with a smile. They show how it is possible to make this world a better place. Anyone who engages in conversation with them generally begins at a disadvantage because “this friendly person” is intent on making an assault on his or her being.

Group maintenance

At the beginning new members are free to associate with their family and friends. This is allowed up to the moment they indicate their intention never to join the group. Subsequently the leader will discourage them from spending any more time with them.⁴⁷ Cults have strict conditions of membership. They immediately crack down on those who dare to deviate from what the group expects and if things do not change quickly, exclusion follows, with social dislocation as a consequence.⁴⁸

No freedom to resign

People are free to join a cult, but not to leave it. In the eyes of the cult there can be no valid reason for leaving. They expect their members to spy on each other and to report immediately when they deviate from the rules, even if this is within their own family. Anyone who takes their leave pays a high price, as generally speaking they will lose their spiritual and natural family, who will stay. Besides losing one’s circle

⁴⁷ S. Hassan, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, pp. 101-104.

⁴⁸ W.R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 18

of friends, it feels as if one is losing one's purpose and meaning in life and even God's "approval".

To the leaders, members are a source of power and income, and so deserters are not tolerated. The leaders give their members the instruction to reject deserters, to hate them, refuse to greet them, and as far as possible to avoid them like the plague. Anyone who does not comply with this runs the risk of being thrown out themselves.⁴⁹ In some cults there are cases of ex-members being persecuted or even shot dead.⁵⁰

Anyone who manages to get away from a cult will generally be left with some nasty consequences. Many of those who leave say they "no longer believe anything any more". Few things are so painful as when, after devoting all one's time, money and energy to a false religion, for many years, one is then cold-shouldered and treated with disdain by one's "friends".

The experience of the former member makes him or her suspicious of other churches and groups. For years he has collected negative information about all sorts of churches. So there is scarcely a religious group left that he can trust or join up with. Moreover he lives in fear of becoming enslaved again and is afraid that the church will take control of his life as was once the case in the cult.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has become clear that researchers in the field of cults view the control that these groups exercise over their members as one of their most important features. Such control relates above all to the members' thinking, their behaviour and emotions, access

⁴⁹ R. Watters, *Do Cults Follow the Same Patterns?*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ P.R. Martin, *Cult-Proofing Your Kids*, pp. 196-198.

to information, use of language, norms, views of history, notions of God and the Bible, doctrines, personal redemption and membership.

CHAPTER 10

Kwasizabantu Measured against the Characteristics of Cults

Introduction

This chapter investigates whether Kwasizabantu dominates its members in the ways discussed in the previous chapter, and whether it can be characterised as a cult. A point-by-point comparison is made between the features of cults and the testimonies of previous members and other relevant material. Given the huge quantity of data it is not possible to note everything. The question is whether Kwasizabantu meets the criteria for cults and for this purpose the data used are sufficient. Not every former member will find his or her testimony in this chapter.

1. Thought control

The reversal of negative thoughts

Kwasizabantu uses counselling as a “thought-stopping” technique. Anyone who hears or reads something that is critical of the organisation must confess “negative thoughts” to the counsellors, before the “poison” can do its work. The counselling manipulates the members’ thought processes, so that they shut themselves off to criticism.

Compartmentalised thinking

The consequence of defence against “negative” thoughts is “closed-mindedness”. People in the organisation are blind to the evil in their

own organisation, but continue to oppose the demise in society and the church, particularly as regards the influence of drugs, abortion and euthanasia.

As the churches do not distance themselves sufficiently from these sins, Kwasizabantu takes up these topics, with some success. Special satellite organisations have been set up for this purpose: “Christians for Truth”, “The Naked Truth” and “Doctors for Life”.¹ As far as the outside world is concerned, the organisation is quite capable of forming a critical and rational evaluation of the facts. But as soon as the concern is with internal matters, it is as if conversations run into a thought blockade.

A new sense of reality

In his addresses, which can last for hours, Stegen (like many a German politician) browbeats his audience. The audience feel deeply chastised, become confused and lose their assurance of faith. Now the path lies open for the counsellor, who likes to stand at the side of recruits to “assist and advise”. Before they know it, impressed by the “many miracles”, they are taught the new doctrines. Anyone who submits to this finds his or her critical faculties limited to the level of a child that needs the security of a parental source of authority.² The believer loses confidence and needs the counsellor for everything, as a small child needs its parents. The believer will henceforth make all his or her decisions against the background of the newly acquired sense of reality.

¹ “Christians for Truth”, “The Naked Truth” and “Doctors for Life” are satellite organisations concerned, respectively, with matters of norms and values, addiction and pro-life. “Christians for Truth” was discontinued in South Africa in 2013.

² Cf. H.G. Stoker, *Die Jehovah-Getuies: ‘onchristelike’ kulte?*, p. 13.

2. Control of behaviour

Influence of leaders

Stegen stands at the centre of his movement as preacher, prophet and healer. He has absolute power over his followers, expects blind obedience and punishes or ignores anyone who does not fully surrender.³ Stegen has a magnetic effect even on academically educated people. Among his followers are qualified theologians, a doctor of theology, medical doctors, an engineer and even a barrister. Lawyers generally have a reputation for not being particularly gullible people. Cases like this therefore provide impressive evidence of Stegen's persuasive abilities.⁴

Ordinary members see the presence of academically trained members as an indication that things are well with their movement.

The award which Stegen received from World Vision in 2007 and the Chancellor's Medal from North West University, Potchefstroom awarded to him in 2013 are further signs of Stegen's astonishing persuasiveness.

Suppression of the personality

School children, members and co-workers who step out of line are regularly suspended to "seek God". This "seeking" can last up to a year, after which repentance must be shown. And members targeted by the group can also be placed under house arrest. Ultimately the victims do the rounds among the community asking for forgiveness, not knowing for sure what it is that they are supposed to have done wrong.⁵ Occasionally a co-worker will be summarily stood down, losing his or her job.⁶ Large numbers of members and co-workers have over the years been forced to give up their personality and have

³ Cf. A. van der Braak, *Goeroes en Charisma*, 2006, p. 77.

⁴ Cf. A. Storr, *Reuzen op lemen voeten*, 1998, p. 22.

⁵ P. Coetzee, email 21 August 2010.

⁶ M.W. Mabizela, interview 6 February 2010.

been manipulated and made psychologically dependent. They have allowed themselves to be forced to become people they were not.⁷ Corporal punishment was not spared, as in the Kranskop debacle, in which toddlers and young children were thrashed until they bled (see Appendix 3, pp. 227-231). The leaders also advise the men to beat their wives and children if they are disobedient. A man who beat his wife heard Stegen deny having said anything of the sort, when his wife made her complaint about this.⁸

Mental breaking of co-workers

One method of breaking a co-worker mentally is the so-called “hot seat” which is also used in interrogation by the information services. Someone is invited to a discussion, not suspecting that they themselves would be the subject of the conversation. For hours they are vigorously browbeaten. All kinds of psychological tricks are used on a person, who is unaware of having done anything wrong, to try to break him or her mentally and identify him or her as the “perpetrator” of a transgression. An example of this: the leaders wait for an opportunity to accuse the targeted person of something. A reaction to someone, even if this is fully justified, can be sufficient. The person is then told: “What this brother has done is not good. But your reaction to it is much worse.”⁹ The leaders let the miscreant get off scot-free and the innocent party is victimised.

Kobus du Preez notes in relation to his stay at Kwasizabantu that anyone with a will of their own was broken spiritually. The Zulu verb used for this is *ukushuka*. This term is used from tanning bare

⁷ God, on the other hand, does not take away people’s thoughts and does not switch off their will. He calls believers to ask Him and prove Him. In Luke 24:45 we read: “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

⁸ Testimony of Neville and Byrill Laing, 30 May 2009.

⁹ This happened to the author in Krefeld (Germany) in January 2000. The lead in this conversation was taken by F.H. Stegen in the presence of the full complement of leaders from Europe and some from South Africa.

leather until it is supple and soft. Stegen's co-workers, who had to go through this process themselves, browbeat the victim until he is mentally broken. The subject of discussion is dramatised as required and avoids the real heart of the matter. All that matters is the desired effect: the victim's acquiescence, regardless of whether the conscience goes along with it.¹⁰

Helga Tonsch, former wife of the former Swiss leader Hans Koller, was put under great pressure by the Swiss co-workers for years. When she threatened to leave the movement, Friedel Stegen told her: "Either you pray that you will die or you submit to me." For the following two years she lived under tremendous stress, praying to be allowed to die. Finally she left Kwasizabantu and divorced her husband.¹¹

As soon as Stegen notices that there is an issue of criticism, he calls them together to carry out a purge. He begins by saying that there are traitors in their midst. Everyone is subjected to close interrogation and no one will leave the room until the perpetrators are identified. When Stegen asks, "Who is on the Lord's side?" his friends raise their hands as a sign of unconditional loyalty. The others have to humble themselves, and anyone who is not "converted" is removed from their function and finally expelled from the location.

Sometimes the leaders meet together for days and nights in succession to track down errant or guilty members. Former members call these meetings "court cases". Among other things, cases are known of schoolchildren being set out of the campus with their suitcase in the middle of the night.

A pupil of Domino Servite School, accused of sin, had to leave Kwasizabantu on the spot. A car travelling to Greytown offered him a lift. Unfortunately the car was involved in a traffic accident and the

¹⁰ Taken from the first guestbook, contribution by K. du Preez, 26 August 2009.

¹¹ IDEA Pressedienst, October 2003: "Die umstrittene Mission Ksb tarnt sich hinter einem Netz christlicher Initiativen".

boy died as a result of his injuries. The next Sunday, during the service Stegen informed the congregation why he had been expelled from the school and how he died. With disdain, Stegen said that his death was a result of God's judgment and punishment.

One day, a few years later, a boy came to Kwasizabantu who had been a student at that time. In tears, he confessed that he was the one who had committed the "error" of which the boy who died had been accused.

The wrong done to the deceased boy and his family was never put right. Instead, the matter was hushed up. Stegen never restored the honour of the deceased boy in public, and never withdrew the verdict he had pronounced upon him.¹²

After the funeral of Fano Sibisi a series of court cases took place. Afterwards Stegen sent his followers out in all directions to inform their families that Kwasizabantu reserves the exclusive right to organise the funerals of their members and to give addresses. The purpose was to avoid situations such as occurred with M. Hadebe, who bluntly criticised Kwasizabantu in the course of an address at Sibisi's funeral.¹³ In the Zulu culture the exclusion of the family from the funeral ceremony amounts to a gross infringement of customary family rights.

Elitist mentality

On the basis of the testimonials of 20 former members, Ds. Moss Kltha came to the conclusion that Kwasizabantu sees itself as an exclusive way to God, and that an elitist mentality has developed and Kwasizabantu now resembles a sect.¹⁴ Arbitration by the commission Evangelical Alliance was rejected by Stegen, because he regards

¹² K. du Preez, blog on Kwasizabantu; see: en.ksb-alert.com, 12 November 2013.

¹³ See on the death of Fano Sibisi in 2011 in ch. 2 above.

¹⁴ *Nederlands Dagblad*, 7 July 2000: discussion about the *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*.

the conclusion of an agreement with the opposition a fundamental betrayal of his principles.¹⁵ In a response to the *Natal Witness* Stegen systematically denies all the accusations.¹⁶ The elitist mentality has a huge influence on members' behaviour and finds expression in fanaticism and fundamentalism.

Stegen's co-workers also brand critics as malicious liars. They accuse the media and ex-members of slander, lies and half-truths.¹⁷ Kwasizabantu sees the established church as a sort of organised hypocrisy but "apparently has a hidden system of its own",¹⁸ whereby this accusation is turned against itself.¹⁹

3. Control of emotions

Fear

Stegen's adherents fear him in a way that comes close to terror. Any-one he calls does not know whether he or she has fallen out of favour and whether they may stay after the conversation or will be dismissed. Leaving Kwasizabantu is tantamount to losing one's salvation and going to hell.²⁰

If anyone disagrees with him and leaves, he says: "It is crazy to leave the 'spiritually renewed' Christians, it is absurd. If anyone says: 'God is leading me out', then the devil is his god. We want noth-

¹⁵ Cf. A. Margalit, *Sektarisme als geesteshouding*, 2009, pp. 13, 14, 24: openness and transparency are needed for arbitration and this could expose the leader to criticism which he does not want to hear. Criticism would detract from his claim to superior knowledge and reduce him to the status of an ordinary person.

¹⁶ E. Stegen, Press statement from Kwasizabantu Mission, 9 February 2000.

¹⁷ J.W.T. Mout, in *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, 12 February 2010.

¹⁸ Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, point 5.1, 23 June 2000.

¹⁹ Cf. A. Margalit, *Sektarisme als geesteshouding*, p. 25.

²⁰ P. Coetzee, email 21 August 2010: After someone had been sent away Stegen would always declare: "We deliver him into the hand of the devil, so that his soul may be saved."

ing to do with such a person.”²¹ Friedel Stegen declared: “I break with everyone who does not submit to the work of Kwasizabantu. I did this in the past and will do so in the future. Even if the person concerned is my own wife.”²² Stegen’s newest confidante and advisor, Nthokozo Nhlabathi, announced to his guests at the wedding that he would throw out his wife and divorce her if she were no longer to be “at one” with Stegen’s gospel. His children could expect to face the same fate.²³

Guilty feelings, loyalty and dedication

In every address emphasis is placed on sin and believers are again called upon to “purify” their lives.²⁴ Since no one can live a perfectly pure life, everyone feels guilty. The threat of hell is part of the everyday vocabulary of Stegen and his friends.²⁵ Some recruits, despite having been convinced Christians for many years, thought that they were unconverted. Even preachers concluded that they still had to be converted. Loyalty to Stegen is such that the followers cannot bear or listen to any contradictory opinion from outsiders. Attacks on the leader are seen as rebellion against God himself.²⁶

²¹ G.D., *Evidence for a Doctrine of Exclusion at Ksb*, Kwasizabantu family conference in Melchtal, Switzerland, 10 August 1997.

²² F.H. Stegen, quoted in a letter by K.H. Wicker, “Statement regarding my separation from KSB”, 20 February 2000. The statement concerned was made in January 1999 at a conference in Lindach, Germany.

²³ On the wedding of Ntokozo Nhlabathi and Snikiwe Ndimande see the Kwasizabantu website, 7 November 2010.

²⁴ “Purify” is a technical term used within Kwasizabantu. It means “self-purify” or “improve oneself by one’s own efforts”.

²⁵ E. Stegen, *Revival among the Zulus*, pp. 4, 8; W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, pp. 19, 29; E. Stegen, Walbourg, France, 3 August 1993; E. Stegen, Brussels, 30 April 1990; E. Stegen, Kwasizabantu, 10 June 2001; J. Lilford Powers, 3 February 2000, 27 August, 2000.

²⁶ G. Grau, letter from the German leader to the co-workers, 29 January 1999: “It was a declaration of war against God”; he claimed, furthermore, that Stegen was in a direct line with Moses, the prophets and the disciples.

Persecution complex and hate

Stegen issued earnest warnings about the emerging ANC, which he saw as an extension of communism.²⁷ He and his followers did not want to let the ANC eliminate them as a soft target, and with their defence commando (G8) they would have defended themselves tooth and nail had they been attacked. Against this background it is not difficult to comprehend that Kwasizabantu started to work for Military Intelligence. Since the lifestyle of Kwasizabantu always was extremely secretive, cooperation with the secret service proved to be no problem at all. Mabaso observes concerning this period: "It was as if a spirit of militarism had entered into us."²⁸

Love and friendship

On coming in, outsiders experience a warm bath of friendliness and hospitality. Those who have an important social position or are well off, are welcomed with special VIP treatment. Stories of revival and great miracles serve to remove doubts. The result is that visitors allow themselves to be pampered. Despite the friendliness there is a tangible distance towards the outsiders. They are discreetly led up the garden path. This love is not unconditional, but depends on the outsiders' participation and results. Those who do not surrender are dropped, after which attention is directed towards new people. Friedel Stegen once stated that visitors are not convinced by the "revival message" but by the special way they are treated! It is abundantly clear that Kwasizabantu has two faces, one for the treatment of its adherents and another for outsiders, in which the technique of love-bombing is used.²⁹

²⁷ W. du Toit, *Gods Genade – die verhaal van Kwasizabantu*. In the last chapter of this book we find confirmation of this. In the period 1988 to 1993 Stegen regularly had anti-communist speakers give addresses at conferences; E. Stegen, talk at the day for the Underground Church at Veenendaal, Netherlands, 29 September 1990.

²⁸ B. Mabaso, interview 8 February 2010.

²⁹ Examples of love-bombing: (1) In answer to the question how you get a revival, Thofozi said: "Give your guests the best of your time, the best bed, the best food and

Security and personal crisis

Everyone is invited to come and see with their own eyes “the great work which God has done among the Zulus” and “to prove life in the light of the revival”. Anyone who is in a state of crisis or uncertainty will readily listen to the invitation. Through stress and reduced resistance the movement is able to get inside the head of the recruit and brainwash his or her mind. Instead of having to make all sorts of difficult choices, it is easier to put one’s fate in the hands of an all-knowing authority. By identifying with Stegen the recruit will feel safe and share in his greatness, being motivated by emotional distress, a lack of self-confidence and fear of existence in all its complexity.³⁰

Hyping up

At a Christmas conference in Metz (1998) Friedel Stegen performed a masterful feat of group dynamics. He called disciples to come up to the podium to commit themselves to leading a sexually pure life. They formed a fan club which ushered in the beginning of the Euro youth choir. The youth allowed themselves to be manipulated and became puppets and sycophants. From that moment on they had to live according to Friedel Stegen’s rules.³¹ At the international summer conferences Friedel Stegen made a similar appeal a number of times. However, these went a good deal further by having everyone stand and promise never to sin again – even though any rational person knows that it is absolutely impossible to live without sin.

the best room.” (2) In a special message in Klatbrunn, Switzerland around 2000, F.H. Stegen emphasised the best way for co-workers to pamper guests. (3) In the foreword to the Dutch edition of *Gods Genade* by W. du Toit, 1990, F. ter Velde writes: “In Kwasizabantu I really met ‘changed’ people. People without many pretensions but with an attitude and radiance of love, acceptance and self-giving warmth which was more pleasant than anything else on earth.”

³⁰ Cf. A. van der Braak, *Goeroes en Charisma*, pp. 39, 40.

³¹ www.ksb-alert.com. See the article “Bräutigam – unbekannt!” June 1999.

4. Control of information and environment

The cult want to get him to the point that he agrees to be placed voluntarily in a “prison”

What does God want? There is no one who knows this apart from Stegen's Zulu prophetesses. So no one can afford to miss the teaching of the brothers, even trained theologians who have joined Kwasizabantu. One of them said he had a higher regard for Stegen's wisdom than for his university education.³² His adherents admire his wisdom and insights and regard his pronouncements as the highest conceivable wisdom. Some members are influenced to such a degree that they “freely” sell their houses and sacrifice the proceeds, with the motto, “The brothers have given their lives for us”.

The way in which a cult monitors what someone sees, hears, reads, writes and experiences; even what someone says, needs to be monitored

Everyone who stays at Kwasizabantu is being censored, though they are unaware of it. Co-workers are informed upon concerning indicators which may suggest deviant opinions or incorrect perceptions of anything at all, because such an attitude is a sign that someone is on the point of turning into a traitor.³³ Anyone who harbours errant views is, in the eyes of Stegen and his companions, committing a crime rather than a mistake. A denial of the truth can only be the result of malice. Former members who deny “the truth” are not lacking in knowledge or insight and are not badly informed but are themselves bad. Members hate ex-members and those that go astray within the movement, because they hold on stubbornly to earlier notions.³⁴

³² According to a statement by Friedel Stegen after a tour, around 2000.

³³ Cf. A. Margalit, *Sektarisme als geesteshouding*, p. 30.

³⁴ Cf. A. Margalit, *Sektarisme als geesteshouding*, p. 28. A co-worker regularly read books about a revival in the past. When Friedel Stegen heard about this, he said judgmentally: “That revival is long since dead, but our revival is still alive.”

How do cults control information and the environment?

They try to keep the “poison” of the media, other religious groups or critical material from former members out of the reach of members. Most members live at the location for years without being aware of what is going on around them in society. They have lost their ability to form critical questions about what is happening at the location, because otherwise they will be punished. If someone is sent away, no one dares ask about the reason or the questioner may become the next victim. Members who consult the website ksb-alert.com about the desperate circumstances at Kwasizabantu are threatened that adversity and calamity will overcome them.

They frighten members that the devil will rob them of the “truth”. Stegen took the very first opportunity to travel to the Netherlands when critical information about him was being disseminated.³⁵ He warned that the devil could devastate the work in the Netherlands in the twinkling of an eye. At one meeting Stegen slated a number of opponents, in particular: Jens Nissen, Colin N. Peckham and Erwin Redinger. These people apparently had no spiritual understanding of revival and showed no spiritual fruits.

Members are obliged to attend daily or weekly sermons. The meetings at Kwasizabantu are more like indoctrination sessions than services. Anyone who does not regularly attend the services is not showing evidence of complete surrender and cannot grow spiritually. At the free conferences the same topics are hammered out for hours, so that the audience are exposed to brainwashing. Newcomers will never immediately get to hear any of the deepest secrets.³⁶ They are initiated into the doctrine step by step without any knowledge of its basis. The degree to which someone is initiated depends on his or her

³⁵ G.D., Analysis of Erlo Stegen’s view of those leaving Kwasizabantu, Urk 12 December 1999.

³⁶ Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sekten?* p. 86: In a sect trainees are initiated gradually, depending on initiation rites and the whim of the leader.

place on the hierarchical ladder. People of intelligence are generally given responsible posts to keep them out of mischief.³⁷

The co-workers no longer have time to think. They develop national centres and spend all their time on the activities of the movement, so that there is no time for any critical evaluation. If someone does not react to a request by Stegen he or she is not asked again and feels left out. To avoid this, followers immediately attend to everything they are asked to do.³⁸

Former members are regarded as apostates who should not be spoken to and who constitute a considerable danger. In relation to the exodus of members and co-workers in 1999 and 2000, Stegen warned his European followers “to keep what was entrusted to them”, because “some had gone astray”.³⁹ They were viewed as people who were “in love with this present world”, like Demas who left Paul.⁴⁰

Stegen gives his followers the task of purging themselves of deserters and avoiding them. Only those who are “obedient to God” will be a “usable vessel”.⁴¹ By this he means: Anyone who follows me slavishly is suitable for my organisation. Anyone who aligns himself with the deserters will himself be evicted too.

5. Control over the use of language

A special vocabulary

Kwasizabantu has a vocabulary of its own, some words consisting of familiar Christian terms, but with different content. To newcomers

³⁷ Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sektten?* p. 72.

³⁸ Cf. A. Storr, *Reuzen op lemen voeten*, p. 67. The followers of Rajneesh had working weeks of 100 hours or more and so had little time for intellectual or artistic activities.

³⁹ E. Stegen, letter to European co-workers, 21 June 2000; E. Stegen, meeting at Urk, 12 December 1999.

⁴⁰ 2 Timothy 4.10.

⁴¹ E. Stegen, *Contact met God*, brochure 1989, p. II.

the terms sound familiar, but in due course they will learn the real meaning. By making this vocabulary their own, in reality people learn not to think for themselves but to adopt Stegen's clichés. By such means Stegen is able to strengthen his hold over his followers.

New content for words

Despite its redefinition of Christian terms Kwasizabantu aims to create the appearance that its teachings are confirmed by the Bible. This is a misuse of the Bible. And by singing well-known spiritual songs Kwasizabantu leads its members to believe that they are part of the universal Christian church. Any member who has learned to reinterpret familiar terms, sentences and words will unconsciously become a slave of the movement. The following clichés are dealt with.

1. I have confessed all my sins: this is the highest level of spiritual life. "Being born again is not important, the main thing is that God is for us."⁴²
2. Is there anything between God and you? There can be no sin between God and man.
3. Confession of sins: sins need to be confessed in detail to a counsellor.
4. Asking for prayer: a counsellor deals with the believer's future.⁴³
5. Purifying one's life: all sins from the past need to be confessed in detail to a counsellor.

⁴² Pronouncement by F.H. Stegen quoted in the [www.ksb-alert.com guestbook](http://www.ksb-alert.com/guestbook) (discontinued), 18 February 2011: When a visitor asked him what he thought of being born again, his answer was: "Being born again is not important, the main thing is that God is for us." H. Bartels according to E. Redinger's testimony: I asked my nephew of Kwasizabantu whether he was born again. The answer was: "I don't know what you mean, but I have confessed all my sins."

⁴³ Note that the believer does not go direct to God, but through a mediator.

6. The brothers have given their lives for us: that is to say, Stegen and his brother Friedel have sacrificed everything for us. So it would be unjust not to do what they ask of us.⁴⁴
7. The pure way (also called “the high standard”): these are behavioural limitations which cannot stand the test of Scripture.
8. As soon as Stegen notices that there is a suggestion of criticism among the members and co-workers he calls them all together and asks: “Who is on the Lord’s side?”
9. Everyone is expected to test his life in “the light of the revival”: this means testing by the unwritten rules of Kwasizabantu.
10. We stick to what “God has shown us”: Stegen uses this cliché to demand submission and obedience from his followers.

6. Control of norms

Commandments and prohibitions

Since Stegen claims divine authority within the belief system he has created, he is the one who sets the restrictions, regulations and taboos, generally on the basis of revelations. He has brought into being a whole variety of limitations of behaviour, such as: no one may miss a meeting, say they are sick, feel tired or show anger. For women this means a prohibition of jewellery and make-up, and the skirt became a religious symbol: only long skirts or dresses (without a split) were permitted.⁴⁵ There is no handwritten document for these unwritten rules of living, which amount to a code of group behaviour, unlike

⁴⁴ G. Grau, “It was a declaration of war against God”, 29 January 1999: I should never have let things go so far that my spiritual father, uncle Friedel, would be treated so shamefully. It is not a matter of a person, but a man of God, who has surrendered his life for us Germans and continues to do so. *Comment:* this is close to blasphemy because the Lord Jesus Christ is the Only One who gave his life for us.

⁴⁵ G.D., article concerning habits and customs, 13 January 2000.

Isaiah Shembe's Nazareth Baptist Church, which already in its early years used a book with the rules of *Ekuphakameni*.⁴⁶

Holy and unholy

Stegen is preoccupied with the idea of the holy and is a great champion of purity.⁴⁷ The doctrine of absolute holiness and purity makes members feel ethically superior to other Christians. The moral pressure applied through the claim to purity and holiness is so great that serious transgressions are kept quiet, as if they had not happened.⁴⁸ But because Stegen is afraid that members and outsiders will find out about them, he hushes up these questions in the secret of the confessional instead of reporting the perpetrators to the authorities.

Young women who were molested by a counsellor were forced by Stegen to keep quiet. They were not even allowed to tell their parents. When the counsellor committed sexual acts with the same victims a number of years later, once again Stegen told them to stay quiet. It is easy to understand how badly traumatised these young women are.⁴⁹ There was even a serious case of sexual assault in which the victim was murdered.⁵⁰

Ambivalence

It is apparent that Stegen's policy of keeping irregularities secret has ultimately caused him nothing but problems. In the course of the

⁴⁶ E. Gunner, 1987, p. 206: early on, Lazarus Maphumulo wrote the *Incwadi yemithetho yasEkuphakameni*.

⁴⁷ Cf. A. Margalit, *Sektarisme als geesteshouding*, pp. 24, 25.

⁴⁸ Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sekten?* p. 74: This occurs at the expense of the truth, which is that from a Reformed point of view a person is "sinner and justified" at the same time.

⁴⁹ M. Kunene had als zielzorger een relatie met twee jonge blanke vrouwen. Natal Witness 31-01-2000: *Escape from the mission of fear*; Sunday Tribune 06-02-2000: *Mission of Malice*; Anoniem getuigenis voor de commissie van de *Evangeliese Alliansie* (23-04-2000).

⁵⁰ *Natal Witness*, 12 August 2003: "Man strangled victim after sex".

years hundreds of co-workers and perhaps even thousands of members and sympathisers have turned away from him. Despite first believing Stegen and giving him their heart, they developed an ambivalent attitude because of the many conflicts with which they were afflicted.

K.H. Wicker says of this: “If we noticed wrong developments, saw faults or were in a position to determine that the teaching and practice of Kwasizabantu militated against God’s Word, we immediately set such thoughts aside. We did not want to correct or criticise. In these situations we always had the impression that we were still not as pleasing to God as the Kwasizabantu brothers. We did not even dare to think or act differently from the people of Kwasizabantu, because our understanding was that this was sinful.”⁵¹

Ex-members can be caught in two minds for years. Sometimes they yearn for the comradeship of the community they used to enjoy, even though at the same time they know deep down how badly they have been let down. They go through a long process of working things through before they are fully free.⁵² Someone who left Kwasizabantu almost 20 years ago built a new life for himself and became a successful businessman. During a conversation he turned out to be incapable of saying anything negative at all to the detriment of Stegen and Kwasizabantu, despite having been shamefully treated. He was even put under pressure to divorce his wife.⁵³

⁵¹ K.H. Wicker, “Statement regarding my separation from KSB”, 20 February 2000. Wicker was deputy chairman of the German CFT (Christians for Truth) department.

⁵² This point emerged from interviews with ex-members who wish to remain anonymous.

⁵³ Anonymous; the name is known to the author.

7. Control over history

Personal history

Those who become members of Kwasizabantu run the risk of losing their identity; instead of choosing their own way they meekly carry out the new doctrine of salvation.⁵⁴ They are cut off from their history, from that of their families, but also from their culture, their language, from nature around them and their feelings.⁵⁵ Recruits are thus robbed of an essential part of their identity.⁵⁶ As a reward for their cooperation Stegen takes co-workers with him on tours and promises them security for the hereafter if they remain loyal.

The history of the movement

In the previous chapters we showed that justice is not done to historical reality in Kwasizabantu's own historiography. There is no "objective" historical reality, because everything is subject to what Stegen himself regards as the truth. His followers have access only to knowledge he permits them to have. Stegen keeps the background facts hidden from them. In his historical description of the "revival" Stegen likes to compare himself with the early church.⁵⁷ The huge numbers of people mentioned in the publications of Kwasizabantu are almost equivalent to those on the Day of Pentecost.⁵⁸ It is clear

⁵⁴ Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sekten?* p. 60.

⁵⁵ A former member tells how after being a member of Kwasizabantu for years he had to rediscover his history, revive ties with his family (because there were no other contacts), discover his culture and – most importantly – develop his emotional life afresh.

⁵⁶ Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sekten?*, p. 62.

⁵⁷ See ch. 1 on Stegen's publicity campaign.

⁵⁸ See ch. 5, on numbers at the beginning and checks on the number of people attending in South Africa.

that Stegen was indulging in revisionism, rewriting the history of Kwasizabantu.⁵⁹

Prophecy

Stegen took his lead from his Zulu prophetesses not only on everyday matters but also on political and financial topics. In March 1989 Josiphina Nsibande received a “message from God” in relation to the first elections in Namibia. Like the boy David, Kwasizabantu would tackle the Swapo freedom fighters, the all-powerful Goliath, by bringing them the gospel and so defeating them politically. In this action Colonel T. Vermaak was also involved. The first choir, which comprises the spiritual elite of Kwasizabantu, even found itself in the firing line in this action. After this victory the Kwasizabantu team would spread across the whole world to preach the gospel. But things turned out differently: Swapo won the elections and Kwasizabantu could only look on.

The Zulu prophetesses doubtless also played a large part in the Klipdam diamond mine at Kimberly. Friedel Stegen, who led this project, called upon the movement’s members to invest in “God’s kingdom”. In the end the mine did not get going, but it turned out that all the money had gone missing without Friedel Stegen’s knowledge.⁶⁰ The leaders then decided to plant 150 hectares of peach trees in this location, once again with disastrous consequences: for miles around not a drop of water was available. Stegen committed stupid mistakes by listening to the Zulu prophetesses and squandered large sums of money.⁶¹ This stands in stark contrast to what the leaders lay upon their members: anyone who ever took anything, even just a

⁵⁹ Historical revisionism relates to the phenomenon in which affairs of the past are “revised”. See ch. 2 n. 49.

⁶⁰ Several millions were involved; *Natal Witness*, 5 February 2000; J. N., “Stegen zahlt ohne Anerkennung einer Rechtspflicht”, 22 July 2010.

⁶¹ U. Bonginkosi, interview 2 January 2009: When the first 45 hectares had been planted, it turned out that the local water rights had been sold, and the young trees withered for lack of water. The remaining trees were never planted. Stegen was asked

small item, had to give it back or pay it back. It makes no difference how long ago it was or how far away.

8. Control of God

God's organisation

The conviction and passion with which Stegen proclaims his message is responsible in large measure for his influence on other people. He ascribes divine authority to himself, his teaching and his tasks, and speaks like a little pope *ex cathedra*. He and his adherents see Kwasizabantu as God's movement. In fact things are the other way round: Stegen has "dominion" over God and uses Him as a stamp of approval on everything that his movement is and everything he conceives.

God's channel of communication

When the "Spirit of God" came down in Mapumulo, Stegen discovered that he could get Magasa to go into a trance. He thought that through her he could go straight to God. Stegen saw the trances as the breakthrough to revival, receiving immediate answers to all his questions, so that he was always perfectly informed as to the will of God.⁶² Hence everyone had to listen to him, regardless of what God's Word says. This gift working through Magasa had been given him personally by God so that he would not go astray.⁶³

beforehand by a co-worker how water would be provided. his answer was: "If God says it will work, then it is so!"

⁶² O. Mbango, testimony 2001; E. Redinger, testimony points 33, 34, 35; E. Redinger, interview 14 July 2006.

⁶³ E. Redinger, interview 14 July 2006; testimony points 33, 34, 35.

9. Exercising “control” over redemption

Redemption by membership

The believer must be reconciled to God through the hierarchical institute of Kwasizabantu, because God has entrusted it with His authority to forgive. Redemption and a restored relationship between the believer and God depends on this. Stegen has convinced his followers they can receive forgiveness by confessing sins to a counsellor. He ascribes authority to forgive to himself and thinks that he can prevent those who have left him from receiving God’s grace (see Chapter 8).

Redemption through works

From a spiritual point of view members try by repetition to gain the favour of the counsellor and the favour of God to be sure that they are still on the right path. This conviction gives rise to works-righteousness. But works-righteousness does not bring assurance of faith because it is not based on the sacrifice of Christ. Working for Kwasizabantu is subtly changed into the lie that one is working for God.

Redemption through confession of sins

Everyone is called upon not to leave the gathering if there is still a single unconfessed sin, because the time of grace will soon be over. The consequence is that believers feel guilty and are constantly tracking down and confessing their sins. Each year they travel long distances to attend services and conferences held by Stegen so as to “get right with God” again (see ch. 8). Stegen thinks a general prayer for forgiveness is “too cheap” and is only satisfied with a continual detailed confession of sins by his followers.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The rejection of the *sola gratia* principle is directly opposed to the biblical teaching on grace.

10. Exercise of “control” over the interpretation of the Bible

Non-biblical revelation

Stegen has not followed any academic study of theology and is not familiar with methods of scripture interpretation. Through the revival in 1966 he has been given “new light” on the interpretation of biblical truths. Stegen makes the Bible echo his dogma by means of a selective use of Bible texts. The interpretation of supernatural dreams, visions and prophecies⁶⁵ is not tied to the Bible, because God manifests himself as He wills, according to Stegen.⁶⁶ The Bible, however, says that God watches over His Word to perform it.⁶⁷ The co-workers are expected only to carry out Stegen’s ideas. They do not need any Bible school training for this, because “practice is the best schoolmaster”.⁶⁸

Non-biblical explanations

That Kwasizabantu does not need Bible school training for the education of its co-workers, means that Stegen does not want any independent co-workers who let the Bible speak to them individually. It is an open acknowledgment that anyone who lets the Bible speak will arrive at the teachings of the Christian faith. The Bible is read through the spectacles of Kwasizabantu, and so sermons generally end with the same application, regardless of the chosen text.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ E. Redinger, *comments on the two books of Kwasizabantu*, 9 November 2001: Everyone had to write down his or her dreams and hand them to Stegen so that he could see if they came true.

⁶⁶ E. Redinger, interview 14 July 2006; E. Redinger, “*Reflections on the Early Years of Ksb*”, point 4, 2000: According to Stegen God is not tied to the Bible.

⁶⁷ Jeremiah 1:12.

⁶⁸ Friedel Stegen, after-lunch conversation concerning Koos Greeff during a conference in Metz in July 1998.

⁶⁹ The subject is relationships in the family: between husband and wife, parents and children, boys and girls, sexuality, and alcohol dependency.

Non-biblical quotations

Stegen acts as if the Bible has supreme authority. He does not shy away from giving the annual preachers' conference the title of "As the Scripture says". Despite having had no theological training, he likes to be called "reverend" or "minister".⁷⁰ For him the Bible is not the only arbiter in a dispute; the supreme authority lies with himself and his Zulu prophetesses. What they saw and interpret is presented as the Word of God. The fact that one should obey Christ rather than men is subtly replaced by the lie that one should obey the leaders of Kwasizabantu. Quotations from the Bible serve only as camouflage for Stegen's own brand of religion.

11. Exercise of "control" over doctrines

Inviolable doctrines

The sacred doctrines of Kwasizabantu can only be accepted or rejected and are unshakable.⁷¹ Stegen's interpretation of the Bible alone is the truth.⁷² Any attempt to change viewpoint is seen as trampling on the sacred doctrine of the movement. Stegen dismisses any form of criticism and thinks that everything that is not unconditional applause is equivalent to antagonism.⁷³ Stegen is prepared in certain circumstances to adapt the "truth", because he believes that the end justifies the means. He thinks that in so doing he is protecting "God's work" or is able to "save" people.⁷⁴ And so he gives his co-workers the task of telling everyone that the revival is still growing and that more and more people are coming to the location, even if this is categori-

⁷⁰ *Visie*, weekly magazine of the Evangelische Omroep in the Netherlands, 7 June 1987 and 10 September 1989.

⁷¹ Cf. A. Margalit, *Sektarisme als geesteshouding*, p. 30.

⁷² P. Coetzee, email 21 August 2010: Anyone who does not believe this will go to hell.

⁷³ E. Stegen, Press statement from Kwasizabantu, 9 February 2000.

⁷⁴ T. Dahl, Personal addendum supporting the document "Urgent Appeal to the Leadership of Kwasizabantu Mission", 19 February 2000.

cally not the case.⁷⁵ There is no biblical or theological legitimacy for this practice. Quite the contrary: the Bible rejects such practices.

Scientific doctrines

By inviting guest speakers with theological training for the preachers' conferences, the impression is created that the teaching of Kwasizabantu supports their academically responsible viewpoints.⁷⁶ Kwasizabantu is able time and again to find people who are not *au fait* with its situation and who find it an honour to speak in front of such a large audience. Stegen thereby creates the impression that he is working together with the "Body of Christ". The guest speakers have only an instrumental value to the extent that their sympathy is good for the community. Stegen is misleading his followers and the public when he declares that he needs "the wisdom of God's people" for the edification of his followers.⁷⁷ If Stegen means what he says, why then was he unwilling to cooperate with the commission of the Evangelical Alliance, which wanted to apply the legal principle of "listening to both sides"?

Christian teachings

In the last decades of the 20th century reputable theologians undertook research into Kwasizabantu. They published articles in scholarly

⁷⁵ Testimonies to the Commission of the Evangelical Alliance, 23 June 2000. E. Stegen, meeting at Urk 12 December 1999: during this meeting Stegen did the same thing in claiming that there had never been so many people coming to Kwasizabantu and coming to faith as at that very moment. The revival was only increasing in strength. The term for such a practice in Islam is *taqiya*, by which in order to reach the objective it is permitted to lie ("taqiya". *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2008 Ultimate Reference Suite*, 2008).

⁷⁶ Each year preachers, evangelists and leaders of Christian organisations come together for a three-day conference.

⁷⁷ Press statement by E.H. Stegen, 12 February 2000: Stegen further states the following: "Church leaders, politicians and laity who have visited our community have repeatedly expressed their appreciation for the racial and cultural harmony at our location." Some once called it a "model for the new South Africa".

journals which praised Kwasizabantu. The leaders' detachment from worldly existence was generally viewed as evidence of their genuineness.⁷⁸ What is certain is that none of the researchers managed to track down Stegen's inspiration from the *Jenseits*. Around 2000 Kwasizabantu itself published a confessional document in which it did everything it could to present itself as a part of the classical evangelical movement.⁷⁹ This document is designed to pull the wool over the eyes of the outside world and stands in marked contrast to the unwritten rules of life at Kwasizabantu. The fundamental biblical principles are misinterpreted by Kwasizabantu, even though the pretence is made that their teachings are perfectly in accord with the Bible.⁸⁰

The commission of the Evangelical Alliance concludes its report by saying it has no other choice than to declare that a serious break has taken place with the biblical principles, such as those represented in Matthew 18:17. As the leaders refuse to be reproached, their methods and doctrines are widely rejected in church circles. However, the commission is unwilling to pronounce a final verdict.⁸¹

12. Exercise of “control” over membership

Recruitment

Stegen wants “others to share in what God has done for the Zulus”. For this purpose he conducts tours, organises conferences, publishes books and makes use of the media. When on tour, the practice is to adjust to the local church views. Serious Christians of different

⁷⁸ Cf. A. van der Braak, *Goeroes en Charisma*, p. 68.

⁷⁹ A confessional document appeared on the internet around 2000. See Appendix 2, pp. 225, 226.

⁸⁰ Cf. W.R. Martin, *The New Cults*, p. 16.

⁸¹ Commission of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, *Report concerning Kwasizabantu Mission*, point 5, 23 June 2000: If the leaders come to self-examination and repentance, and reform their movement, this can bring God's forgiveness and restore the trust of the Christian community.

backgrounds who had been seeking revival for years felt attracted to Kwasizabantu⁸² and walked into the net of what was no revival at all.

Intelligent and talented people are selected for the better positions, and are recruited when they find themselves at a low emotional ebb. They can in turn become good “salespeople” for Kwasizabantu. Later they learn to sell its best side with a smile and to show how Kwasizabantu has made this world “a better place”.⁸³

Group maintenance

For the sake of group maintenance in Kwasizabantu, family and friends who show no interest in becoming members, are kept at a distance as far as possible – although if the family is well off and an inheritance is in the offing, exceptions can be made. In addition, action is immediately taken in cases where members do not do what the leadership expects of them.

Stegen gives his followers the job of purging themselves of deserters and avoiding them. Only someone who is “obedient to God” can be a “usable vessel”. By this he means: Anyone who follows me slavishly is suitable for my organisation. Anyone who sides with the deserters will himself be thrown out.

No freedom to leave

Each co-worker is free to leave whenever he wants, according to Stegen,⁸⁴ but in practice things are much more difficult than that. It is almost impossible to leave Kwasizabantu amicably. Stegen’s love is soon over if someone decides to resign. People who have worked for years for pocket-money can leave without a penny. Sometimes fami-

⁸² Cf. E. Stegen, *Beproef jezelf – de weg tot opwekking*, 2006, p. 2: Kwasizabantu is not engaged in church-planting, but calls upon people to witness in their own church. The question then is: Why did Kwasizabantu then found communities of its own?

⁸³ Two sons of the Mout family, namely W. Mout Jr. and J.W.T. Mout, both of whom are trained ministers, work for Kwasizabantu. Their parents have a location for Kwasizabantu in Well with the name “De Jacobsbron” (Jacob’s Well).

⁸⁴ W. du Toit, *God se Genade*, pp. 70, 71.

lies fall apart and divorces can occur as a result.⁸⁵ Parents banish their children as soon as they develop a mind of their own.⁸⁶ Deserters are threatened with the wrath of God. They can expect only adversity, and disaster will overcome them. Gossip is spread about them saying how badly things are going for them. They are intimidated to such an extent that even years later they still find themselves in the grip of fear.⁸⁷ Some overcame their fear and told the world of their experiences. Others seeking publicity were intimidated with threatening letters from Stegen's lawyers.⁸⁸

Conclusion

In order to be sure of keeping a firm hold on its members, Kwasizabantu displays all twelve of the characteristics of a Western cult listed in ch. 9 above. From everything discussed in that chapter it is clear that they can rightly be characterised as a morally and socially “boundary-crossing” cult. Partly because a sect has no prophetic leader and the supernatural inspiration of Stegen is beyond doubt, Kwasizabantu can be labeled a cult rather than a sect.

The elitist mentality of the movement has an enormous influence on the behaviour of the leadership and the members and finds expression in fanaticism and fundamentalism.

⁸⁵ See ch. 2 concerning Mabizela and Qinqi. For Kobus du Preez see ch. 4.

⁸⁶ Among those who have left in recent years are children of S. Schneider (advocate), K. Olsen (spokesperson for Stegen), A. van Eeden (Doctors for Life) and P. Rice (Radio Khwezi). Some of them returned in remorse and others say they “can't believe in anything any more”. Van Eeden (28 July 2013): “When our children make friends with the world, we must turn our backs on them, even though they are our closest relatives.”

⁸⁷ Most ex-members did not grant an interview. Some were prepared to tell their story on condition that no use would be made of it (one person did not dare to speak out even after 15 years).

⁸⁸ Letter from Stegen's lawyer known to the author.

CHAPTER 11

Personal Experiences

Personal experiences

In 1988 I organised the first conference for Kwasizabantu in the Netherlands and in 2002 I laid down my functions. For more than 14 years I was leader of the Dutch branch of Kwasizabantu. My life story is entwined with pain and heartache, about which I find it difficult to speak with complete openness. However, partly with the encouragement of former members, I came to see it as a duty to conduct this study and publish it. The perpetrator-victim role sometimes made this a complex task. But who could have more insight into the movement than someone who was so closely involved with it for many years? To keep quiet can make a person guilty and complicit.

Around 1999 the truth caught up with Stegen when the secular press managed to get hold of information from former members, information that was so disgraceful and degrading that barely anyone could believe it. Up to that point Stegen had been able to keep things hidden, both from his own movement and from the outside world. And victims were not quick to reveal their secrets because they were intimidated by Stegen. On the other hand, for them too it was a particularly sensitive matter of reputation. Honesty forbids me to say that I (and many others) acted in ignorance and was completely out of the picture in relation to irregularities. They were known only to the “inner circle” and the victims, and they were as silent as the grave. In addition, Kwasizabantu’s internal communication is shrouded in mystery.

Slander and Scandal-mongering?

Is it acceptable to draw attention to the shortcomings of a person or an organisation? Some people refuse to do this on the basis of the statement in James: “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.”¹ On the other hand John says one should not believe every spirit but to test whether a spirit is from God.² When the same rumours keep on cropping up, then an investigation is in order.

The apostle Paul writes to the Thessalonians that his warnings do not come from deceit or impure motives but because God has entrusted him with the gospel.³ In his letter to the Romans he says one should keep an eye on people who deviate from the teaching and so cause dissensions and offences. He even says one should avoid them.⁴ He urges the Ephesians not to participate in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead to expose them.⁵ For this purpose God has given the gift of discernment of what is of the Spirit and what is not.⁶ If our motives are pure and we have no peripheral agenda, we can test in the light of the Bible whether there are deviations, so that we ourselves remain in tune with sound teaching.

Although this case study involves my coming to terms with my past, the more important thing is defence of the Word of God. The gospel of Christ calls for acknowledgment of guilt and conversion to believe in the triune God – to such an extent, indeed, that the core

¹ James 4:11.

² 1 John 4:1.

³ 1 Thessalonians 2:3.

⁴ Romans 16:17.

⁵ Ephesians 5:11.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:10.

of resistance to grace is exposed and a person is placed before Christ, where there is no escaping the fact that he is in the wrong.⁷

How I came to be with Kwasizabantu

In the 1980s the Netherlands was hit by a recession which brought a great deal of uncertainty with it. There was widespread unemployment and it was a difficult time. I constantly tried to stay ahead of the problems by taking decisions that were beyond my capacities. My health suffered, and as a result I went in search of the strength needed to attain my objectives. Since I had a Christian faith, I thought I could find this in the charismatic movement. In the end nothing worked and I suffered a spiritual and physical collapse. At this time I read the book *God among the Zulus*, the story of a revival of the Christian faith in “a mission situation”. It was incredible: thousands of heathen people had been converted, diviners were coming to faith and there was even someone who had been raised from the dead. In 1985 I visited Stegen for the first time in Aurich, Germany. At that moment I had no way of knowing what the ultimate consequences would be.

When I visited Kwasizabantu for the first time in South Africa, I was impressed by the hospitality and especially the friendliness. Whites and blacks lived together in peace and were building a new future. Then there were the joyful songs, the testimonies of Zulus who had been saved from their heathenism, and of course not forgetting the wonderful scenery. Critical comments about the revival that I heard I dismissed out of hand. I had no inkling of what was going on behind the scenes. I had no idea, of course, that I was joining a cult.

As long as one has a firm belief in a leader, all one's rational judgment disappears. Devoted followers are as deaf to reasoned arguments as people who are head over heels in love. They are content with the

⁷ C.J. Haak, citing J.H. Bavinck, in *Gereformeerde missiologie*, 2005, p. 50.

myth, the idealized image. They want the myth, and information that conflicts with the myth is simply ignored.⁸

Kwasizabantu in the Netherlands

Deeply impressed, in 1988 I began public relations on behalf of the “revival”. The Netherlands at that time was open to the idea of revival, and I was able to capitalise neatly on that. Each year tours and conferences were organised which were attended by hundreds of people. On my initiative books and brochures were published. As many as 10,000 copies were printed of one title, *Opwekking begint bij jezelf* (Revival starts with you).⁹ About 25 years after the appearance of these publications I have to confess that I allowed myself to be led up the garden path, and I would like to apologise publicly for this. For this reason it is my responsibility to write this book and send it out into the world.

In due course it became clear to me that some of the leaders were not leading upright lives. Since Stegen was the man who had been “used of God” and I knew him only from a distance, for me he remained the unimpeachable man of God. Despite doubts I persevered and was able to gain a position in the movement. Because of growth a need arose for a national conference centre. The costs of this centre had to be borne by the Dutch. The brothers travelled frequently to Europe to help us on spiritually and had “given their lives for us” – so should we not be willing to do something in return, for example by selling our possessions? And so we sold our house and moved into “De Cederborg” in Middelstum, in the province of Groningen.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. A. van der Braak, *Goeroes en Charisma*, p. 50.

⁹ The other titles are: *Opwekking onder de Zoeloes* (Revival among the Zulus); *Gods genade onder de Zoeloes* (God's grace among the Zulus), and a reprint of *God onder de Zoeloes* (God among the Zulus); as well as innumerable brochures and recordings.

¹⁰ The “De Cederborg” centre was bought for barely € 350,000. After completion of the alterations the new-build value including contents was estimated by the Troostwijk office at € 5,500,000.

My resignation

In 1999 it became clear to me that I did not want to go on, and because of the lack of uprightness and sincerity of the leaders I resigned. However, I allowed myself to be persuaded to stay, remaining for the sake of “De Cederborg”. I had responsibility for its everyday management, maintained contacts with authorities and directed the rebuilding work. After its completion a time came to take a rest, as the years before had also been hectic. Although I was in need of some relaxation, it was denied me. In reaction I laid down tools, but did not resign my membership. When the board deleted my name from the register of trustees without my knowledge, our paths separated definitively.

Health problems

Driven by inner strength, I did not allow myself to lose my self-esteem and persevered. After years of indoctrination I still had enough “I-strength” to take the difficult path of separation.¹¹ I had to leave my flat in “De Cederborg”, lost my “job” and the community to which I had belonged. It was a hugely difficult thing to do.

The consequence of the years of high-pressure work was that I gradually became aware of a threatening loss of my own sensitivities. This meant that my body’s signals were no longer being registered and my body was driven with the help of the will, at the very moment when weakness and exhaustion were developing.¹² As a result of this period, and of my resignation which followed, I developed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, for which I received effective help. It turned out later that I was not alone: many former adherents suffered similar complaints.

¹¹ The term “I-strength” is the counterpart to personality loss in sects. For “I-strength” in the Bible see G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sekten?* pp. 231-233. An article on this in the secular realm by S. Joos appeared in *Tijdschrift voor psychiatrie* 26, 1984.

¹² Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, *Warum faszinieren Sekten?*, p. 61. Many members and ex-members suffer from exhaustion because they are in a constant state of agitation as they have to meet one deadline after another.

Return to society

It was a painful experience for me to discover after many years, having devoted all my time and energy to a false religion, that I was afterwards treated coldly and with reserve by my “friends”. Like many others, after difficult conflicts I left in a traumatic manner. I felt deceived and betrayed. I had been promised paradise, I had given my heart, but in the end Stegen turned out to have no interest in my wellbeing.¹³

To find a new circle is almost a pipe-dream. For years someone heard that the “revival” was the perfect body of Christ on earth. Now that he has left Kwasizabantu, he roves about in search of the perfect church which he will never find. Moreover he lives with the fear of becoming enslaved once again and that the church will gain control of his life as was once the case with the cult. Even if someone has turned their back on a movement such as this, he is far from free of the enslaving influence on his thinking. He has to go through a painful process of habit-breaking before he is truly free.

In conclusion

The Kwasizabantu revival has left a trail of destruction and devastation in its wake: broken human beings, divorces, spiritual and physical abuse, beatings, financial disasters, and so on. In view of the deep suffering Stegen has caused for decades, and which I personally have been through, it is clear that he lacks awareness of humanity towards others, the cause of which must be sought in a dysfunctional conscience and a lack of awareness of guilt feelings.¹⁴ Despite all the stories of abuse and manipulation, I am the one who eventually left Stegen. He himself is forced to continue to believe in the self-created

¹³ Cf. A. van der Braak, *Goeroes en Charisma*, p. 62.

¹⁴ Heinz Kohut, a psychoanalyst, wrote in the 1970s about a charismatic type of patient. During therapy the root of the patient’s disorder came to light: he had almost no conscience and had no sense of guilt (A. van der Braak, *Goeroes en Charisma*, p. 64).

myth of his revival. Stegen is anything but a great man: he is a great actor playing the part of a great man.

It never occurred to me that I had joined a cult. In the period in which I was a member I did not realise this, and it was not until quite some time after I had left the movement that I did so. In the course of conversation with an expert I felt attacked when he asked me if I realised that I had been a member of a cult. Gradually it dawned on me what I had given myself to, and gradually I came to the conclusion that a person can be dragged towards evil in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are more than enough examples of this in church history!

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List of Abbreviations

AEB	Afrika Evangeliese Bond
AK	Anglican Church
AIC	African Independent Church
ANC	African National Congress
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CFT	Christians for Truth
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
ELM	Evangelisch Lutherisches Missionswerk in Niedersachsen
Ev.-luth. kerk	Evangelical-Lutheran Church
Ksb or KSB	Kwasizabantu
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
NG kerk	Dutch Reformed Church
RK kerk	Rooms Katholieke kerk (Roman Catholic Church)
Stegen, the family	relatives of Erlo and Friedel Stegen
the Stegens	the brothers Erlo and Friedel Stegen
Stegen	Erlo Stegen
Stegen E.	Erlo Stegen
Stegen F.H.	Friedel Stegen
Stegen B.	Bodo Stegen (no more connected with Ksb)
Stegen M.	Manfred Stegen (idem)
Stegen D.	Dieter Stegen
UDF	United Democratic Front (vakbond)
ZCC	Zion Christian Church

Figures

Figures

General map of South Africa

Map of Kwazulu-Natal

Influences of Zulu Religion on Ksb

APPENDIX 1

List of Members of the Claridge Congregation

This membership list of the congregation of Claridge near Pietermaritzburg has been compiled by E. Redinger and is approximate. The first two groups were fully informed about the prophetic activities of Stegen and Magasa.

The first group to leave Claridge around 1967

Anton and Martha Engelbrecht (expelled)
Fanuël Ntsimbande and Peggy Porrill (committed suicide)
Herman and Ge Holt
Owen and Ivonne Marr
Derryck and Annette Stone
Abraham and Brunhilde Williams
Lex and Sheila Buchanan
Heinz and Stella Bartels
Ron and Flo Peckham
Ivan and Doris Peckham (parents of Colin N. Peckham)
Gerhard and Ilse Engelbrecht
Peter and Bernhard Rudert
Georg and Annie Duvel
Erwin and Gertrud Redinger
Erwin and Lily Freese
Wilfried and Ruth Freese
Nathanaël and Beauty Ximba
Obed and Nellie Mbambo
Ernst and Erna Freese
Freddy and Martha Redinger

Egon and Ilse Redinger
Roy and Kay Cope
Stan and Joy Cope
Nandor and Gerda Prigge
Friedchen and Jes Köhne
Walter and Isolde Klingenberg
Gabrielle Ashenheim, Leni Witthöft
Fritz and Mareile Wortman
Gertrud and Ruth Düvel
Günther and Lydia Stegen (parents of Edith Newlands)
Hubert and Hettie Dollenberg (parents-in-law of Derryck Stone)
Gustav and Gustchen Reimer
Boy and Constance Masango
Mackie, her sister Krissie and daughter
Beryl Brendon
Eckhard and Vera Dedekind
Justin and Dorianne Michel (reason for leaving unclear)
Heinz Werner and Vera Dedekind
Gerhard and Evelyn Freese
Harald Fölsch
Noël and Colleen Lindsay
Jan and Meril Beck
Herold and Sybill Dahl
Mathilde Baum, Heinz and Faith Baum

The second group to leave Claridge

Ludwig and Bertha Bartels
Rolf and Veronica Engelbrecht
Lorenz and Waltraut Freese
Walter and Barbara Frensel
Enid Bartels and Karin Witthöft
Horst and Pat Witthöfttels

The third group to leave Kwasizabantu (1993-1994)

These people were originally members of Claridge¹

Jacobus Willem and Estel Greeff

Manfred and Evelyn Stegen

Irmgard Stegen-Witthöft

Bodo and Dalene Stegen

Von and Irmgard van der Linde

Trevor and Naomi Dahl (1996)

Barney and Florence Mabaso, with their congregation of 300 members (2000)

Bill and Shirley Larkan (2000)

**Original Claridge members who are still members of
Kwasizabantu**

Friedel and Rita Stegen

Heino and Alida Stegen

Martin and Nora Stegen

Jo and Edith Newlands

Waldemar Engelbrecht (his wife Gwen died)

Bruno and Molly Engelbrecht

Ernst Erich and Jenny Engelbrecht

Werner and Senta Engelbrecht

Edmund and Judy Witthöft

Hogart and Inge Joosten

Lionel and Ursula Muller

Gudrun Redecker

Erwin Schröder (his wife Ruth Engelbrecht distanced herself)

Peter Dahl and his wife

¹ With the exception of J.W. Greeff

APPENDIX 2

Kwasizabantu's Statement of Faith

Kwasizabantu believes in:

1. The Holy Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testament, is the inspired Word of God, without error in the original text, is the full revelation of God's will for our salvation and is the Divine and ultimate authority for the whole of Christian faith and life.
2. There is One, and only One true God: He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things; almighty, omniscient, independent in His existence, unchanging, spirit, unfathomable, eternal, sovereign and ruler of the universe, infinitely perfect in love, goodness, holiness and righteousness.
3. In the one Being or Existence of God there are three distinct but equal persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
4. In the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus Christ. These two distinct natures, fully God and fully man, are inseparably united in the one Person.
5. In the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, His sinless life, His death on the cross for our sins, His burial, His bodily resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven. He sits at the right hand of God. He is our Highpriest, Advocate, Redeemer and Lord. His visible and physical return.
6. In the full divinity and full personhood of the Holy Spirit and His work in regeneration and sanctification and in His work in the unification of His Church.
7. That men are created in God's image in order to glorify God and to live in communion with Him. We are, however, in rebellion against Him and are now sinners by nature through our own

choice. We therefore stand condemned before God, deserving His wrath and are unable to reconcile ourselves with Him through any form or amount of good works, merits, or ceremonies.

8. That salvation is only by the grace and love of God through re-creation by the Holy Spirit, repentance from sin and belief in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
9. In the bodily resurrection from the dead of the believer to eternal joy and happiness with God; of the unbeliever to judgment and eternal conscious punishment and separation from God. Further we (Kwasizabantu) believe in a conscious existence of all souls between death and resurrection; of the believer in heaven with God and of the unbeliever in hades in separation from God.
10. In the existence of angels and satan and his demons. Angels are personal spiritual beings in the service of God. Satan and his demons are personal spiritual beings who live in rebellion against God, His angels and His people. Their fate of eternal damnation was sealed by Christ on the cross. All believers are given authority over them and their activities.

This is in general agreement with the traditional Protestant confession.

APPENDIX 3

The Debacle of Kranskop

Testimonies of by Victims or Their Parents

The interviews below were for the most part recorded by the author, and their names are known to him.

Father 1

A father relates that during a meeting it was said that there was only one father who was prepared to have his children “disciplined”. This turned out not to be true, as Stegen had already asked the father concerned for his agreement, and been given it, before the meeting. Children were to be given a spanking if they were naughty. When it was said in the meeting that there was only one, father 1 called his children together and they went home. The children were then 4 to 9 years old.¹

Mother 1

I took a photo of my daughter’s back. She was bleeding in several places. I have kept the photo to this day. She is still suffering from the traumatic consequences today.²

¹ Interview 25 November 2004.

² Interview 25 November 2004.

Young man

Similar meetings for children and young people were also organised in Mtunzini and Johannesburg. In Mtunzini it happened that we were locked up in dark cupboards if we had done something to “deserve” punishment. My sister was beaten really badly. She was black and blue on her back and her backside.³

Father 2

My son was also at Kranskop and he was still very young. When a Zulu went past, one of the leaders asked: “Which of you doesn’t like this man?” Two boys put their hands up, unsuspectingly. As punishment they had to stand in the corner the whole day. Later the boy told his father: “Kwasizabantu has taught us to tell lies. To avoid being punished we learnt to tell them what they wanted to hear.”⁴

Father 3

Smanga, Mabaso’s son, was 3½ years old when he was called to Kranskop. When Mabaso dropped him off in Kranskop he saw Lindiwe lose consciousness and go into a trance, speaking Zulu. Her pronouncements were written down carefully by the Stegens. All the children were beaten to free them from evil spirits. Smanga too, my son, did not escape the hands of the bullies. He was beaten and later he no longer wanted to follow Christ. Barney Mabaso estimates that 99% of the children who were called to Kranskop are no longer Christians today. Together with Thofozi, Arno, a son of Friedel Stegen and at the time still a teenager, beat the children until they bled.⁵

³ Interview 25 November 2004.

⁴ Interview 24 November 2004.

⁵ Interview with M. Mabaso 15 November 2004.

Mother 2

The very young children who were not even two years old were called to go. My child had an ear infection, but no attention was paid to that. As a result she is hard of hearing in one ear.⁶

A visitor

A visitor helped the little child when she needed to go to the toilet and got a terrible shock when I saw that her little back was totally beaten up and bleeding.⁷

The information below concerning “Father 4” and “Young woman 1” comes from Redinger, who kept in email contact with his brother-in-law, Lorentz Freese.⁸

Father 4

Freese, a brother-in-law of Redinger’s, said that one particular day he heard that Kwasizabantu was calling on children to come to Kanskop, and they were being separated from their parents. All contact with the children was ruled out, and father 4 heard, furthermore, that the children were being badly beaten. A short time later his children were called. He went to Stegen and said: “I hear that you have thrashed the children here and I am warning you that you may not hit my children without my consent. You are not to touch my children without my permission. If my children deserve a spanking, then come to me and ask for my consent. If it should happen that you go ahead and hit my children without my consent, then those involved, Erlö Stegen included, will have a thrashing from me which they will not forget for the rest of their lives.” And so father 4’s children were spared a great deal of trouble.

⁶ Interview 11 November 2004.

⁷ Interview 15 May 2005.

⁸ Email 17 March 2004.

Young woman 1

His daughter tells the following story: "As little children we were called to the farm. I had only just got there with my sister, when we were told that we were naughty children. This was repeated to all the other children (we didn't know what my father had said to Stegen). Our food consisted of bread with peanut butter. We were given so much on our plates that it was too much to finish. The left-overs were given to us again the next day, and because it was no longer fresh we ate less, until finally the bread was dry and stale. But we were only given fresh bread when the old bread was completely gone.

"One particular day the children were offered an outing to the beach. We were not allowed to go because we had been disobedient. The others were pleased that they were going to the sea and we, the naughty children, were really sad because we were not allowed to go with them. The other children went off in an estate car.

"It was not long before they came back again. It may have been just two hours. When the children got out of the car they were miserable and in tears. A boy my age, who I was friends with, came up to me and stood next to me and said: 'We are not allowed to speak, pull my shirt up.' To my horror he had a wound on his back and I could also see places that were bleeding. I asked: 'Why have you been beaten like this?' His answer was: 'Because Christians are not worldly and glad about a trip to the sea.' So that was the reason, and that is why they were driven to a wood where they were beaten black and blue and thrashed.

"Another time Arno Stegen came up to us complaining about the weeds growing around the outside toilet. When uncle Erlo comes here and wants to go to the toilet he has to walk through the weeds. He talked us into chopping down the weeds and taking them away.

"At some point later Stegen came by and saw that the garden was neat and tidy. He wanted to know who had done it. The children answered that it was they who had done it. But Arno came and beat them mercilessly saying that they were arrogant and proud about what they had done.

“You have to bear in mind that these were toddlers and small children. This has nothing to do with God. We are not against a disciplined upbringing, but this was cruel and mindless.”

APPENDIX 4

Survey Questionnaire

Survey Results 4a, 4b en 4c

Appendix 4 – Survey Questionnaire

Overview of understandings of Christian concepts at Kwasizabantu

How did you think when you were a member of Kwasizabantu?

- Age ____
- How long were you a member? ____
- How long ago since you left KSB? ____

Tick the right applicable answer, more than one answer will also be good.
You may also add your own answer to the question.

1 What did sin mean to you?

- a everything not done in the love of Christ
 - b violating the rules of Kwasizabantu
 - c violating the Ten Commandments
 - d putting my Self in the centre
- or ...

2 How did you seek to get forgiveness?

- a our confession to God is the basis for forgiveness
 - b if I have seen a counsellor and have a good feeling
 - c by accepting Christ's sacrifice
 - d when the counselor accepts my confession
- or ...

3 The confessionel process

- a I confessed sins because I had to
- b if my counsellor wasn't satisfied I made up more sins to confess
- c I confessed sin because I had true repentance and regret
- d I confessed sin because I was told that was the way to do it
- e I was sent to a counsellor to ask forgiveness, although I was not aware of anything

or ...

4 My thinking regarding the consequenses of my sin, when I sinned at that time?

- a I thought I was no longer a child of God and would need to confess my sin again
- b I had no assurance of my salvation if I had unconfessed sin in my life
- c I would need to go back to my counsellor and confess the details of my sin, my motives, my attitude and my guilt and I would have to name the party I sinned against.

or ...

5 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a when God forgives my sin it is forgiven forever
- b my forgiveness for that specific sin was absolute and I would never have to confess it again
- c if more things came up regarding that sin I would need to go to my counsellor and confess that sin within the new context over again.

or ...

6 What did grace mean to you at that time?

- a it was a vague concept and not really relevant to my faith.
- b it meant that God provided for my needs through God's work showing me mercy in Christ.
- c It is God's loyalty because of His promises in Christ

or ...

7 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a from when I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus till when I get to heaven
- b if I sinned too much my period of grace would be over
- c I was not even sure if there was grace for me, I constantly felt condemned
or ...

8 What was more important?

- a to confess my sins to a counsellor
- b to be born again
- c to be 'living in the light' with my counsellor, whereby I was totally transparent. It was vital to me that I had their approval and permission to participate in activities and even some daily routine matters
or ...

9 My thinking regarding mercy and forgiveness at that time

- a I was never sure of it
- b I thought God showed mercy or forgives arbitrarily
- c I knew it was a forever thing
or ...

10 What did "justification by faith" spoken about in Romans mean to you?

- a justification was an important virtue
- b it meant the continuous confessing of my sins to my counsellor and his approval thereof
- c it was based on the agreement and feelings of my counsellor that my sins were forgiven.
- d justification is given to us by God through the death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross. He died for our sins thereby justifying us!
or ...

11 What was the basis for your believing in and understanding the word of God?

- a I believed in the bible as explained and interpreted by Stegen
- b if I didn't believe in Erlo Stegen's interpretation I would go to hell, because his interpretation was the TRUTH!
- c I believe in the Word of God, as inspired by the Holy Spirit.
or ...

12 What I believed about the will of God

- a** I never knew what God's will was
 - b** the counsellors and Mamas always knew what God's will was
 - c** I felt powerless and needed to accept what came my way
 - d** I always knew He was my Loving Father and He would make his will known to me
- or ...

Thank you very much! Your answers will be processed anonymously in forming an idea of the doctrine of Kwasizabantu.

Appendix 4a – Total Overview Enquête

question number	%	Survey Results
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1 What did sin mean to you?

- a 23 22 everything not done in the love of Christ
- b 46 46 violating the rules of Kwasizabantu
- c 17 16 violating the Ten Commandments
- d 17 16 putting my Self in the centre

or ...

2 How did you seek to get forgiveness?

- a 13 17 our confession to God is the basis for forgiveness
- b 26 34 if I have seen a counsellor and have a good feeling
- c 8 10 by accepting Christ's sacrifice
- d 29 39 when the counselor accepts my confession

or ...

3 The confessional process

- a 26 21 I confessed sins because I had to
- b 20 17 If my counsellor wasn't satisfied I made up more sins to confess
- c 17 14 I confessed sin because I had true repentance and regret
- d 35 29 I confessed sin because I was told that was the way to do it
- e 23 19 I was sent to a counsellor to ask forgiveness, although I was not aware of anything

or ...

4 My thinking regarding the consequences of my sin

- a 28 24 I thought I was no longer a child of God and would need to confess my sin again
- b 40 34 I had no assurance of my salvation if I had unconfessed sin in my life
- c 48 42 I would need to go back to my counsellor and confess the details of my sin, my motives, my attitude and my guilt and I would have to name the party I sinned against.

or

5 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a 18 24 when God forgives my sin it is forgiven forever
- b 9 12 my forgiveness for that specific sin was absolute and I would never have to confess it again
- c 49 64 if more things came up regarding that sin I would need to go to my counsellor and confess that sin within the new context over again.

or ...

6 What did grace mean to you at that time?

- a 38 58 it was a vague concept and not really relevant to my faith.
- b 14 21 it meant that God provided for my needs through God's work showing me mercy in Christ.
- c 14 21 it is God's loyalty because of His promises in Christ

or ...

7 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a 15 18 from when I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus till when I get to heaven
- b 19 23 if I sinned too much my period of grace would be over
- c 49 59 I was not even sure if there was grace for me, I constantly felt condemned

or ...

8 What was more important?

- a 50 49 to confess my sins to a counsellor
- b 39 46 to be born again
- c 42 40 to be 'living in the light' with my counsellor, whereby I was totally transparent. It was vital to me that I had their approval and permission to participate in activities and even some daily routine matters

or ...

9 My thinking regarding mercy and forgiveness at that time

- a 39 46 I was never sure of it
- b 21 25 I thought God showed mercy or forgives arbitrarily
- c 24 29 I knew it was a forever thing

or ...

10 What did “justification by faith” spoken about in Romans mean to you?

- a 15 15 justification was an important virtue
 - b 40 41 it meant the continuous confessing of my sins to my counsellor and his approval thereof
 - c 34 35 it was based on the agreement and feelings of my counsellor that my sins were forgiven.
 - d 9 9 justification is given to us by God through the death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross. He died for our sins thereby justifying us!
- or ...

11 What was the basis for your believing in and understanding the word of God?

- a 46 47 I believed in the bible as explained and interpreted by Stegen
 - b 36 37 if I didn't believe in Stegen's interpretation I would go to hell, because his interpretation was the TRUTH!
 - c 16 16 I believe in the Word of God, as inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- or ...

12 What I believed about the will of God

- a 23 20 I never knew what God's will was
 - b 36 37 The counsellors and Mamas always knew what God's will was
 - c 16 16 I felt powerless and needed to accept what came my way
 - d 23 20 I always knew He was my Loving Father and He would make his will known to me
- or ...

1139 answers

71 participants

Appendix 4b – Totals, Rock of Life Church in Tugela Ferry

question number	%	Survey Results
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1 What did sin mean to you?

- a 14 21 everything not done in the love of Christ
- b 35 53 violating the rules of Kwasizabantu
- c 8 12 violating the Ten Commandments
- d 9 13 putting my Self in the centre

or ...

2 How did you seek to get forgiveness?

- a 7 14 our confession to God is the basis for forgiveness
- b 19 37 if I have seen a counsellor and have a good feeling
- c 2 3 by accepting Christ's sacrifice
- d 23 46 when the counselor accepts my confession

or ...

3 The confessional process

- a 16 19 I confessed sins because I had to
- b 14 17 if my counsellor wasn't satisfied I made up more sins to confess
- c 10 12 I confessed sin because I had true repentance and regret
- d 27 32 I confessed sin because I was told that was the way to do it
- e 17 20 I was sent to a counsellor to ask forgiveness, although I was not aware of anything

or ...

4 My thinking regarding the consequences of my sin

- a 25 28 I thought I was no longer a child of God and would need to confess my sin again
- b 31 34 I had no assurance of my salvation if I had unconfessed sin in my life
- c 34 38 I would need to go back to my counsellor and confess the details of my sin, my motives, my attitude and my guilt and I would have to name the party I sinned against.

or ...

5 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a 13 23 when God forgives my sin it is forgiven forever
- b 4 7 my forgiveness for that specific sin was absolute and I would never have to confess it again
- c 39 70 if more things came up regarding that sin I would need to go to my counsellor and confess that sin within the new context over again.

or ...

6 What did grace mean to you at that time?

- a 30 61 it was a vague concept and not really relevant to my faith.
- b 8 16 It meant that God provided for my needs through God's work showing me mercy in Christ.
- c 11 23 it is God's loyalty because of His promises in Christ

or ...

7 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a 12 19 from when I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus till when I get to heaven
- b 13 20 if I sinned too much my period of grace would be over
- c 39 61 I was not even sure if there was grace for me, I constantly felt condemned

or ...

8 What was more important?

- a 39 50 to confess my sins to a counsellor
- b 5 6 to be born again
- c 34 34 to be 'living in the light' with my counsellor, whereby I was totally transparent. It was vital to me that I had their approval and permission to participate in activities and even some daily routine matters

or ...

9 My thinking regarding mercy and forgiveness at that time

- a 29 50 I was never sure of it
- b 18 30 I thought God showed mercy or forgives arbitrarily
- c 12 20 I knew it was a forever thing

or ...

10 What did “justification by faith” spoken about in Romans mean to you?

- a 12 16 justification was an important virtue
 - b 30 39 it meant the continuous confessing of my sins to my counsellor and his approval thereof
 - c 29 38 it was based on the agreement and feelings of my counsellor that my sins were forgiven.
 - d 6 7 justification is given to us by God through the death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross. He died for our sins thereby justifying us!
- or ...

11 What was the basis for your believing in and understanding the word of God?

- a 38 53 I believed in the bible as explained and interpreted by Stegen
 - b 27 38 if I didn't believe in Stegen's interpretation I would go to hell, because his interpretation was the TRUTH!
 - c 7 9 I believe in the Word of God, as inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- or ...

12 What I believed about the will of God

- a 16 21 I never knew what God's will was
 - b 27 37 the counsellors and Mamas always knew what God's will was
 - c 13 17 I felt powerless and needed to accept what came my way
 - d 19 25 I always knew He was my Loving Father and He would make his will known to me
- or ...

821 answers

54 participants

Appendix 4c – Totals, Europeans

question
number

% Survey Results

1 What did sin mean to you?

- a 9 24 everything not done in the love of Christ
- b 11 30 violating the rules of Kwasizabantu
- c 9 24 violating the Ten Commandments
- d 8 22 putting my Self in the centre

or ...

2 How did you seek to get forgiveness?

- a 6 24 our confession to God is the basis for forgiveness
- b 7 28 if I have seen a counsellor and have a good feeling
- c 6 24 by accepting Christ's sacrifice
- d 6 24 when the counselor accepts my confession

or ...

3 The confessional process

- a 10 27 I confessed sins because I had to
- b 6 16 if my counsellor wasn't satisfied I made up more sins to confess
- c 7 19 I confessed sin because I had true repentance and regret
- d 8 22 I confessed sin because I was told that was the way to do it
- e 6 16 I was sent to a counsellor to ask forgiveness, although I was not aware of anything

or ...

4 My thinking regarding the consequences of my sin, when I sinned at that time?

- a 3 12 I thought I was no longer a child of God and would need to confess my sin again
- b 9 35 I had no assurance of my salvation if I had unconfessed sin in my life

- c 14 53 I would need to go back to my counsellor and confess the details of my sin, my motives, my attitude and my guilt and I would have to name the party I sinned against.

or ...

5 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a 5 25 when God forgives my sin it is forgiven forever
b 5 25 my forgiveness for that specific sin was absolute and I would never have to confess it again
c 10 50 if more things came up regarding that sin I would need to go to my counsellor and confess that sin within the new context over again.

or ...

6 What did grace mean to you at that time?

- a 8 47 it was a vague concept and not really relevant to my faith.
b 6 35 it meant that God provided for my needs through God's work showing me mercy in Christ.
c 3 18 it is God's loyalty because of His promises in Christ
or ...

7 How long did I think God's grace lasted at that time?

- a 3 16 from when I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus till when I get to heaven
b 6 32 if I sinned too much my period of grace would be over
c 10 52 I was not even sure if there was grace for me, I constantly felt condemned

or ...

8 What was more important?

- a 11 44 to confess my sins to a counsellor
b 6 24 to be born again
c 8 32 to be 'living in the light' with my counsellor, whereby I was totally transparent. It was vital to me that I had their approval and permission to participate in activities and even some daily routine matters
or ...

9 My thinking regarding mercy and forgiveness at that time

- a 10 67 I was never sure of it
 - b 3 20 I thought God showed mercy or forgives arbitrarily
 - c 2 13 I knew it was a forever thing
- or ...

10 What did “justification by faith” spoken about in Romans mean to you?

- a 3 14 justification was an important virtue
 - b 18 48 it meant the continuous confessing of my sins to my counsellor and his approval thereof
 - c 5 24 it was based on the agreement and feelings of my counsellor that my sins were forgiven.
 - d 3 14 justification is given to us by God through the death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross. He died for our sins thereby justifying us!
- or ...

11 What was the basis for your believing in and understanding the word of God?

- a 8 30 I believed in the bible as explained and interpreted by Stegen
 - b 9 35 If I didn't believe in Erlo Stegen's interpretation I would go to hell, because his interpretation was the TRUTH!
 - c 9 35 I believe in the Word of God, as inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- or ...

12 What I believed about the will of God

- a 7 26 I never knew what God's will was
 - b 6 22 The counsellors and Mamas always knew what God's will was
 - c 10 37 I felt powerless and needed to accept what came my way
 - d 4 15 I always knew He was my Loving Father and He would make his will known to me
- or ...

295 answers

17 participants

APPENDIX 5

Glossary of Zulu Religion

umthakathi (pl. *abathakathi*)

witch who harms people and makes use of black magic

umthandazi (pl. *abathandazi*)

prayer woman

umzalwane (pl. *abazalwane*)

brother and sister, fellowship

amadlozi (sg. *idlozi*)

ancestral spirits

another popular word is *abaphansi*, “those who are below”

amaNazaretha (*Ibandla lamaNazaretha*)

African Independent Church (AIC) founded by Isaiah Shembe

amaZyoni

a movement of African Independent Churches

amaZiyoni are healing churches

amaZulu (sg. *umZulu*)

the Zulu people

abantu (sg. *umuntu*)

man-person

isibongo (pl. *izibongo*)

praise name, tribal name, clan name or surname

iNkosi yezulu

king of heaven; other names are *uMdali* (creator) *uMenzi* (maker)

inkosi (pl. *amakhosi*)

tribal chief, king

an *inkosi* rules over a territory called *umuzi*

isangoma (pl. *izangoma*)

diviner, connection between family and ancestral spirits

inyanga (pl. *izinyanga*)

herbalist

izizwe

name of an illness caused by spirits, demons

this may suggest that someone is being called to become an *isangoma* (see *ukaguliswa*).

izilimi

speaking tongues in trance

ilobola

dowry, generally by means of livestock

ukulobola

paying the dowry

ukubhula

divining by the traditional *isangoma*

ukuquleka

falling unconscious (trance) – of the traditional *isangoma* when she comes into contact with the ancestral spirits

ukukholwa (*kholwa*)

faith, being content

ukulungisa

putting something right; this word is used in the Zulu Bible for *justify*

ukuprofeta

AIC prophets prophesy, according to them, through the Holy Spirit; the so-called mainline churches regard *ukuprofeta* as *ukubhula* (divining) by traditional *isangoma*

ukushuka

tanning raw leather until supple and soft

ukuthanda

to love, sometimes used synonymously for sexual intercourse

ukaguliswa umoya

this is an understanding of traditional Zulus that when their shoulders start to be painful or have pins and needles, the spirits are trying to make contact with them; in Zulu religion anyone to whom this happens is viewed as a candidate to become an *isangoma*

woza Moya oyiNgcwele

come, Holy Spirit!

Dr. Pretorius writes the following

Popular belief holds that religion contributes to the well-being of its members. In this book, however, Pilon indicates the vulnerability of individuals in a particular religious context, a vulnerability also confirmed by research on so-called harmful or high-demand religious groups (sometimes also called cults). Research indicates that deception and abuse can be prominent as a result of the underlying dynamics of these groups. Not many of the victims of these high-demand religious groups are able to break free, and fear of potential or threatened consequences can severely restrict their liberty to share their experiences. Reports of abuse, intimidation and control may sound unreal, but those reported on in this book echo the experiences of many former members of other similar groups. The challenge to each reader is not to dismiss the testimonies of abuse in the light of contrasting positive reports about the group but to listen open-mindedly and appreciate the harm that can be caused by underlying and subliminal processes. It stands to reason that role models and seemingly respectable organizations are not necessarily deserving of blameless reputations. Furthermore, society needs to be made aware of evidence of abuse and deception behind the seemingly innocent façade of religion.

Dr. S. P. Pretorius, Director Cultism Dialogue South Africa

For fourteen long years Albert Pilon was one of the leaders of the Kwasizabantu Mission in the Netherlands. In 2002 he resigned from the leadership. Ultimately, having serious doubts about its theology of revival, he left the movement, determined to seek answers to his questions. Pilon immersed himself in Zulu culture and religion, researched existing theological studies of Kwasizabantu, consulted at length with theologians and experts on religious sects, and compiled newspaper articles and letters – in fact publications of all kinds – by Kwasizabantu and about Kwasizabantu. In addition, both in Europe and in South Africa he interviewed dozens of former members who had left the movement at various times. The testimonies of their experiences formed a coherent picture, fitting together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

Besides innumerable cases of abuse of power, Pilon discovered various parallels between the teachings of Kwasizabantu and those of the independent indigenous churches, which are invariably influenced by traditional Zulu religion. In this book he presents a compelling account of his quest and a salutary insight into the true face of Kwasizabantu.