

***The Spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals:
A Study of Two Religious Communities***

by

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DECLARATION

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SUMMARY

The new interest in spirituality forms the background to this research. In step with prominent scholars in the field of spirituality the following working definition for spirituality has been adopted: “Spirituality is an experience in the presence of the Creator and the dynamic transforms us”. The spirituality of various religious traditions has been described. Black Hebrew Pentecostalism is one rich tradition that has been hidden from the view of scholars. This research is an attempt to address this issue. The research problem enquires whether there are unique features to this religious tradition and its corresponding spirituality.

Two communities in New York (USA) have been selected for research purposes. Methodologically, literature and empirical research approaches have been employed. A specific contribution has been made to the discipline of spirituality by mapping a qualitative method for studying the spirituality of a religious tradition. In conversation with major scholars a unique set of constituent dimensions for spirituality has been identified; when used as questions during empirical research this could disclose the main feature of spirituality.

In studying the two communities of *Temple El Shaddai* and *Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ* specific attention was given to the following issues: contextual background, distinctive spiritual features, normativity and authority, theological views, notions of transcendence, distinctive morality, the dynamics of the divine-human relationship and its impact on spirituality.

To determine synthetically the profile of the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostalism not only the research results of the two communities were compared, but two additional research strategies were employed: the study of related spiritualities (e.g. that of the Lemba communities, Pentecostalism, Traditional Africa and African-Americanism) and the use of various religious typologies. These help highlight the main and unique elements of Black Hebrew Pentecostal spirituality.

The research has disclosed that this religious tradition has unique features that have resulted in a unique spirituality. Here are some of the main constituent elements:

- Black Hebrew Pentecostalism *integrated* the perspectives of two religious traditions – Judaism and Christianity - to form a unique tradition of its own. The faith and concomitant spiritual practices are experienced as *coherent*.
- A string focus on *social identity* accompanies this spirituality. Without social realities like racism this spirituality cannot be appreciated.
- *Identity markers* like symbolism, ritual, theological conviction and ethical practice functions strongly to determine and maintain spiritual identity.
- *Normativity* and *authority* which inevitably influence spirituality are located in both the leader of the community and the Bible.
- *Time-cycles* function prominently especially concerning the honoring of the Sabbath and Old Testament Feasts.
- *Morality* and strict moral codes are intimately intertwined with spiritual experiences.
- The *naming of the divine* is exceptionally critical and is another outstanding characteristic of this spirituality.
- Spiritual maturity can be defined in terms of *power* and this is related to the social identity of the tradition.
- The spirituality integrates the life of followers and supports them to cope with existential challenges.

This research has made contributions, not only to the general corpus of knowledge of this religious tradition, but also to the academic discipline of spirituality.

OPSOMMING

Die nuwe belangstelling in die Spiritualiteit vorm die agtergrond van hierdie navorsing. In gesprek met prominente geleerdes in die veld is die volgende werksdefinisie geformuleer: “Spiritualiteit is ‘n ervaring in die teenwoordigheid van die Skepper en hierdie dinamika werk transformerend”. Die spiritualiteit van verskeie godsdienstige tradisies is alreeds beskryf. Een tradisie wat nog nie aandag ontvang het nie, is Black Hebrew Pentecostalism; en hierdie navorsing spreek die leemte aan. Die navorsingsprobleem vra of daar unieke trekke aan hierdie godsdienstige tradisie is en aan sy spiritualiteit.

Twee gemeenskappe in New York (VSA) is gekies vir navorsingsdoeleindes. Metodologie, literêre en empiriese benaderings gevolg. ‘n Spesifieke bydrae is gemaak tot die veld van die Spiritualiteit deur ‘n kwalitatiewe metode te ontwerp om die Spiritualiteit van ‘n bepaalde geloofsgemeenskap te bestudeer. In gesprek met belangrike geleerdes is ‘n unieke stel konstituerende dimensies geïdentifiseer; wanneer dié gebruik word as vrae tydens empiriese navorsing kan dit die hoofkante van ‘n Spiritualiteit aandui.

Tydens die studie van die twee gemeenskappe - *Temple El Shaddai* en *Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ* – is aan die volgende aangeleentede aandag gegee: kontekstuele agtergrond, onderskeidende spiritualiteitstrekke, normatiewiteit en gesag, teologiese sieninge, gedagtes oor transendensie, onderskeidende moraliteit, dinamika van die God-mens verhouding, en die impak van Spiritualiteit.

Om ‘n profiel van die Spiritualiteit van Black Hebrew Pentecostalism te bepaal is nie net die navorsingsresultate van die twee gemeenskappe vergelyk nie, maar twee addisionele navorsingsstrategieë is gebruik: ‘n studie van verwante Spiritualiteite (bv. die van die Lemba gemeenskap, Pentekostalisme, Tradisioneel Afrika en Afrika-Amerikanisme) en die gebruik van tipologieë. Dié het gehelp om die hoof- en unieke elemente van die Black Hebrew Pentecostal Spiritualiteit aan die dui.

Die navorsing het aangetoon dat dié godsdienstige tradisie inderdaad unieke trekke het wat ook 'n unieke Spiritualiteit tot gevolg het. Van die belangrikste konstituerende elemente kan uitgelig word:

- Black Hebrew Pentecostalism integreer die perspektiewe van verskeie godsdienstige tradisies – sp. Judaïsme en die Christelike geloof – en vorm so 'n tradisie in eie reg. Die geloof en die geestelike praktyke word as koherent beleef.
- 'n Sterk fokus op sosiale identiteit lê aan die grondslag van hierdie Spiritualiteit. Sonder sosiale werklikhede soos rassisme kan hierdie Spiritualiteit nie verstaan word nie.
- Identiteitsaanduiders soos simboliek, rituele, teologiese oortuigings en etiese praktyke funksioneer sterk om geestelike identiteit te bepaal en te handhaaf.
- Normatiewe en gesag, wat 'n groot invloed op Spiritualiteit het, word by beide die geestelike leier en die Bybel gevind.
- Tydsiklusse funksioneer kragtig, spesifiek wat die eerbiediging van die Sabbat en die Ou Testamentiese feeste betref.
- Moraliteit en 'n streng etiese kode is nou verbind aan geestelike ervaring.
- Die benaming van die Goddelike is prominent en is 'n uitstaande kenmerk van hierdie Spiritualiteit.
- Geestelike volwassenheid word verstaan in terme van krag en is ongetwyfeld verbind aan die sosiale identiteit van hierdie tradisie.
- Die Spiritualiteit integreer die lewens van volgelinge en help hulle om die uitdagings van hul lewens die hoof te bied.

Die navorsing het 'n besliste bydrae gelewer, nie net t.o.v. die algemene korpus kennis van hierdie tradisie nie, maar ook tot die akademiese dissipline van Spiritualiteit.

INTRODUCTION

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Researching the spirituality of two Black Hebrew communities in America is the culmination of my interest in spirituality. My curiosity in spirituality began with my quest to understand the spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In my study of Bonhoeffer, I discovered an emerging global interest in spirituality. Sheldrake (2006:16) comments that the concept of spirituality is steadily to be applied outside of the confines of religion. Spirituality is moving into new areas, such as social issues. He said there is an earnest desire to delve deeper into the purpose of life as a whole in order to detect “a vision of the human spirit and what enhances it.”

Waaijman (2002:2) sees spirituality as an every day occurrence in our lives. He says spirituality is quietly present in our consciousness and in our very existence as human beings. Schneiders (2005a:15) is in agreement with Waaijman that spirituality is an integral part of our lives. She argues that spirituality is not a doctrine. On the contrary, spirituality is an on-going experience of life. The purpose of spirituality “is life integration,” Schnieders says and with this understanding it facilitates researching spirituality.

Encouraged by the writings of Schneiders, Waaijman, and Sheldrake I became curious about the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals, a community of which I have been a part for more than 30 years. I hope that this research project will be a vital contribution to the academy. The importance of the historical information cannot be denied because so many people are unfamiliar with Black Hebrew Pentecostalism. No scholarly information about this community exists. This research shall be the first and only one of its kind on the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

In studying the spirituality of two Black Hebrew Pentecostals communities in New York an important question must be addressed. *Does the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals contain distinct features?* This inquiry leads to other important questions. What is

spirituality? To what can we compare the spirituality features of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals?

Schneiders (2005a:15) argues that spirituality is an ongoing experience of life as well as an integration of life. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals consider themselves to be original Jews - the descendants of Abraham. As a result of this, they conclude that Jesus is Black. This strong Jewish identity is a unique feature of their spirituality, generally not shared by Black Baptists, Methodists and Catholics. Black Hebrew Pentecostals give their children Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs. Mainline Black Baptists, Methodists and Catholics do not follow these Jewish rites.

The observance of the 7th Day Sabbath and the seven Jewish Holy Days are distinctive features of Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Another belief is that the White Jews are Edomites from the tribe of Edom. They are the descendants of Esau.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In my research of the literature, I consulted writers in the area of the discipline of spirituality such as Schneiders, Waaijman, Sheldrake, Kourie and others. Their work on defining spirituality and forming methodological approaches to the study of spirituality has been invaluable. With their help, I have formulated a methodological research approach to the study of the spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals.

The writing of Downey (1977:120) was instrumental in helping me formulate a methodological research design model. This is critical because the study of the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals is a new field of knowledge. In chapter one, I arrive at a design model for researching the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Chapter one shall guide me in a focused study on the unique spirituality of two Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. My design model will encapsulate qualitative methods such as observations, focus groups (Ware 1995:46-53) and personal interviews for my field work. Obviously there will be similarities and differences between the two Black Hebrew Pentecostal groups. The design model will be critical in assisting me in the gathering of accurate data about the spirituality of the two religious groups for the academy.

Kourie (2006: 19) makes a statement that is well understood in the academy: the term spirituality is difficult to define. Unlike many of her contemporaries, she expounds on the ambiguity of spirituality with more insightfulness. She argues that the difficulty in defining spirituality is the “equivocal meanings attributed to it.” Black Hebrew Pentecostal interpret researching spirituality to mean studying how much of God’s spirit a member has to heal the sick, raise the dead or cast out devils in Jesus’ name. Black Hebrew Pentecostals have little knowledge of the human spirit and the study of spirituality because it has not been discussed in the church. But when the topic is introduced in the church it is met with different reactions. Kourie is aware of the varied approaches to spirituality and the difficulties in defining it.

4. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

The development of a model to study the spirituality of a religious community is beneficial to other researchers who study the spirituality of a unique community. Not only is a design model useful for researchers but it is also valuable for gaining knowledge of the religious tradition of Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Adding unique knowledge of the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals enhances the credibility of spirituality as an academic discipline (Schneiders 1989:678).

A major contribution to the scholarship of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community is research about the spirituality and the unique faith of these believers. This is vital data for the discipline of spirituality.

5. RESEARCH APPROACH: CHAPTER DIVISION

I shall give a brief outline of the issues addressed in each chapter starting with the first chapter. Chapter one deals with Studying the Spirituality of Religious Communities. Subsections include Defining Spirituality, Methodology for Studying Spirituality, and Empirical Research & Spirituality. We shall look at the writings of the following authors: Waaijman, Schneiders, Perrin, Endean, Sheldrake, Downey, Froehlich, Smit, Ware, and Berg.

Waaijman examines the forms of spirituality. Schneiders looks at spirituality as a discipline and studies spirituality as an existential phenomenon. Perrin argues spirituality has a place within human experience that does not include religion alone but all aspects of human

existence. Endean contends that spirituality in the form of a more monastic nature was common practice principally in mid 1950s in the Catholic Church. Sheldrake separates spirituality from theology. Theology is more theoretical than spirituality. Downey states Christian spirituality refers to “a lived experience.” Froehlich agrees with Schneiders’s method of researching spirituality. Smit formulates a methodology in an attempt to explain in what way spirituality differs from theology. Ware’s interest in typological spirituality begins with her exploring of different types of spirituality. Berg says that qualitative research attempts to search for answers to questions.

Chapter two gives a general introduction to Black Pentecostalism. Subsections in chapter two include a State of Scholarship, General Historical Overview, and Unique Theological Identity. The authors consulted are Parfitt, Wynia, Hughley, Edgar and Goldschmidt.

Chapter three entails field work of *Temple El Shaddai of the House of God the Holy Church of the Living God The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth The House of Prayer for All People (Hebrew Pentecostal)*. The church is located in the borough of Queens in New York. The church has a male pastor. Months were spent observing the church as members traveled to different states and attended several church services and special events. Notes were taken during services and a miniature tape recorder was used to gather research data. A qualitative methodology was used in researching their spirituality. This chapter has an Appendix.

Chapter four takes an in-depth look at the *Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus of The Order of the Gideon Knights of Yahshua Messiah*. Gideon has a female pastor that is common to this church. The church is located in the borough of Brooklyn, New York. Although the researcher is the presiding bishop over the Gideon Knights Church, the same methodology used at the Temple El Shaddai was applied. This chapter also has an Appendix.

Chapter five pertains to Related Spiritualities. The subsections are Lemba Communities, African Spirituality, African-American Spirituality, Pentecostal & Charismatic Spirituality and the Conclusion. The authors consulted are Le Roux, Anderson, Wulff, Kalilombe, Parris, Zahan, Wicker, Karecki, Kourie & Kretzschmar, Hayes, Orlando, Joseph, Land, Kärkkäinen and Van Schaijik.

Chapter six is the Conclusion—The Unique Identity of Black Hebrew Christian Spirituality. Subsections are Comparison of the Two Communities, Use of Typologies in Spirituality and

Conclusion: Unique identity. Authors consulted are Wainwright, Chapman, Wilson and Watson & Morris.

In my research of the spirituality of the two religious communities I refer often to phenomena that impact their spirituality. Impact is a continuous influence on a subject, for example “science impacts culture.”

CHAPTER 1. STUDYING THE SPIRITUALITY OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Chapter one is a critical chapter in the formulation of this work because it examines various scholarly views on spirituality. In doing this we shall look at the writings of different authors on the definition of spirituality and various methods for studying spirituality.

1.1 DEFINING SPIRITUALITY

1.1.1 Scholarly Views

1.1.1.1 Waaijman

Waaijman (2006:13) reflects on the basic forms of spirituality in an attempt to define spirituality. From this vantage point he develops three elements of spirituality: “A relational process between God and man, a gradual process, and Transformation” (13-14). Before discussing Waaijman’s three elements we shall take a look at the forms of spirituality. We find these forms in his book *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods* (2002:11). There are 54 forms of spirituality (configurations, movements, units). Forms of spirituality differ from the three elements of spirituality. Waaijman asserts a form is a unique experience of a *general rule*.

Waaijman (11) divides spiritual forms into three basic groups that form a triangle. The 54 forms of spirituality move continually within the triangle. According to Waaijman the triangle consists of: (1) lay spirituality, which occurs in the context of the family; (2) institutional spirituality, which typically manifests itself in distinct schools; (3) counter-spirituality which, operates from the margins of society.

The first element of spirituality takes into consideration a relational process between God and man. In a relational process between God and man, one must examine closely all forms of spirituality (2006:13). This is possible because the relationship forms a divine pole (the Awesome, the Holy, the Merciful, the Infinite One), and a human pole (application,

dedication, awakening).

Waaijman (13) argues that the purpose is not to give a name or to define the divine pole. The purpose is to experience the relational process as wholly other than the finite. In this relational process, there is a revealing of power that humans share with the Spirit. Sharing of the Spirit enlivens the human spirit. Within the relational process, one comes to comprehend the function of God and the divine names. Understanding the human pole in the relational process is vital because in the spiritual development it seeks God. The human pole becomes receptive to God. This facilitates the human pole transporting outside of itself in love. This occurs on all levels of human existence. Through the relational process one grows to maturity.

In the second element of a gradual process, the divine pole and the human pole interconnect and the divine pole affords a way back to God. Waaijman (13) says in finding our way back to God, His mercy is manifested in our works of mercy. We receive God's holiness in the sanctification of our lives as a gradual process. Through a gradual process we gain knowledge of God through His revelation. A relationship between God and man within itself is a gradual process from the very first awesome touch to respectful love. This constitutes the reality of God that leads to maturity. Our human spirit finds peace and completeness in a union with God. This infers growth through a gradual process (2006:14).

The third element of transformation flows from the other two elements. The element of transformation emanates from a relational process between God and man. This process forms a divine pole and a human pole. The divine pole directs us back to God. A gradual process impacts upon transformation in a relation with God. This is an ongoing process that helps one to maturity. When we consider the first two elements they point us in the direction of transformation through self-transcendence. Waaijman asserts in the human existence we understand the relational process as a reality. The relationship between God and man creates the relational process that transforms us into our own unique identity; however, God is not changed by this encounter.

1.1.1.2 Schneiders

Schneiders (2005a:15) argues spirituality, as a discipline that studies subject matter of

spirituality as an existential phenomenon. This is done under a formality that distinguishes it from both theology and religion. She gives a definition or identification of both the phenomenon and the formality as requirement for studying spirituality. Schneiders (2005:16) interprets Christian spirituality as an existential phenomenon. She calls this existential phenomenon a nuance definition. This is a more general interpretation that leads to it being especially Christian. Christian spirituality as existential phenomenon enables the Christian to experience self-transcendence. The ability to do so involves conscious involvement in the process of life-integration. This would facilitate the discipline of spirituality in studying spirituality as an existential phenomenon.

Schneiders (2005a:16) contends Christian spirituality as an academic discipline studies the living experience of Christian faith. The Christian faith understands the spirituality of a Christian as an expression of human beings' ability to transcend. This can mean a Christian's conscious involvement of life-integration toward the ultimate value that for Christians is Yahweh (God). Spirituality rejects unprompted experience for it is not a conscious and an intentional way of living. Unprompted experience is not a compilation of experiences and episodes. Living spirituality often reflects one's spiritual life. Christian spirituality as an academic discipline studies the spiritual life or the spirituality of a Christian. Christian spirituality researches a Christian's faith.

This spiritual life of the human constitutes the moving toward the ultimate value. The ultimate value for a Christian is Yahweh. Schneiders argues this may be God or something other than a deity. The ultimate value articulates as a vital sphere enticing the person toward growth. Spiritual life in all due consideration is inherently dynamic. For some Christians, the ultimate value in spirituality is the revelation of the triune God in Jesus Christ. Scripture communicates His life to the believer through the Holy Spirit. This process makes the believer a child of Yahweh (2005a:17).

As the human moves toward the ultimate value, it is the process of self-transcendence that precipitates growth. For the Christian this moving toward Christ constitutes a religious experience. A religious experience or any type of experience is difficult to define. Schneiders suggests that experience is subjective. One can only feel pain by experiencing it. Only communication through the articulation in texts helps one to experience spirituality as an existential phenomenon. By texts she refers to "verbal, literary, artistic, behavioral, and so on

. . . .” Schneiders (2005a:18) says a text has an object: something one can understand. She remarks a mystical experience is the most ineffable of religious experiences. A mystical experience affords the reader/listener access to something. Schneiders concludes that this something is the object of spirituality and as a result it leads to a field of study of religious experience or any other type of experience.

In exploring spirituality as a field of study Schneiders uses the term spirituality as an academic discipline. For example she (1989:678) proffers three categories relating to spirituality as a field of study. In the first category Schneiders sees spirituality as a discipline researching the basic environmental constitution of mankind. This encompasses the human existence or human spirit through self-transcendence to its Creator. This she states has no bearing on Christianity or for that matter any religion. The second category deals with spirituality as the living experience. Schneiders views this as that phenomenon that makes real the environmental component of a human being that appropriates spirituality as a field of study. The third category is the academic discipline which studies or investigates the reality of the living experience.

With regard to spirituality as lived experience Schneiders (1989:682) says that the term spirituality went from being an almost exclusive Roman Catholic term to being used by other religious denominations. This evolution could be a vital step for spirituality as a living experience. Spirituality is an activity of human life, so that the total living experience of a human being exists in some relation through the self-transcendence to the Creator. Therefore, Schneiders (1989:682) argues that because the living experience of a human takes in life, it is not limited to Christianity. For Schneiders, living experience is an open engagement with the Absolute. For the Christian this Absolute is the Messiah (Jesus). Schneiders argues this transcendence of human spirit is available to creatures of Yahweh seeking to live an authentic human life.

Schneiders (1989:684) argues spirituality as lived experience includes the total existence of all human beings. Regardless of their religious or secular persuasion this is a phenomenon that is common to all. She says this phenomenon of commonality is the experience of consciously striving to integrate one’s life. It is an attempt of integrating one’s life not in terms of isolation and self-absorption but self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives. For the Christian spirituality, the living experience is progressing through self-

transcendence toward the ultimate value. According to Schneiders the ultimate value for a Christian is God revealed in Jesus Christ and experienced through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1.1.1.3 Perrin

Perrin (2007:3) argues spirituality has a place within human experience that does not include religion alone but all aspects of human existence. So when studying spirituality it becomes important to solicit the assistance from the human sciences. These afford the researcher of spirituality the exposure to the multi-faceted nature of human experience. This is vital because both Christian spirituality and human sciences have an interest in studying human experience, even though they do so from their own perspectives and questions. Working together for the study of human experience Christian spirituality and the human sciences complement each other. Human sciences include a wide range of disciplines that study the aspects of life: sociology, psychology and anthropology. Christian spirituality asks questions that constitute the foundation of faith. This is a living faith in Yahshua (Jesus). This is not primarily the concern of human sciences.

Perrin understands Christian spirituality has its foundation in the living faith of Yahshua. However, Perrin (2007:44), like Waaijman (2002:404), asserts a separation between religion and spirituality. He concludes the relationship between the two is difficult to understand as the relationship between spirituality and theology. Religions set boundaries within their beliefs, practices, symbols, and texts that are central to their authoritative spiritual traditions and structures. He (2007:44-45) gives some examples of various faiths, such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam that all have their institutional structures. He contends religions seem to produce standards for living and existing in the world that give clear directions in life that are prescriptive. On the other hand, spirituality unlike religion is non-prescriptive.

Perrin (2007:45-46) continues that prescription may be indicative of religions, it is not necessarily characteristic of contemporary spirituality. This avoids seeking for indicators of official religiosity. Spirituality searches for an expression of the intuitive presence of God in our daily lives. Spiritually joins together with "*praxis*" (practice) irrespective of religious systems' prescriptions of beliefs and traditions. The author concludes religion and spirituality do not oppose one another. They have different functions in the human quest for self-transcendence that pertain to discovering a meaning for life.

As Christians we are on a quest to discover meaning for life in a relationship with God. Perrin (2007:35) sees theology and Christian spirituality working together to better understand the human spirit through self-transcendence. This cooperative venture will help us to find a deeper meaning for life with Yahweh. This will lead to growth that will improve that relationship. Perrin views Christian spirituality and theology cooperating with one another with some reservation. He asserts there is a dialectical approach between theology and Christian spirituality. In this relationship between the two he argues Christian spirituality does not have to depend on theology for every question under consideration. A dependency on theology would not necessarily guarantee a more meaningful life. Christian spirituality has its own strengths as experienced in its worship of the Messiah that enables it to reinterpret its past. Christian spirituality commits itself to critically analyzing histories and practices that will enhance the meaning of life.

1.1.1.4 Conclusion

As I critique the work of Waaijman and Schneiders I come away with a sense that “seeking” characterizes our lives as human creatures. Thus in many ways, we experience unsettlement in our daily existence. We are on a quest seeking to discover ourselves by self-transcendence to the ultimate reality. This may be the basis of those principles we esteem critical to our living experience. The phenomenon of seeking and moving toward the ultimate does not pertain to Christians alone. Seeking and moving define other religions and the secular world as well. All of these themes come clearly through the writing of Waaijman and Schneiders.

However, the writings of Waaijman and Schneiders are too theoretical. And as such I question whether their work would be useful for my field-work that is more practical than theoretical.

Perrin’s work is also theoretical with regard to Christian spirituality but he tends to take a softer tone. He elucidates more easily than Schneiders or Waaijman. For example, Perrin remarks Christian spirituality and theology are dialectical in nature. This appears more appropriate for better understanding the relationship between the two disciplines because of their distinct dissimilarity. Nevertheless, his writing equally did not appear applicable for my field-work because it too theoretical.

After carefully examining the writing of these and other scholars in depth, I believe my enhancement and understating of spirituality is much clearer. However, in the final analysis I have come to the conclusion that any attempt to define spirituality is a formidable task. This remains a major challenge in the academy. In the absence of a clear definition of spirituality, I formulated my own working definition to research the spirituality of two Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. *Spirituality is an experience in the presence of the Creator and the dynamic transforms us.* The dynamic transforms because it renders one helpless and vulnerable. In this process we become dependent on the Creator. This dependency meets a human need. And as such we are always moving and growing toward the Creator through self-transcendence.

1.1.2 Distinctions

1.1.2.1 Spirituality and Religion

Perrin (2007:45) argues there are differences between spirituality and religion. Religions work to offer direction in life. Contemporary spirituality, for the most part, does not give direction. Spirituality is less prescriptive than religions, which are more prescriptive and sometimes restrictive and dogmatic in their attitude. Such attitudes and restrictiveness often add rigidity to the life of the adherent. Spirituality, in opposition, is pliable and easily adaptable to the ways of life. By its pliability, spirituality sets no boundaries for itself. This fact makes spirituality more congenial.

Established institutions, guardians of their doctrines, generally dominate religions. The religious institutions formulate teachings on how to live one's life. Religious institutions give followers road maps on life's journey without detours and few curves. Spirituality has no such restrictions and rigidity. Spirituality offers no direction on how to live life. Perrin says that commitment to diversity and the expectation of nothing is the key to spirituality. Commitment and particularly hoping without expectation is what helps to define the concrete circumstances of everyday life, all of its complexities and difficulties. As a result it becomes problematic for the established institutions in trying to be prescriptive and give direction in life. Juxtapose the practices of spirituality religions eliminate commitment to diversity and

the expectation of nothing. Thus, religion, unlike spirituality, as an institution gives prescriptions for life's direction.

1.1.2.2 Spirituality and Theology

Endean (2005:76) argues spirituality in the mid-1950s was the sole domain of the Catholic Church. Here the practice of spirituality was a branch of theology. Spirituality in the Catholic Church constituted a life of consecration that included prayer and meditation. When the Second Vatican Council altered its view of spirituality it became no longer confessional exclusivity. However, Endean points out the old conception of spirituality being a part of moral theology continues to be institutionally influential in the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical facilities. Nevertheless, the Second Vatican Council's new approach to spirituality became inclusive of all believers. This prepared the way for spirituality to gradually move away from theology.

As spirituality leaves theology it starts on the road to independence. Endean remarks that relocating spirituality in the lives of human beings undermines the monastic and quasi-monastic traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. Endean (2005:77) says there is a close encounter between spirituality and theology that has existed since the Second Vatican Council. Nevertheless, spirituality retains its autonomy. He concludes we need new answers to the academic discipline of spirituality. He is unsure what the new answers will reveal. Meanwhile, spirituality remains a separate field of study from theology.

Schneiders (1986:270) asserts in light of the Scripture in the 13th century the intellectual clergy of Christian theology becomes the dominant form of theology. She (1986:258) analyzes the relationship between spirituality and theology by taking a look back in time. For many years they existed in each other's presence, but by the 12th century philosophy begins to exert some influence on theology. This influence has some relationship to spirituality because of its preoccupation with rationalizing and reasoning. This phenomenon continues until the middle 20th century, when the influences of World War I and II led to questions of the existence of God. Many Christians begin to experience spirituality differently in wanting to understand their relationship to God. The different spiritual experiences affect their daily lives. She offers some examples in times, places and cultures. In other words, people began to

question their own existence and their purpose for being in the world.

She (1986:254,259) takes a look at Catholic theology's preoccupation with spirituality at the time of Vatican II. Vatican II makes a broad and inclusive statement that all Christians receive a call to one and the same holiness. Schneiders (1986:255) moves from Catholic influence to a wider interest in trying to determine a relationship between theology and spirituality. This includes an appeal to Protestants to work with Catholic researchers in the study of a relation between theology and spirituality.

Schneiders goes further to expand the meaning of spirituality and to declare its autonomy from theology and religion. In fact, she argues spirituality does not have to be a religious experience. It can be a nonreligious or even an atheistic experience. The term spirituality now takes on a new essence for life's orientation. She (1986:270) says the living experience of spirituality precedes that of theology and religion. This is critical to Schneiders' (2005:1) definition of spirituality as living experiences. To support her contention, vital living experiences are important, she sites the First Testament and the Second Testament. She emphasizes the living experiences of Christ as a special source of reference. These living experiences of Christ reflect His human nature. This helps to demonstrate how spirituality stands apart from theology and religion. This phenomenal approach expands the meaning of spirituality.

Schneiders (1986:271) says theology serves spirituality. However, she is quick to point out, that theology is not alone in serving spirituality. The author lists a host of disciplines that are important to the field of study of spirituality. Schneiders (1986:271, 272) says it becomes problematic for some people to view spirituality serving theology. As a result many times theology becomes an umbrella term for all the sacred sciences. This can become a dilemma in the field of spirituality. Some scholars interpret spirituality belonging under theology's auspices. This may foster the notion that spirituality is a dependent of dogmatic theology and a subdivision of moral theology.

Schneiders opts for pushing spirituality away from theology. She is adamant theology should serve spirituality. This is contrary to many earlier scholars who insist on formulating a formal relationship between spirituality and theology. Nevertheless, Schneiders (1986:272) concludes spirituality as an academic discipline has its own subject of study. Spirituality has

its own methods and approaches. Spirituality caters to its own objectives. In other words, spirituality is an entity within itself and not under the auspices of theology. Theology might be under spirituality.

Waaajman (2002:310) argues in a different way on the issue of the relationship between spirituality and theology. His argument differs slightly from Schneiders' view. He asserts one must look more closely at a relationship between theology and spirituality. With this supposition Waaajman (2002:307) states that historically spirituality lingers in the shadow of Catholic tradition. Along the route to growth and changes scholars such as Schneiders cast new light on spirituality. She rescues it out of the dimness of theology. She brings spirituality into its own bright beam. Therefore, Waaajman (2002:311) contends that spirituality came out from the traditional name "spiritual theology." He agrees that theology and spirituality are separate disciplines. But he has reservations. For Waaajman there is no question of a close affinity between theology and spirituality. Therefore, spirituality does have bearing on the frame of reference to theology.

Sheldrake, unlike Schneiders (1986:272) determines spirituality is an entity within itself. Sheldrake (2006:26), like Waaajman (2002:396) takes a more hesitant position. Sheldrake (2006:26) does not regard spirituality completely as an independent discipline. He argues if we place spirituality in proximity to theology, the question will still remain whether spirituality should be a separate discipline within itself. Sheldrake defends his position by expressing concern with dividing "pure" and "applied" disciplines within theology.

There is a relationship between spirituality and theology and religion. The relationship is one of a reciprocal nature. All three entities complement one another and they have need of each other.

Theology that is the foundational basis of a believer's belief will impact their spirituality. Spirituality in turn looks to theology to get a clearer understanding of belief. Theology and spirituality are close associates.

Religion enters the association between theology and spirituality and defines the faith, Christian, Buddhist or other. Therefore, theology, spirituality and religion are all close associates.

1.2 METHODOLOGY FOR STUDYING SPIRITUALITY

1.2.1 Scholarly Views

1.2.1.1 Waaijman

Waaijman's (2002:309) methodology demonstrates a concrete method of doing foundational research. He asserts one must research the "how" object in spirituality. The "how" object is in close association with the "what" object of spirituality. The how and what objects decide what method the researcher will employ in doing foundational research. The researcher's method will determine how spirituality is to be studied.

Waaijman's foundational research leads to the term *levels*. These interact with one another. The first level, Waaijman says, functions as hermeneutical approach, or the holistic approach. This hermeneutical level attempts to explain daily occurrences in the lives of human beings. The hermeneutical level researches human existence for the purpose of obtaining knowledge and awareness.

The second level according to Waaijman deals with the discipline. This topic comes under frequent conversation in the academy. The topic is considered relevant in researching spirituality. Waaijman characterizes some disciplines more suitable toward spiritualities. However, they are troublesome; such as, "psychology, sociology, literary science, natural science, and the like." He does state, however, that an interdisciplinary character of researching spirituality is vital to the discipline of spirituality.

The third level - the method - is the most concrete (2002:310). Waaijman says researchers of history are fully aware of the methodological steps. This is a must when researching a past event. However, in order to do this the researcher must employ the appropriate method.

Methodology, the final level is the most concrete. Methodology entails the following: conducting interviews, doing field research, conducting concordances, making statistical calculations, analyzing texts, describing certain circumstances and so forth. One can apply

these also to method. Waaijman cautions the researcher has to become aware of different methodological levels. Researchers must be able to distinguish amongst them, so not to integrate the methods and methodologies into a consistent inter-disciplinary scheme.

1.2.1.2 Schneiders

Schneiders considers a hermeneutical approach to spirituality when determining the method of study. She (2006:4) acknowledges spirituality understands a person as an individual. She says when researchers study an individual's spirituality they examine "texts, persons, particular spiritual traditions ... prayer and social commitment." All of these phenomena move Schneiders (2006:5) to appropriate a hermeneutic approach to spirituality. Schneiders argues in favor of a hermeneutical approach by maintaining spirituality is a "field-encompassing field." In other words, a hermeneutical does not use one methodology for studying the spirituality of an individual. It utilizes whatever method is appropriate for a better understanding of the person. In her delineation of hermeneutical methodology, Schneiders clarifies how to do this. She says the discipline of spirituality examines the spiritual life of an individual. Consulting texts, listening to prayers, and viewing interaction with others are essential to gaining understanding.

Schneiders contends researchers should take a hermeneutical approach to the living religious experience. And, she says, researchers must take into consideration biblical studies and the history of spirituality. Researchers may employ disciplines such as theology, sociology, and literary criticism and others for the purpose of a hermeneutical approach to the lived religious experience.

The discipline of spirituality can shed light on the religious experience. It has a threefold relation to an existing religious encounter. They are: describing the encounter under investigation, examining it and making judgments about it, and appropriating the meaning of the experience. This results in the discipline of spirituality impacting the spiritual life of the researcher.

1.2.1.3 Sheldrake

Sheldrake (2006:19) makes a definitive statement regarding the dissimilarity between

Christian method and methodology. In the study of Christian spirituality there is a vast spectrum of methods and methodologies. Nevertheless, these constitute minimal fundamental principles that encompass a methodological theory of the field as a whole. In methodology the fundamental principles establish a methodological theory of Christian spirituality. These fundamental principles help Sheldrake to view more clearly the dissimilarity between Christian method and methodology.

Sheldrake declares how vital methodology and the fundamental principles are. He directs his attention to this matter. In focusing on methodology he brings into consideration the discipline of theology along with critical theory and cultural analysis. He says critical theory and cultural analysis impact theology. Sheldrake's critical theory is vital at this time.

Sheldrake (2006:21) explains the critical theory, in light of the methodological theory. Critical theory reminds us that spirituality does not imply a set of insignificant questions of the material. Nor do insignificant questions apply to the instruments. For example, what involves the discipline and the problems it encounters is critical. Sheldrake calls for a broader spectrum of methodological questions. That is to say, "Why" do we study a particular topic? "What" is the result when studying a topic and for what justification? Such questions will impact upon the methodological theory and the fundamental questions.

1.2.1.4 Downey

Downey (1977:115) says Christian spirituality refers to "a lived experience." He tries to decide which factor is necessary in determining which method to use in researching Christian spirituality. Insight into the Christian religious experience influences the appropriate method. Once the importance of the living experience is acknowledged formulating a method of study becomes easier because of a correlation between the living experience and a method. By employing an appropriate method the researcher will be more effective in assisting those individuals who seek a fuller spiritual existence.

One method of studying spirituality is looking at its history. However, the author asserts instead of examining history, the more modern methods of reflection is coming to the forefront through the writings of such notable scholars as Schneiders and Principe. These scholars bring new methodological forms to the field of study.

Downey examines a methodological form in the study of spirituality by asking “what is it that ... the discipline of Christian spirituality studies?” He answers this by asserting it is important how researchers approach the subject when studying spirituality. The researcher must possess a strategy with the “what” and the “how” (Downey 1977:117). In developing a strategic plan of action, Downey (1977:118) takes into consideration employing the appropriate method. This is a helpful approach that adds to the knowledge of the discipline of Christian spirituality in studying spirituality.

Downey (1977:120) argues for the discipline of Christian spirituality within the context of various spiritualities. He contends the discipline of Christian spirituality maintains an interest in human relationships with God. The discipline of Christian spirituality seeks for a method of studying the living experience of the Christian believer. In the study of spirituality the researcher must become cognizant of the “human spirit and the Spirit of God.” Christian spirituality as a discipline, says Downey, centers its interest on the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. With this in mind Downey lists seven suggestive ways of studying spirituality:

- 1) within culture; 2) in relation to a tradition; 3) in light of contemporary events, hopes, sufferings and promises; 4) in remembrance of Jesus Christ; 5) in efforts to combine elements of action and contemplation; 6) with respect to charisma and community; 7) as expressed and authenticated in praxis.

Downey (1977:122-123) finally arrives at four methods to study Christian spiritual life: the theological, the anthropological, the historical, and the appropriate. He (1977:123) states each of these methods has a definitive methodology that delineates a series of steps and stages. These steps and stages dictate strategies to arrive at an acceptable knowledge of the Christian spiritual life. He also adds these four major methods complement one another.

1.2.1.5 Froehlich

Froehlich (2005:66) agrees with Schneiders’ interdisciplinary method of study, and uses the method to develop her own. She argues where method is a concern you can name a “methodological principle.” This relates directly to spirituality as a discipline. She defends her assertion by bringing back the hypothesis of interiority as it relates to the object and the method to the discipline of spirituality. Froehlich begins with a very simple approach: ask the

right questions. She arrives at this understanding through the influence of Bernard Lonergan (who probably learned it from Aristotle). Froehlich gives an example of one critical question that may be indicative of a methodological principle. It is of a reflective nature when approaching a research project. As a teacher she asks herself: 'What am I doing when I teach spirituality?' The question is not about the theoretical or practical aspect of teaching, rather about the physicality of teaching that affects her personal spirituality. The right questions could lead to valid answers.

Froehlich (2005:66-67) elucidates what constitutes a methodological principle. She shares a scenario of problems she encounters when teaching a Doctor of Ministry program to a group of mid life or older students at Catholic Theological Union. The students have difficulty detecting the relevancy of the study of spirituality to ministerial reality. She asks them to write about their own living experience within the context of spirituality. During this entire process Froehlich (2005:67-68) finds useful the four levels of spirituality Downey outlines in his book, *Understanding Christian Spirituality*. She employs all of his suggestions on levels of spirituality with her students in the Doctor of Ministry program. The first level she applies deals with texts describing spirituality academically. The second level constitutes a text expressing spiritual wisdom. The third approach involves the living experience of the students. The fourth level leads to the finality of her methodological principle. This one involves insight into the foundational character of the human spirit. From this perspective Froehlich remarks we can formulate methods of studying spirituality that encapsulate all aspects of this phenomenon.

1.2.1.6 Conclusion

The comments on method or methodologies by all five scholars are helpful. Their comments help to better acquaint me with the subject matter. However, I have to decide how relevant their work is to my field of research. This is a critical issue when choosing and applying the appropriate method for studying spirituality. I agree with Schneiders (2005a:14-15) in the hands of the examiner he or she must skillfully use methodology as a tool. Thus the selection of the appropriate method is critical.

For a researcher that is new to the field of studying spirituality or a returning scholar, the

issue of how to study spirituality remains problematic. Schneiders (2005a:14-15) suggests an interdisciplinary methodology. Although I agree with Schneiders, I would caution to be selective in deciding what associate discipline to use for examining spirituality. I would devote some attention to biblical studies but not an accessible amount of time because the emphasis is on spirituality. The history of spirituality would receive brief attention because of my preoccupation with contemporary spirituality as it relates to my research project. I took Downey's (1977:120) suggestions for studying spirituality, giving theology attention because of its close proximity to spirituality. Sociology also plays a vital role in the area of culture and its impact on spirituality. In this case, the two communities I have studied are located in different areas. I also pay attention to anthropology close because of the intricacy and the complexities of human beings.

The initial method of studying the spirituality of an individual is to gain insight into his or her human spirit. Categorically, in order to look into the spirit of a human being one must study his or her spirituality. This becomes my challenge as well as that of any researcher struggling with the issue how to study spirituality.

Therefore, in forming a working definition of spirituality I distilled the essence of the scholarly views that I most arrive at a working definition: *Spirituality is an experience in the presence of the Creator and the dynamic transforms us.* Thus, I conclude the dynamic can lead to the employment of the appropriate method or methodology. In addition, the dynamic is critical to my understanding the transformational process that causes dependency upon the Creator.

1.2.2 Specific Methods

1.2.2.1 Questions & Constituting Elements

(a) Smit's Proposal

Smit (1989:88-94) formulates a methodology in an attempt to delineate spirituality. Smit accomplishes this by proposing "a series of questions." He then lists the elements of his questions as follows:

Religious exercises and practices (e.g. meditation, prayer, Bible reading, liturgy, music)
Time cycles (life-daily- and annual cycles) and communities (e.g. family, society)
Christian symbols or doctrines (e.g. God, Christ, Holy Spirit)
Religious motifs (e.g. peace, holiness, purity, love, justice, journeying)
Various relationships (e.g. to the world, to God, to the self)
Ethos (e.g. work, consumer, personal growth, liberation)

There is the possibility Smit's proposed series of questions will lead to serious research of a specific spirituality. This will impact Smit's methodology. Yet his proposal lacks some strength. He fails to include the issue of spirituality as a rational "matter" in his attempt to describe it. For example, he never mentions the subject of transformation or context. Nevertheless, this research is formally structured on his proposal. A new set of dimensions is to be applied. These dimensions are identified and explained in the subsequent segment.

(b) Constituting Elements

The constituting elements I shall discuss are: context, forms of expression and practices, normativity & authority, theological co-ordinates/identity, morality, and transformation.

Context

In studying the spirituality of an individual or a group people it is important to know where they are located. It is important to learn the historical and the cultural background of the particular location. The history and culture where people reside impact their spirituality. As result of this, it will define how they view their environment.

The researcher should also look at the racial make-up of the people who reside in an area. The information gathering should include how long the people lived in a particular area, and the level of stability in the area. Is it a migrant environment or do the people settle in the area and form a stable community are questions that must be addressed?

The researcher should take note of the foods that people eat in their community. Food can tell a lot about the people's culture. For example, in the Republic of South Africa many of the people prefer eating maize meal.

Language is vital in studying the spirituality of a people. Language forms a way of communicating with the Creator. The Creator communicates with people through their spirit that is interpreted by their language. So in essence language and spirituality form a close association.

The religious beliefs of a people reveal their experience of transcendence. Beliefs help people to interpret their deity. What symbols or images do they use to define their Creator? What name or names do the people apply to their god or gods?

The researcher must examine the religious relics used in worship and at home. How do worshippers honor their Creator? What sacrifices are made to their deity?

Another critical question is how do people identify themselves? And how do they identify themselves in relation to others? How do they feel toward “outsiders”? Is there love or hate? This will impact their spirituality by internalizing true feelings.

Any serious researcher needs to examine the community’s political system. The political system will impact the spirituality of the people by determining whether the people identify with the political process.

The type of education, access and importance of education in a community must weigh in to the study of spirituality. This will impact the spirituality of a community affecting their ability to see a connection between education and the Creator.

Looking at those who are prosperous and those who are not will assist the researcher in examining the spirituality of a group in a specific area to determine how economics affects an individual’s spirituality.

In summary the context of a community helps to shape and define an individual’s spirituality. The contexts of two religious communities in New York City will be researched to show how environment influences spirituality. The spirituality of the two communities will be looked at for similarities and differences.

Forms of Expression and Practices

Major expressions render spirituality visibly distinctive, such as prayer, liturgies, and reading the Scriptures. There are also religious practices concerning time cycles, for example, daily, weekly, and annual practices in the observance of various religious days. There are religious practices concerning rites of passage, that is, birth, puberty, marriage, and death.

For Black Hebrew Christians, the Seventh Day Sabbath and the seven Hebrew Holy Days are significant in their expression of faith and practice. The seven Hebrew Holy Days are Sabbaths. All members must observe these days and refrain from working in or outside the home. This becomes problematic with fire-fighters, doctors and nurses whose services are required on any day of the week. New York City passed a law in several years ago that all civil service examinations given on Saturday must also be made available for Sabbath observers on Sunday. New York City and the Federal Supreme Court of the United States of America passed laws requiring all employers to make allowances for Sabbath observers to be off on Saturdays.

Various forms of visual art, paintings, and statues play a non-existent role in the Black Hebrew communities because these can be classified as idolatry. Music and singing play vital roles. When people are kneeling at the altar tarrying (clapping hands, praying and crying out loud), music and singing accompany them. Often when the preacher is preaching, he or she requires the playing of music. Music accompanies the collection of the offering. When members pray, music is played. During the taking of communion there is music and singing. One song can be sung for an hour. Sometimes a member will go into the phenomenon of tongues and sing songs in Italian, Hebrew and other languages. One of the most essential instruments in the Hebrew church is the drum. Many of the young people begin early learning how to play this instrument. Sheet music doesn't exist for the pianist or organist. All musicians play instruments by ear.

When the Brooklyn Hebrew church opens its Sabbath service on Friday evening and Saturday morning, members stand and face the eastern direction of the temple. They raise their hands. Usually, one person is chosen by the pastor to pray out loud. Then the Ten Commandments are recited. Some Hebrew Pentecostal churches chant the *Sha'ma*. Sabbath observance is from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Following the prayer, Saturday Sabbath school begins with an in depth study of the Bible. All of this gives expression to the

spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals through their liturgical practices.

Normativity & Authority

In the Black Hebrew Pentecostal church at the top of the pyramid stands the pastor as the interpreter of normativity and the dispenser of authority. The pastor decides all issues related to the church. Votes are not taken. The pastor in the Brooklyn church decides who will be a deacon or deaconess. The pastor picks the trustees to the board, and determines who has a calling to the ministry. The pastor decides when to ordain a local minister. The pastor appoints members to various auxiliaries in the church. If there is a written schedule for carrying out Sabbath (Saturday), the pastor at any time can alter the service. For example, a pastor might decide that the Sabbath school will not begin at a certain time in the morning. He or she might substitute a tarry service or a breakfast at that particular hour. It is understood that this is all dependent on how the Holy Spirit leads the pastor. After all, he or she is the spiritual leader in the church. There is no one with more authority than the pastor. There is the belief amongst some members that the pastor receives his or her appointment from Yahweh to lead the people. In the case of one Black Hebrew Pentecostal church, the pastor receives her appointment from the bishop: hopefully, Yahweh leads the bishop to make this choice.

This authoritative role of the pastor in the Hebrew Pentecostal church comes from tradition. Traditionally one never challenges the authority of the pastor. It is believed to challenge the role of the pastor is to risk punishment by God, since Yahweh calls, sends and appoints the pastor to shepherd the flock. It is believed that the Holy Spirit works through the pastor. The pastor is the “mouthpiece for God” working through the Holy Spirit. This is the Moses syndrome that God deals with a specific leader.

The Bible is central to the faith of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals. The Bible is a guide to understanding our faith, and is the exclusive resource material for sermons. Hebrews do not use any form of written script when preaching the Word. The preacher will on average take only the Bible when entering the rostrum. On occasion the pastor or a minister will never open the Bible when preaching because the verbal text comes extemporaneously from Yahweh through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Black Hebrew Pentecostal church has a creed and some have 24 principles that provide instructions for members. The major purpose of the creed or principles is to direct members how to administer their lives outside of the church. The creed or principles determine the norm for spirituality. One example of a norm is that members are forbidden from indulging in any form of alcoholic beverage.

Theological Co-ordinates/Identity

One of the unique elements of the theology of Black Hebrew Pentecostals is the group's dual identity. They are Pentecostal and Hebrew; this signifies a descendant from the ancient Israelites. Hebrew implies practicing the religion of Judaism. The Black communities that are the subject of this project do not practice Judaism exclusively. These two communities believe that Yahshua, the Son of Yahweh, is the Messiah. What makes these communities Hebrew is some of the Judaic practices. Hebrew also represents the language of ancient Israel. A few Blacks are proficient in the language.

The Black Hebrew communities incorporate liturgical practices from both Judaism and Christianity. One Judaist practice is the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. During these hours, members cannot go to the store and are forbidden from cleaning their homes. Another Judaist practice is the observance of the seven Holy Days that are Sabbaths. Other Judaist practices are followed such as refraining from eating pork or fish without scales, such as shrimp or lobster. When a boy reaches the age of 13, he is given a Bar Mitzvah. At 12, a girl is given a Bat Mitzvah.

Pentecostal practices also shape the theology of the Black Hebrew. Hebrew Pentecostals believe Jesus is the Son of God. In line with traditional Christian teachings, they believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead. Unlike traditional Christians, Black Hebrew Pentecostals do not recognize Sunday as the day of worship. Nor do they recognize the traditional Christian theological interpretation of Sunday as the Day of the Lord. Hebrew Pentecostals do not recognize Sunday observance in celebration of the resurrection of Christ. Some Hebrew Pentecostals question whether Christ rose on Sunday. Many Hebrew Pentecostals contend Christ rose on the Sabbath (Saturday). These beliefs make their faith different from other mainline Christians who believe Christ rose "early Sunday morning" (Mk 16:2 NKJV).

Hebrew Pentecostals do not observe Christmas Day as the birth of Christ. Nor do they take part in religious or secular festivities of Christmas, such as giving presents or singing the seasons' songs. Black Hebrew Pentecostals claim this is a Roman pagan worship day taking place during the "Winter Solstice."¹ Hebrew Pentecostals do not keep Easter. The Black Hebrews Pentecostals are aware both the non-observance of Christmas Day and Easter go contrary to the practice of mainline Christianity.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals speak in tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit; this defines the spirituality of Pentecostalism: "Pentecostal denominations or movements teach that all Christians should seek a post-conversion baptism in the Holy Spirit . . . that glossolalia is the initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism" (Land 1989:484). Speaking in tongues is a vital norm for the two Black Hebrew communities.

Shouting under the anointing and moving of the Holy Spirit is a practice encouraged by Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Shouting in the Holy Spirit is dancing under the control of an unseen force. This is different from "praise dancing" that is performed in the church at occasional services. Praise dancing can be a form ballet or hip hop done to religious music. This type of dancing is usually done by women. Shouting is done by men and women and it impacts their spirituality.

Hebrew Pentecostals use different names for God and Jesus. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals use the Greek name God. Other Black Hebrew churches use only the Hebrew name Yahweh or Yahshua. Still other Hebrew Pentecostals use both Yahweh and God. The church that uses only Yahweh, argues that God is a pagan name. To use the name God defames the true name of the Creator: "The Jews considered the name so holy that they never pronounced it, to prevent taking God's name in vain" (Miethe 1988:223). Black Hebrew Pentecostals harbor no apprehension about using the name Yahweh in or out of the temple. Some Black Hebrews feel self-condemnation when uttering the words God or Jesus because they claim these are pagan names. The name of Yahweh has a deeper and a more subtle meaning for Hebrew Pentecostals. Using "Yahweh" identifies the Black Hebrews as children of Israel who are the chosen people of Yahweh. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches

¹:1. either of the two points on the ecliptic at which its distance from the celestial equator is greatest and which is reached by the sun each year about June 22 and December 22.

2. the time of the sun's passing a solstice which occurs about June 22 to begin summer in the northern hemisphere and about December 22 to begin winter in the northern hemisphere.

that use both Jesus and Yahshua consider Yahshua to be the more holy name because of its Hebrew origin.

Those churches using the names, Jesus or Yahshua believe Christ will hear their prayers no matter what title they give Him. Through the fullness of His humanity Christ is able to feel the infirmities of Black Hebrew Pentecostals. The messiah's humanity initiates a human-Christ relationship in the Black Hebrew Pentecostals' daily existence that makes titles less important.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals interpret the Holy Spirit in different ways. Black Hebrews interpret the Holy Spirit as being remote, near, or mysterious depending on the circumstances. Some Black Hebrews refer to Holy Spirit as holy and powerful. Specific metaphors include: Teacher, Comforter, Leader and Discerner. For the Black Hebrew to define the Holy Spirit can prove to be a task that probes deeply into the dynamic of his or her spirituality.

The Holy Spirit empowers the believer to ascend into heaven when Yahshua the Messiah returns to earth. Through the relationship with the Holy Spirit, the believer experiences spiritual joy, peace and happiness. Before this relationship can begin, however, the Black Hebrew Pentecostal must receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is evidenced by the speaking in tongues as based on Acts 2:1-4. This happens when the individual has surrendered his or her heart to Christ. When this happens, transformation and salvation takes its full effect in the believer's life.

Morality

In the Brooklyn Black Hebrew Pentecostal congregation, the behavior of the members is governed by rules on vices and virtues. Members must shun vices and taboos. Members are forbidden to drink alcohol, use controlled substances or smoke. Because drinking wine is considered a sin, it is not used during communion. Black Hebrew Pentecostals abstain from vices because of health concerns, and because the body is the temple that should not be polluted. Adultery is also forbidden for it is the breaking of the Ten Commandments. It too defiles the body and subsequently is a vice. A member caught indulging in a vice is considered a "backslider," someone who has fallen from grace. He or she must repent and

confess their fault to the whole congregation. He or she must tarry before the whole congregation and then the backslider will be forgiven and accepted back into the church.

Fornication outside of marriage is also a taboo and a sin. It is considered a defilement of the body. In this context, adults worry about premarital sex among young people in the congregations. They understand that the rate of teenage pregnancy has reached epidemic proportions in the Black community. The Black Hebrew church encourages youth to abstain from sex until marriage using the Bible teachings that fornication defiles the body. Abstinence until marriage is considered a virtue. One challenge the Black Hebrew church encounters is the distribution of condoms in public schools. Black Hebrews believe that the government is encouraging young people to fornicate, and sin against Yahweh.

Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities also provide guidance about interaction between brothers and sisters inside and outside the church community. Most rules relate to decorum between a brother and a sister inside church. For example, a man and woman should not shake hands too long because the flesh might start “crawling.” This an unwritten rule passed down verbally. The rules about interaction between a brother and a sister may equally apply to members interactions with people outside of the religious community. Another rule encourages young people to marry only believers in Christ, preferably those who observe the Sabbath. The youth receive caution about entering into a courtship with a non-Christian because according to the Bible the non-Christian may cause the believer to leave Christ.

Transformation

Understanding the mystical relationship between humans and God may require the application of metaphors. Attention must be paid to the spiritual journey, practice of obedience, struggle, love and growth. The Black Hebrew Pentecostal community has little difficulty articulating its relationship with Yahweh. As Hebrews, their relationship is steeped in the history of Israel and the chosen people of Yahweh. Black Hebrews are descendents of Abraham. This lineage gives Black Hebrew Pentecostals a special place in the eyes of the Creator. The Gentiles later come into the realm of Yahweh by His Son.

The bishop overseeing the Gideon Knights Church believes he is chosen in his relationship with God. This bishop believes this because of an intense and unique experience of God’s

presence (Sherron 1967). This Hebrew man reported a conversation with Yahweh and the devil simultaneously some years ago. The devil wanted his soul and so did Yahweh. The conversation took place on a Monday afternoon. The bishop had to make a choice between the two. He chose Yahweh. He received salvation that evening with a baby as white as a sheet coming from a darkened sky. It came through the car windshield and leaped into his chest. A dark cloud lifted from him. The man became instantly saved. The bishop over the years has reflected on the interpretation of a white baby leaping into his chest. He has never received an explanation of this experience.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals strive for spiritual maturity. For the Brooklyn Black Hebrew Pentecostal church, the endowment with more Spirit of Yahweh leads to spiritual maturity. This pastor looks for the demonstration of Yahweh's Spirit as a symbol of spiritual maturity. She would like for Yahweh to use her in exhibiting His power. This pastor strives to grow in God to be able to live fully for Yahweh. This pastor feels she is lacking in some spiritual awareness because she is unable to perform many of the miraculous acts in the name of Yahshua. She prays and fasts in order to mature spiritually and to experience transformation. This pastor often recites, "I want my satisfying portion."

In the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community the term *Saint* has a totally different interpretation than other religious denominations. A saint is someone who undergoes a powerful spiritual transformation and is born again. A saint is not an exceptional spiritual person. An unsaved person coming into the Black Hebrew Pentecostal Church to receive salvation is considered a sinner. This person is outside of the community. Once the sinner tarries and feels the moving of the Holy Spirit he or she experiences transformation. This can happen on the first visit if the sinner is perceived by the older members to authentically repent. One method of discerning true repentance is observing the sinner cry, sweat, and roll on the floor. There has to be a show of physical emotion. Transformation takes place in the life of the unsaved and ushers in a feeling of self-transcendence. While undergoing transformation the repentant one receives a new name in heaven and becomes a saint. All those who are born again are saints with new names written in heaven.

The Black Hebrew Pentecostal Church guides people in nurturing and deepening their relationship to God. This can be done through specific practices like fasting, meditation, Bible reading, preaching, going on retreats, and cultivating solitude. Surrendering to the will

of Yahweh deepens that relationship. Black Hebrews believe that the human being's will is strong because we have been living with it for so long that it becomes "second nature." Our will creates a comfort zone of security and control. Obeying the will of God disturbs that comfort zone. Yahweh wants to control our lives. Forming a deeper relationship with Yahweh, requires us to consciously and willingly give up our will to His will. We then incorporate His will. Here rests the major challenge for every believer. His will is not always clear and often we struggle trying to determine His will. But in the process of seeking to do His will, we form a deeper relationship with Yahweh.

In the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community fasting is the primary means for spiritual maturity. Fasting deepens the relationship with Yahweh. The Brooklyn church frequently fasts three days and three nights without water or food. During that time, some members stay in the church and sleep on the floor in order to deny themselves physical comfort. Fasting is a practice taught to children. In fact, some children are made to fast three days and three nights from an early age. Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe fasting brings a quicker spiritual maturity than, for example, reading the Bible.

For the Black Hebrew Pentecostal Churches, spirituality is a link to the Holy Spirit, who is considered a teacher. The Holy Spirit teaches one to love all people in and outside the community. The Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe the Holy Spirit will teach them how to concern themselves with the problems of society and to pray diligently for changes. The members receive encouragement to pray particularly for political leaders. The pastor asks the members to pray for the leaders of the church to do Yahweh's will.

(c) List of Questions for Empirical Research

The research questions developed around the central issue of supplying information to the academy regarding the nature of spirituality and finding ways to accomplish this. The questions reflect the working definition of spirituality: *Spirituality is an experience in the presence of the Creator and the dynamic transforms us.* In the data-gathering phase, both communities of Black Hebrew Pentecostals received identical questions and their answers allowed me to delve deeper into their spirituality. Therefore, data from both Black Hebrew communities will help me to probe deeper into their spirituality. Gathering information from

questionnaires is critical to the academy. There is a need to determine whether or not the information is valid. This is critical for researching the spirituality of the two Pentecostal communities. Questions remain our vital tools. The areas of the questions that reflect upon the working definition are as follows:

1.1 In what context is the religious community situated (geographically, politically, socially, economically, culturally, ethnically)?

1.2 What is the history of the community?

1.3 Did the context have any impact on the formation of the community?

2.1 In which distinctive & unique forms are the Spiritual practices expressed?

Or: What are the distinctive & unique Spiritual practices?

Or: What makes your faith different from others in terms of what you do?

2.2 What is unique & distinct about the music used in the Spirituality?

2.3 What is the general attitude towards time in the Spirituality?

3.1 What has the greatest authority in the Spirituality?

3.2 How does the Bible influence and impact the Spirituality?

3.3 What is the influence of the Religious Leader on the Spirituality of the community?

3.4 Are there any written texts, apart from the Bible, which is normative in the Spirituality?

4.1 What are the unique and distinct elements of what the community believe?

Or: What makes your faith different from others in terms of what you believe?

4.2.1 What are the most important names, and descriptions you use for God?

4.2.2 What does God do for you in your life?

4.3.1 What are the most important names, and descriptions you use for Jesus Christ?

4.3.2 What does Jesus Christ do for you in your life?

4.4.1 What or who is the Holy Spirit?

4.4.2 What does the Holy Spirit do for you in your life?

5.1 What is considered bad (taboo, vice) and good (virtue) in your spirituality?

5.2 Are there specific rules how you should behave to others in your community and outside your community?

6.1 How will you describe the relationship between you and God?

6.2 Did you ever have a very intense and special experience of God's presence?

6.3. What do you strive for in your relationship with God?

Or: What do you consider as Spiritual maturity?

6.4 Who would be considered a saint or person of exceptional Spirituality in your community?

6.5 What helps you deepen your relationship with God?

6.5.1 What is done in the Community to guide members to spiritual maturity?

6.6.1 What does your spirituality mean for you?

6.6.2 How do you consider outsiders to your community?

6.6.3 What is your general attitude to the society and all its problems?

1.2.2.2. Ware-Holmes Typology

The Ware-Holmes typological method is used in my field work with both Black Hebrew communities. The application of the Ware-Holmes typological method is administered in order to determine which spiritual typology depicts the spirituality of the two Black Hebrew communities.

Ware's (1995:1) interest in typological spirituality begins with her exploring the phenomenon as to whether there are types of spirituality. In exploring this issue she analyzes various responses of people in their worshipping community. She tries to ascertain the parishioners' religious expression in worship. Ware wants to know whether worship meets their spiritual needs. This raises several issues. If the worship service does not meet the spiritual needs of members, a religious leader might ponder the following questions: What is our church really like compared to other churches? What do we need most to strengthen in our congregation to meet the needs of more people? How can we relieve some of the discontent?

Ware searches for answers to pass on to struggling spiritual leaders. These questions lead Ware to the notion of types of spirituality. She offers two questions in response to the three questions in the previous paragraph: Who am I as a spiritual person and what is the spiritual profile of my worshipping group (1)? The critical profile of an individual or group is crucial to the understanding of types of spirituality.

Ware (1995:2) describes Marie, a 67-year-old parishioner. This woman feels she is not spiritual because her spirituality type is different than the spirituality of her church. Ware concludes the way people feel in response to patterns of worship implies there are types of spirituality (2). Ware's understanding of types of spirituality rile critics who claim that an individual's spirituality cannot be known because it is the private business between the individual and God. Ware defends her work saying she is not trying to quantify how spiritual a person is, but rather what "kind" of spirituality they exude. Ware acknowledges Carl Jung's temperament types of spirituality have added much to the field of spirituality. Ware relies on

the work of Urban T. Holmes who proposes a method for studying spiritual types. Ware asserts the types of spirituality that encompasses the work of Urban T. Holmes is foundational for her book.

Ware says that understanding types of spirituality has a twofold approach for the individual and the group or group leader. One can better understand where he or she fits into the group by becoming aware of his or her spirituality type. And, an awareness of spiritual types helps the group and group leader to better address the needs of the church.

The Ware-Holmes model for studying types of spirituality is “The Spirituality Wheel.” The wheel depicts an individual’s spirituality and that of the worshipping community (1995:6). There are two wheels: one reflects the kind of worship experienced in a given congregation. The other show a person’s preferences and inclinations. The two wheels exist simultaneously. The use of one wheel obtains information about the particular worshipping community. The use of the other wheel gathers data with regard to the parishioner’s personal feelings during the worship service.

Each wheel or circle is divided into four parts. The individual quadrants represent one of four types of spirituality. To determine the distinct spirituality of each quadrant there is a set of questions. The same questions are used with the two wheels, the “congregational style” wheel and the “personal style” wheel (Ware 1995:53). The individual parishioner or the worshipping community selects one of four possible statements that best describe their spirituality type.

The Holmes’ (1995:7) model further describes the circle. The circle or the wheel has a vertical line and horizontal line forming four quadrants. The vertical line has a north pole and a south pole. In the Holmes model, the term “Speculative” refers to the north pole or the top of the circle’s vertical line. The term “Affective” indicates the south pole or the bottom of the circle’s vertical line. The horizontal line of the circle has an east pole to the right and a west pole to the left. The term “Kataphatic” designates the east pole or right side of the circle’s horizontal line. The term “Apophatic” is the west pole or left side of the circle’s horizontal line.

Holmes' (7) model outlines the Circle of Sensibility using four quadrants to represent four types of schools of spirituality. The northeast part of the wheel is number one. This quadrant between the Speculative and Kataphatic has Rationalism as its spirituality type. Quadrant number two, between Kataphatic and Affective is the spirituality type Pietism. Quadrant three has Quietism between the south pole Affective and the west pole Apophatic. The fourth quadrant between Apophatic and Speculative is spirituality type Encratism. Holmes' rational model for studying the various types of spirituality affords "a tool and a method . . . to conceptualize and name spiritual experience within a basic framework" (7).

In an adaptation of Holmes' "Circle of Spirituality, Ware designed "The Spirituality Wheel" (1995:8). Ware's model has a more rational approach than Holmes. Ware uses more contemporary and friendlier terms. Starting at the north and going clockwise Ware uses the term Intellectual for the top of her vertical line. The east horizontal line reads Imaging. South of the vertical line is Heartfelt. West of the horizontal line is Mystery.

Each of the four quadrants depicts spirituality types. *Head-trip* is quadrant one between Intellectual north and the Imaging east. Quadrant two between Imaging east and Heartfelt south is *Emotionalism*. *Reclusivity* is quadrant number three between Heartfelt south and Mystery west. *Moralism* is quadrant number four between Mystery west and Intellectual north.

Ware's modern adaptation of terms makes it easier to study the various types of spirituality. Her (1995:3) model is more rational because of the in depth questions her model asks and the answers it elicits. The rational of the model helps people name their spiritual type and that of their group. This is appropriate in assisting the parishioners as a group and as individual members to discover what their spirituality type is. This becomes possible on the basis of the four different classifications of spirituality types. The four different classifications of spirituality types are found in four distinct quadrants. Each quadrant represents a specific type of spirituality. Through Ware's relational model the religious congregation and the individual member will select a spirituality type quadrant that best describes his or her spirituality.

Ware implements her model by first explaining how to take the Spirituality Wheel Selector test. Without an understanding of how the selector tests functions implementation will be problematic. Ware (1995:47) recognizes for some people the test is challenging and poses a

problem of clearly understanding the test. She admits this is possibly due to the fact that the test is an unfamiliar method of evaluation. Because the Spirituality Wheel Selector test is unfamiliar to some, Ware must spend time explaining the method. This will facilitate its implementation.

Ware (1995:49) begins to facilitate the implementation of two spirituality wheels. She attempts this by explaining the purpose of the test. By doing this Ware hopes to pave the way for its implementation. She says, “The purpose of this exercise is to DRAW A PICTURE of your experience of corporate worship and compare it to the picture of your own personal style of spirituality.” The top circle is the Congregational Style. In the bottom circle Ware measures Personal Style and individual parishioner’s spirituality type. Ware suggests comparing the corporate picture of the congregation’s spirituality type to that of the individual parishioner.

In the top circle, Congregational Style, you draw a picture of your spiritual questions that Ware formulates to “describe what you do in a worshipping group.” One may select none or more than one to place in quadrant 1, 2, 3, or 4 (49). In the second or bottom circle, Personal Style, one looks for something different to compare to the first circle. In the bottom circle participants are asked to draw a picture of his or her spiritually type or personal style. Ware says responding to the questions will help you to “describe what you personally prefer as part of your spiritual experience.” In the first circle, participants describe the congregation’s spiritual experience. The second circle reflects the individual’s preference for spiritual experience. This juxtaposition raises questions about whether the religious environment meets the person’s spiritual needs.

In using Ware’s Spirituality Wheel in the study of both Hebrew Pentecostal communities I would first discuss the test. The sessions would begin with an explanation of how the wheel worked, and what it was intended to measure. I would ask questions in order to avoid problems when implementing the test. This would require clear clarification of the instructions. To implement the test I would possibly to have simplify Ware’s instructions even more. This might help the two Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities to better understand how to complete the test. After explaining and listening to their questions I would have to evaluate whether or not they fully understand all of the categories. I might let them take the test home to review it. After this, I would implement the “The Spirituality Wheel”

test.

Ware's (1995:9) four types of Spirituality need to be defined. She says the quadrants identifying four types of Spirituality will be the basis for the testing done by the Spirituality Wheel. Within the context of the significance of each type of spirituality Ware cautions that each quadrant has its own aberration, its own extreme that can damage and restrict growth, both personally and in the community. Type-1 spirituality is what Ware (1995:37) calls "an intellectual thinking spirituality that favors what it can see, touch, and vividly imagine." Type-1 spirituality values education, theological reflection and ethical issues. This quadrant has an interest in education (1995:38). Type-1 differs from type 2 or 3 in that it names the Holy and interprets its experience. People in this quadrant are aware of their growing connection with God.

Type-2 spirituality she calls *A Heart Spirituality* (1995:39). This group has a more charismatic spirituality. These people want a more holy life than type-1. People in type-2 have a great interest in evangelism. They want to share their experience of transformation with others. Another significance of this group is their zeal to witness to others in testimonies and music. Theologically, this experience stresses the imminence of God over the transcendence of God. God is real in the here and now. Ware mentions a gospel tune that is a favorite of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community: "Yes, God is real, *cause* I can feel him deep in my soul!" Many black congregations fall into type-2, which generates "warmth of feeling, energy, and freedom of expression" that other congregations often do not experience. Ware (1995:40) enjoins an important significance of type-2 is the Black congregations' "warmth of feeling, energy, and freedom of expression" that other congregations often do not experience. For example, their prayers are primarily extemporaneous.

Type-3, Ware (1995:41) calls *A Mystic Spirituality*. Here, the primary interest is union with the Holy. She said people of this type tend to be more contemplative, introspective, and intuitive. This group consists of people who desire a life of austerity and asceticism. Their agenda is the renewal of inner life. Ware (1995:42) asserts that they often write and publish books dealing with spirituality.

Type-4, Ware (1995:43) terms *A Kingdom Spirituality*. Description of this group is challenging. People of this group are "visionary . . . single minded with a deeply focused,

almost crusading, type of spirituality” Type-4 people share a passion for transforming society and implementing a vision of the world as the Kingdom of God on earth.

Raising awareness of spirituality types helps a worship community to better meet the needs of its members. The personal style test helps individuals to discover how he or she fits into the group and whether their needs are being met.

1.3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This section is critical to the research project because qualitative research is the primary method applied when studying the spiritualities of the two communities.

1.3.1 Basic Features of Qualitative Research

Berg (2007:8) says qualitative research is a search for answers to questions about human behavior in their settings. To accomplish this Berg looks at various social settings with a particular eye on how social settings assist qualitative researchers in their effort to find answers to questions that pertain to human beings. Researchers have an interest in how humans arrange themselves in their settings. Qualitative research examines phenomena like symbols, rituals, social structures, and social roles within the context of environment. The application of this systematic procedure assisted me in this endeavor.

Systematic qualitative research invites the researcher to examine letters, photographs, newspaper accounts, and diaries. In this way the researcher can gather facts about people. Conversing with people is also another means of learning about the daily lives of individuals. Berg (1995:8-9) says that such verbal information permits the researcher to share in the understanding and perception of others. Observation is another tool in systematic qualitative research procedure. Berg refers to observation as a controlling technique in qualitative research. Analyzing the qualitative data is another basic feature of qualitative research. Analyzing gives the researcher the opportunity to examine closely the various contours of the data. Analyzing the data assists the researcher in examining the phenomenon that impacts human beings. The experience of the phenomenon helps to create and maintain human beings’ social realities.

Berg (1995:9) offers another critical and basic feature of qualitative research. He argues qualitative research methods have “methodological rigor.” Qualitative research methods must be extremely systematic. This makes it possible for other researchers to make use of the qualitative research methods. This basic feature of qualitative research cannot be overstated because of its significance to the academy. Berg says the ability to replicate and reproduce qualitative research methods is central to the testing of theories and their acceptance by the scientific communities.

Berg wants to offer an introductory level for conducting high-quality qualitative research in the development and gathering of information. Qualitative research can lead to valid information about the settings and surroundings of human beings in their daily lives. This solid information benefits the academy and future researchers who can reproduce and replicate the data, with confidence it is valid.

1.3.2 Validity in Qualitative Research

Berg (1995:14) argues in favor of validation in qualitative research. He attempts to prove validation in qualitative research by demonstrating its connection to science. This is critical when gathering data because a scientific approach is systematic. Berg confronts his critics who try to assert qualitative research is nonscientific. If qualitative research is nonscientific this could pose a problem. The validity of the data the researcher gathers using the qualitative research methodology could possibly be questionable if not validated. Therefore, validation in qualitative research is critical to it being connected to science. Berg defends qualitative research’s validation by use of scientific methods. He looks at the involvement of scientific issues in qualitative research that critics claim to be nonscientific.

Berg refers to such scholars as Borman, Le Compte and Goetz who offer their views as to why other scholars question the validity of qualitative research. Borman, Le Compte and Goetz argue the problem arises because of a misunderstanding of the term “empirical.” Other scholars when using the term empirical equate it with quantification. The empirical connection with quantification has no bearing on qualitative research’s validation.

Berg argues various technologies are in use by different researchers. The technology they use

has to perform to a scientific approach. Some researchers use the qualitative research methodology. These researchers consider the qualitative research technology to be a scientific approach that validates qualitative research.

Berg defines science as a specific and systematic way of discovering and understanding how social realities arise, operate, and impact on individuals and organizations. This lends support to qualitative research being scientific in its methods because of a systematic approach. As a result it helps to validate qualitative research.

Berg argues scientific researchers may demonstrate a more positivist view of individuals and their world of reality than other social science researchers. Such an approach Berg interprets within the context of qualitative research and its validity. Systematic procedures of methodology are applicable to qualitative research (1995:8). Berg (1995:14) contends the qualitative strategies assist the ideal positive-science researchers by providing a rigorous, reliable, and verifiable large aggregate of data and statistical testing of empirical hypotheses. All of this scientific evidence points to the reality there is validation in qualitative research if applied correctly. Equally convincing is the fact that because of the validation of qualitative research, scientific researchers find it helpful in their work, for example, in studying spirituality.

1.3.3 Principles of Focus Groups

In considering Berg (1995:158) the term “basic ingredients” in focus groups to has the same meaning as the ‘principles of focus groups.’ So when the basic ingredients in focus groups is being discussed it refers to the underlying faculties that makeup the focus groups.

Berg lists eight basic ingredients in focus groups. The first is a *clearly defined objective* and/or research problem. Berg says researchers must determine if the focus group is the only available way of collecting data or if there are other means of collecting data. The researcher must have a clear understanding of the research problem. This is critical to the researcher’s use of questions during focus group sessions.

The second ingredient is the *nature of the group*. The researcher must define the characteristics of the group, particularly whether the group is *homogeneous* or *heterogeneous*.

The researcher should decide if the group is appropriate for the questions. For example, Berg says a researcher would not question Quakers about the Sioux India culture in America.

The third ingredient entails *atmosphere/environment and rapport*. Berg says confidentiality of discussable information during the session in a focus group is vital. The establishment of rapport between facilitator and the group members is central to the success of the focus group. The facilitator must make sure all group members feel free to express themselves openly.

The fourth ingredient is an *aware listening facilitator*. The facilitator must possess a keen ear for listening. He or she should utilize a schedule or agenda. However, the schedule or the agenda must remain flexible and open to interesting topics that spontaneously arise. New or surprising topics may prove more important than the previously scheduled items for discussion.

Ingredient five calls for a *well-organized and prepared facilitator*. Berg emphasizes a facilitator must possess a clear understanding how the group sessions are to proceed. He or she must do this whether working with several specific questions or with several general topical areas. Being unprepared without any sense of direction or knowledge of the questions and the topics can kill a focus group.

The sixth ingredient is *structure and direction* but restrained contribution to the discussion. Berg (1995:159) argues a facilitator should guide the group in a discussion but always avoid offering opinions and substantive comments. The author offers a suggestion when conducting interviews: the ideal product is 90 percent subject and 10 percent researcher.

Berg suggests the seventh ingredient is recruiting a *research assistant* whose presence will allow a researcher to serve as facilitator. The second researcher can observe and take notes about the group dynamics. The second researcher can identify voices if a recorder is used. Videotaping is useful when possible.

The eighth and final ingredient is a *systematic analysis* of the data from the focus group sessions. The data of recordings, transcriptions, audiotapes or videotapes of group sessions may be of some use. Berg argues accurate data is vital in order to attest to its verifiability.

The analysis process should afford another researcher the opportunity to find similar conclusions using the same or similar documents and raw data. In the final analysis, all of the eight ingredients are representative of the principles of the focus groups.

1.3.4 Methodology

The first step in researching the spirituality of two unique religious communities was selecting the appropriate one. I wanted to find two religious communities with individual identities and shared traits. The communities also had to be agreeable to my research project. The communities had to accept my presence as an observer in their congregation. And I was looking for communities that would understand the value of my work and want to cooperate with this project.

After selecting the religious communities, I approached the spiritual leaders. I knew that if he or she did not see the value of the research project the data could be compromised. The spiritual leader's receptivity to the research project was critical in gaining the acceptance of the congregation. In one Black Hebrew Christian community in America I encountered a problem. The pastor and I knew each other very well. We worshipped together in many different settings. The spiritual leader invited me to speak to the congregation about my research project. The members were eager and excited to participate in the research project.

Days later, the pastor expressed some reservations. She did not see the value of my work in relation to salvation, and wondered if prying into the spirituality of the members is Godly. She did not give an explanation as to why studying spirituality is ungodly. The pastor voiced concerns about the possibility of inviting the wrong or demonic spirits into the church. Because of her respect for me, the pastor gave me permission to ask the members their opinions on the matter. Still, the pastor's feeling of discomfort led me to exclude the church from my project. Even if the members gave their consent, I worried that without the full consent of the pastor the data could be jeopardized. I decided to choose another Black Hebrew community in America.

I finally selected two cooperative Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. My next approach was to give the spiritual leader a formal letter of mutual understanding. This is keeping within

the context of being ethical in my relation with the Black Hebrew Pentecostal Communities. In the letter I explained that I would be an observer at all services, as much as possible, for several months. I would hold focus groups and conduct one-on-one interviews. I would travel with the church on numerous visits to other churches. In the letter to the Queens church I mentioned my plans to travel to another state with them for their annual conference. The pastors honored my request and gave me permission to write and record during the services.

The pastor of the second Black Hebrew Pentecostal church spoke to his head officials about my project. The leaders rejected my proposal without explanation. I returned to the first church where the pastor had reservation. I explained that I had time to find another Black Hebrew Pentecostal church to work with me. I needed to work with her church. The pastor still had reservations about my work. She agreed to participate but asked that I would not include her name in my project or interview her. I agreed and the work proceeded to the discomfort of the pastor and duress for me.

I choose the qualitative research approach to examine the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals because it elicits feelings. The qualitative approach gave me the opportunity of focusing on human expressions of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. I can observe their expressions in focus groups and during interviews. With a qualitative research approach I can listen for certain words, phrases and sentences that help me to gain access to the spirituality of the two Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. Qualitative research allows me to get to know people. I selected participants for the focus groups based on a balance of criteria: male/female, age, level of education, rich/poor. A qualitative approach allows me to pose questions and examine beliefs within the Black Hebrew communities.

My questions are vital to the research of the spirituality of the two Black Hebrew communities. My questions have social construction that relate to the study of spirituality. I designed my questions to explore the spirituality of two Black Hebrew communities. I applied them systematically in order to elicit valid data. This made interpretation easier. I looked for patterns and themes in the responses that would answer my questions about the spirituality of two unique communities.

After writing my questions, I posed them to a focus group. I use focus groups because of the diverse responses. I imagined that participants would feel freer to express their opinions.

When one or two people dominated the discussion, I would encourage other members to speak up. Focus groups were formed in the context of a qualitative methodological approach. Each group had not more than seven people. I worked with the spiritual leaders in the selection process, looking for diversity in age and gender. I chose members who had belonged to the church for more than one year. There are certain nuances of any religious organization that a member only internalizes with time, for example knowing when and how to approach a religious leader for favors. These nuances of a religious community can be vital in understanding the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals. I planned to meet with the group or groups on more than one occasion for about 45 minutes.

I plan to conduct follow up interviews after the focus groups. During the focus groups, I was attentive to verbal responses to questions and observant to non-verbal language. Afterward, I requested interviews with selected participants to delve further into their responses.

Professor Magdel le Roux and I met in January 2008 in her office at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa. We discussed her research project with the Lemba tribe in South Africa. She offered me her book *The Lemba: A Lost Tribe of Israel in Southern Africa?* We discussed her methodology for conducting research. Le Roux used a qualitative researching procedure for her work. In fact, Le Roux (2003:2) writes in the introduction of her book about the value of using qualitative research: *participant observation, in-depth interviewing and falsification (testing the validity of material by using false statements)*. Observation is critical to Le Roux and during my field work it became a vital tool.

On 21 May 2008 I met with Professor A. C. (Annette) Wilkinson, Head of the Section for Higher Education Studies and Research at her office at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Republic of South Africa. She gave me valuable information on the best way to conduct qualitative research with two Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches in America.

Here are some of the salient features of our discussion:

I Sampling

Use an observational schedule with questions and check each one off.

Validate the work scientifically so that others can make use of it. Use qualitative research for

setting the environment and types of people. Choose an appropriate site. Choose people for focus groups with a diversity of gender, age, rich and poor; video the focus sessions if possible.

II Methodology

State why you chose a particular design. How did you collect your data? After a basic understanding of qualitative research, go to the literature: look for patterns and themes; ask yourself: “Why is it like that?” Look for words, phrases and sentences.

III Interviews

Use interviews for specific questions with content and not generalized questions. Questions must have a sociological construct, relate to the project and explain why. Human beings differ, but look for similarities.

IV Interpretation

Compile data and compare—what are the common themes and patterns? What are you looking for? First look for answers and then themes and patterns; identify problems between the researcher and focus group that may have an effect on the data; code your data, for example, male, female and age group.

V Concluding remarks

There is not one reality. Society is what people believe. Reality cannot be determined by objectivity—you must become part of the setting.

CHAPTER 2. BLACK HEBREW PENTECOSTALISM – A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

2.1 STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP

I have searched for information on Black Hebrew Pentecostals at the New York City Public library for Humanities and Social Sciences. No books or periodicals are permitted to leave this Manhattan library, one of the largest research libraries in the city. I searched through books, journal articles, microfilm, newspapers and authenticated sources, and found little information on Black Hebrew Pentecostals. *There is not much information available on this topic.*

I came across a book at the New York Public library that was written by Goldschmidt titled *Race and Religion among the Chosen Peoples of Crown Heights*, (2006). In Goldschmidt's book I did find some information about Black Hebrew Christians. The author gives a little history about the Black Hebrew Christians and its origin. Goldschmidt's work I found very helpful to my study. I found another book by Edgar titled: *Because They Chose the Plan of God* (1988). I used information from this book because it dealt with the Bulhoek massacre in the Republic of South Africa. Several Black Hebrews were killed. More shall be said about this later. Edgar's book contains references to The Church of God and Saints of Christ that has some reference to the Bulhoek massacre. The Church of God and Saints of Christ is a Black Hebrew Christian organization that established churches throughout South Africa in the early 20th century. Edgar describes the relationship between The Church of God and Saints of Christ and the Bulhoek massacre. The Black Hebrew Christians who perished at Bulhoek have been associated with The Church of God and Saints of Christ organization at one time. Therefore, I used some of Edgar's material in my research work.

I also located a book by Parfitt titled: *The Lost Tribes of Israel* (2002). Parfitt did a study of the Black Hebrew Israelites called the Lemba tribe in Southern Africa. Parfitt studied the Lemba tribe in Zimbabwe and in the northern part of the Republic of South Africa in the Venda area. I visited the Lemba tribe in the Venda area of the Republic of South Africa.

I thought I could gather information from the Lemba tribe. My understanding was that they are Black Israelites. This knowledge was gained from reading Parfitt's book. My thoughts were that the data might help me in my work studying the spirituality of two Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. My observation and conversation with several members of the Lemba tribe proved challenging. In addition to proving challenging my observing and conversing with them was disappointing. I had hoped that I could use information about their Hebrew and Christian beliefs in my research on Black Hebrew Pentecostals. But I found the Lemba lifestyle a little complicated because as Israelites they do not observe the 7th Day Sabbath. However, Parfitt's book did allow me to discover and visit with the Lemba tribe of the Republic of South Africa. And I will have more to say about the Lemba tribe in a later chapter.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem is a library that specializes in black studies. Again, there were very few books, articles, or other resources on Black Hebrew Christians and no information on Black Hebrew Pentecostals. What I found was a book by Hughley: *The Truth About Black Hebrew-Israelites (Jews)* (1982). In a historical overview of Black Jews, she includes those who do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. I was able to incorporate some of her work into my paper. But in her book she does not write exclusively on Black Hebrew Christians. So I did not get an abundance of information on the Black Hebrew Christians.

At the Schomburg Center, I located a book by Wynia titled: *The Church of God and Saints of Christ* (1994). This book dealt with a Black Hebrew Christian movement that originated in Kentucky. The author traces this group back to *The Church of God and Saints of Christ* to the Republic of South Africa. This refers to the tragic event of the Bulhoek massacre. The information I found at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture: New York City Public library by Wynia was appropriate historical information for my study of Black Hebrew Christians because the book has accounts of the Bulhoek massacre in the Republic of South Africa.

At the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, the Republic of South Africa library, I searched the Internet to no avail for authors in the Republic of South Africa who have written about Black Hebrew Christians. A librarian there searched globally to find out whether a

dissertation existed on the topic of Black Hebrew Christians. We found one brief synopsis of a dissertation that was in the process of being published by the University of South Africa. The synopsis of the project did not identify Black Hebrew Christians, but referred to Black Hebrews.

It was there that I located a book written by Le Roux, titled *The Lemba: A Lost Tribe of Israel in South Africa*. Le Roux's book deals with the culture of the Lemba tribe of the Republic of South Africa. This tribe has been found by Parfitt to have the same genes as the White Jews. Le Roux's book looks at their identification as Black Hebrews.

On the Internet, I found more updated information on the *The Church of God and Saints of Christ*, the Black Hebrew Christian organization that is the subject of Wynia's book. The Internet gave historical data of *The Church of God and Saints of Christ*. I found the name, information and the pictures of each leader since its founder William Saunders Crowdy in 1896. Although, I found the data informative, I did not use any of the information from the Internet with regard to this church. I have appropriate data from Wynia's book. The information I obtained from her book was sufficient for my research.

A source I turned to for information about the Black Hebrew Christians was a book ordering firm called Amazon.com. I put in a general search for Black Hebrew Christians. The results again did not yield any substantial information. What I did get from the search was Le Roux's book. I already had this book in my possession.

In the final analysis, there is a dearth of information on Black Hebrew Christians, particularly Black Hebrew Pentecostals. When I first searched for authenticated published information I found little results. I even looked for validated data on this topic, but to no avail. My next move was to search for any sources that might yield useful information for my research project. The results were no different than my previous searches: little information. Therefore, I conclude my research project with regard to Black Hebrew Pentecostals should be of value to the academy.

2.2 GENERAL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A central tenant of the faith of Black Hebrew Pentecostals is that they are descendant from Jacob the Israelite. A disclaimer: not all Black Hebrew worshippers claim to be descended from Jacob. The reason is because of their belief that they are the sons and daughters of Africa and not of Israel. The history of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals is reflected in the biblical narrative of two brothers, Esau and Jacob. Esau is the older brother who sold his birthright for food to his brother Jacob. Jacob's name is later changed to Israel. The story of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals begins in Gen 25:25. The Bible (Gen 25:22) relates two nations came forth from Rebekah, the wife of Isaac. Esau is described as red and hairy in scripture. For this reason, he is considered to be White by several Black Hebrew Pentecostals. The red son Esau would eventually develop into the tribe of Edom. According to the Bible, Esau is "the father of the Edomites in mount Seir" (Gen 36:9 KJV). Jacob who was Black, according to interpretations by Black Hebrew Pentecostals, is the Father of the Hebrews.

Some Black Pentecostals believe they are authentic Hebrews, and they are also followers of Christ. Often Black Hebrew assemblies avoid the word "Christian" preferring instead to identify themselves as "followers of the Messiah." These Hebrews do not use the word Christian. For these Hebrews the term Christian has negative connotations because American slavery was defended by the use of the Christian Scripture. This understanding is important to because some Black Hebrews do not hold to a belief in Jesus as the Messiah. These Black Hebrews follow Judaism. The Black Hebrew Pentecostals turn to Scriptures for their identity as both Hebrew and followers of the Messiah. In Romans 3:1-2 Hebrew is defined (Jew): what advantage than has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much is every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God" (NKJV).

Within Black religious communities in America, particularly in New York City, many faiths and denominations have always existed. There are Black believers in Christ as the Messiah, and Blacks who reject the belief in Christ. Many traditional or conservative Black Christians belong primarily to the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, and other denominations. Some Baptist and Methodist churches are unconventional in forms of worship that include drums and shouting. The aforementioned denominations are trinitarians, who believe in the

triune God. Seventh Day Adventist church that observes the Seventh Day Sabbath and, they are also Trinitarian.

The Holiness churches and the Pentecostal churches are also part of the Black community. The Holiness church emphasizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit without the evidence of speaking in tongues. The Pentecostal church, on the other hand, regards the speaking in tongues as essential evidence of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Members of the Pentecostal and Holiness churches seek the Holy Spirit by tarrying.² Believers kneel with eyes closed and clap hands in quick, short snaps. The whole time, they are praising God in spontaneous words of hallelujah. The physical and verbal activity is in anticipation of feeling the Holy Spirit. Once this is felt, bodies gyrate and roll on the floor as tarrying is stepped up.

Though worship may appear similar, Black Pentecostal church may be either trinitarian or apostolic.³ Apostolic churches believe Jesus and God are separate Persons. A Black Holiness or Pentecostal that is either trinitarian or apostolic may worship on Sunday or the Sabbath (Saturday). The Black Holiness or Pentecostal churches that are either trinitarian or apostolic worship on the Sabbath Day do so from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. From within these two groups we the Black Hebrew Pentecostals

Having viewed a synopsis of the complexities of the composition of the Black Hebrew communities, we shall turn our attention to a brief history of Black Hebrew communities. We shall look at the writings of such authors as Hughley, Edgar, Wynia and Goldschmidt.

a) Hughley

Hughley (1982:32) argues Black people are the authentic Hebrew-Israelites. The mark of a true Israelite is the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath. She (1982:35) attempts to

² Tarrying in the Pentecostal religion is a vital ritual practice. Tarrying consist of a man or a woman kneeling at the front of the altar with their eyes closed, clapping his or her hands and repeating either *save me Lord, save me Lord, or glory, glory*. This continues until his or her tongue is taken over by the Spirit. The man or the woman may begin to shake and roll on the floor. This is an indication that the Lord has come into the man or the woman and He has saved him or her.

³ The term apostolic differs in the Black Hebrew communities than traditional Christendom. In the Black Hebrew communities, an apostolic church believes God and Jesus are of separate substances. According to the Bible Jesus is the first created. Trinitarian churches believe in the three natures the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit into One triune God

substantiate the authenticity of the Black Hebrews by declaring White Jews descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob. White Jews referred to as Edomites or Idumeans are imposters, Hughley said. She refers to Revelation 2.9: “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty . . . and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. She also sites Revelation 3.9: “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie;”

Hughley (1982:49) states that before the 17th century there was less concern with race and skin color. People were generally judged by their country of origin. This is how they were identified. In the 17th century, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was the first to classify humankind according skin color (Hughley 1982:36). In America, skin color is a major issue and shapes people’s perception of one another. Hughley says that the Hebrews lost their heritage and identity in 70 C.E. after temple in Jerusalem. The White European Jews are Gentiles who converted to Judaism in 740 C.E. She contends these Jews are Japhetic in origin. The authenticity of Black Hebrew-Israelites can be validated with Scriptural evidence (Hughley1982:49).

b) Edgar

Edgar (1988:24) states the day of the Bullhoek massacre took place in Ntabelanga in Eastern Cape on 24 May 1924. This was an important British holiday, Empire Day. This date was also the birthday of Jan Smuts the president of South Africa at the time. The Black Israelites, under the leadership of Prophet Enoch Mgijima, refused to pay taxes on land where they lived and worked. They refused to vacate upon orders of a White government (Edgar 1988:22). Talks broke down on 11 May 1921 between the Israelites and the Native Affairs Commission (Edgar 1988:23). Eight-hundred police officers gathered at Queenstown police ground in South Africa. The Israelites were prepared to die. Police opened fire and a machine gun massacre ensued. In the end, 183 Israelites were killed and 100 wounded. Only one police officer suffered a stab wound (Edgar 1988:32).

c) Wynia

Wynia (1994a:ix) shows how the *Church of God and Saints of Christ* played a part in the Bulhoek massacre. The *Church of God and Saints of Christ* was founded in Lawrence,

Kansas on 5 November 1886 by William Sanders Crowdy. A Black American who experienced a revelation of God, Crowdy learned his true identity as a Hebrew of the seed of Abraham. Wynia argues the *Church of God and Saints of Christ* bring together both Jewish and Christian practices. Intrinsic to their Hebrew and Christian faith, there is an element of black emancipation (1994a:x).

Wynia (1994a:8) states that the church's preoccupation with black emancipation may have led to the belief that they are the real Jews. During the time of slavery, Blacks related their suffering under White Americans to the suffering of the children of ancient Israel who had suffered under Pharaoh of Egypt. Enslaved Blacks, in their identification with ancient Israel, longed for emancipation. God led Israel out of bondage from the hands of a hard task master. And Blacks (children of Israel) rested their hopes that God would deliver them from slavery into the promised land of freedom (1994a:13). The exodus theme- the most prominent in Jewish theology – resonated deeply with Black America. The journey motif for Black Americans has God emancipating them and leading them to a better place.

Wynia (1994b:22) asserts that while Crowdy, the founder of the *Church of God and Saints of Christ*, was expanding his church movement in such places as Chicago, he preached in the State Street region of the city. Of those converted to his ministry, a large number of them were White. Crowdy taught his followers that Black people were the true descendents of the lost tribe of Israel. He taught the teachings of both the Old and New Testament must be applied to people's lives in order to receive salvation through the blood of Jesus (1994b:24). Included in his doctrine were the Ten Commandments and the Seven Keys. The Seven Keys would assure a place in heaven, along with observing some Jewish practices and the Holy Days. According to Wynia (1994b:25) the Seven Keys were: 1. Repentance of sin. 2. Baptism by burial into water upon confession of faith. 3. Receive unleavened bread and water for Christ's body and blood. 4. Feet washed by elder as it is written in John 13:1-23. 5. Agree to keep commandments. 6. Breathed upon with the holy kiss. 7. Taught to pray as it is written in Matthew 6:9-13.

Wynia (1994b:39-41) reports that Crowdy had a vision where he saw his church movement spread throughout America, into the West Indies and to the Republic of South Africa. His vision was realized when a ministry in South Africa was started by a Xhosa, Albert Christian. A sailor and former Baptist missionary, Christian dreamt in Port Elizabeth that he had

received instructions to go to America and seek out Crowdy. After doing so, Christian returned to the Republic of South Africa as a minister of the *Church of God and Saints of Christ*. Christian founded churches at New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, the Eastern Cape and as far north as Transvaal. The men who succeeded Christian were Samuel Matshaka, John Mskinya and Enoch Mgiijima. The most controversial of all the ministers was Mgiijima. He is notoriously known because of the *Bulhoek massacre* perpetrated by him. Mgiijima was excommunicated from the *Church of God and Saints of Christ* in 1918 because he had visions of Africans overthrowing the Dutch and the British in battle.

Wynia (1994b:42) comments on the history of the *Church of God and Saints of Christ* founded in America by James W. Crowdy as Black Hebrews. She says that the history of the Church of God and Saints of Christ leaves with its ties to South Africa the sorrowful event of the Bulhoek massacre. Tragedies like the massacre happen when Black people take power into our own hands and misuse it in the name of religion.

d) Goldschmidt

Goldschmidt (2006:220) gives us a glimpse into the history of the Hebrew Israelite movement. There were a few Black Jewish sects established in the American South at the turn of the nineteenth-century. But it was during the Black Nationalist movement in Harlem the 1910s and 1920s when Black people claimed to be the original Israelites (2006:221). Goldschmidt attributes this great interest to the influx (Jews were already in NYC?) to Jewish life in New York City. Blacks learned much from Jews as to how to practice Judaism.

Harlem consisted of eight synagogues of Black Jews or Hebrew Israelites in the 1920s with different leadership. These Black Jews in Harlem were established by Afro-Caribbean immigrants associated with Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. In the mid-1950s Rabbi Wentworth A. Matthews established the *Commandment Keepers Congregation of the Living God* in Harlem. He became the main spokesperson for the Black Hebrew (Jewish) movement. According to Goldschmidt, Harlem and New York City remain the heart and soul of the Black Hebrew movement. There are Black Hebrew churches established throughout North America and in Israel. Goldschmidt (2006:220) states that the

Black Hebrew Christians are made up largely of African Americans and Afro-Caribbean people. He esteems them for their resilience in their belief of being true Israelites.

Goldschmidt (2006:225) looks at the Hebrew Israelite through the Bible, which he calls a a “historiographic tool.” He compares the biblical text to the Hasidic and the Black Hebrew Israelites. The Hasidim story begins with the 25th chapter of Genesis with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Black Israelites’ story begins in Deuteronomy with the scattering of Israel. They interpret the prophesying curses of Moses to impact their lives (2006:226). As Moses stood on the banks of Jordan he told Israel that if its people kept the Laws, Statutes and Judgments of Yahweh, He would allow them and their land to prosper. But if they disobeyed Him, punishments would follow including dispersion throughout the earth (Dt 28:16-20, 27, 64, 68).

Black Hebrews believe that most of the ancient Israelites fled to Africa, according to Goldschmidt (2006:224). There, they mingled with other Black people and formed colonies. Goldschmidt refers to the work of Windsor, who contends that the ancient Black Israelites did not all fall prey to many of the heteristic customs of other Blacks in Africa. Some people maintained their own customs and religious practices. Lewis, a Brooklyn-based author disagrees with Windsor. He contends the ancient Black Israelites fused with the Black people of Africa, adopting African customs and religious practices. Many Hebrew Israelites claim during this infusion with Black Africans Black Hebrews lost their true identity

The Goldschmidt (2006:224) argues that the loss of identity was Yahweh’s punishment for their disobedience. Their disobedience was worshipping to idol gods. The Black Hebrews were further punished by being brought to America in chains as slaves. Black Hebrew Pentecostals and Black Hebrews who reject Christ as their Messiah believe Yahweh permitted Black slavery as a form of punishment. The punishment was dealt to Yahweh’s chosen, the original Israelites. The Black slaves and ancient Israel had been disobedient to the laws, statutes and ordinances of Yahweh. Blacks who were held in slavery had little knowledge of their true identity. Some Black Hebrews believe their true identity has been taken by the White Jews called Edomites. (Goldschmidt 2006:224). The Black Hebrew Pentecostals also believe that the White Jews are not the original Israelites. They are imposters. Ironically, some Black Hebrew Christians view these Edomite White Jews as their

cousins. This is because Esau and Jacob were brothers. As a result of this there is no hatred of White Jews. Both groups often cooperate well with one another.

Goldschmidt (2006:224) offers a brief history of the Edomites, a narrative of great importance to Black Hebrew Pentecostals. The story exposes the Edomites as charlatans. Hebrew Israelites, orthodox Jews, and academic historians all agree that in the second century BCE Israel conquered Edom (2 ki 14:7 NKJV). Edomites, as a result, were forced to practice the Israelites' faith. Black Hebrew Christians argue that since the Edomites were aware of the religious practices of the Hebrews, it would be easy for them to steal the identity of the true Israelite. Feuds between the Edomites and Israelites raged on for centuries. Goldschmidt asserts these poor relations led to the pollution of Israelite culture because of the Edomites' heathenish practices.

Goldschmidt (2006:201) says because Esau formed the tribe called Edom or Edomites, it is important to Black Hebrew Christians because he was the brother of Jacob. The year 70 CE marked the beginning of the end of Israelites true identity following a five-year battle between the Black Jews and the Romans. The culmination of the conflict was the devastating moment when the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. Also destroyed some biblical scholars argue was data about the Edomites. It is as though the Edomites vanished from off the earth in 70 CE. But Black Hebrew Christians claim to know the fate of the Edomites.

According Goldschmidt (2006:225), Ben Levi said the Edomites established the word Jew. Some Blacks Hebrews teach when Rome defeated Israel in 70 CE the Edomites took the identity of the Black Hebrews. They Black Hebrews were subsequently scattered, primarily around Africa. The White Edomites slowly took up residence in Europe, where they began practicing Judaism. There they began establishing themselves as true Israelites knowing they were not. It is believed in the process of practicing Judaism, they began to establish themselves as true Israelites.

Goldschmidt (2006:15) says Black Americans have utilized several themes into religious teachings. Some Black religious themes have been exclusively Jewish. In 1915, the Prophet F.S. Cherry founded the Church of the Living God in Philadelphia. He taught his followers that Black people were descendents from Jacob and that White people were masquerading as Jews. Cherry asserted that the Whites were able to take the identity of the Black people

because the truth was hidden from the world by distorting history in favor of the Edomites. Cherry taught that since the original Israelites were Black Christ was Black. Rabbi Wentworth, a prominent Black Jewish leader at the time asserted that the ten tribes of Judah were located in Africa. He also believed the White Jews descend from Esau.

The belief that Black people are the original Israelites leads to racial and religious contention. Goldschmidt (2006:26) makes reference to the author Cohane Michael Ben Levi who argues for a distinction between an Israelite and a Jew. The first belongs to the race and the second to the religion. Within this context Goldschmidt (2006:222) criticizes Black Hebrew Israelites for interpreting contemporary American racial identities into the biblical text that he feels is irrelevant. He (2006:223) sympathizes with the Black Hebrews saying that bringing race and religion to Biblical interpretation is unavoidable. The historical misrepresentation of Black people resulted from the slave trade. Blacks were yanked from their homeland, stripped of their identity, and robbed of bonds with their parents. As a result, there is an anxiety (*unsettledness?*) among American blacks who long to know their original identity. Goldschmidt says it may prompt them to grab at any straw for hope. A Black Hebrew identity may afford them this hope. American slavery precipitates the race and religion issue.. An expression of a Hebrew Christian faith affords believers an opportunity to find their true selves.

Goldschmidt looks further at race and religion in *Chosen Peoples of Crown Heights*. This section in Brooklyn, New York, is inhabited by White Lubavitch Hasidim Jews and Black Israelites. Some Black Israelites are followers of Christ and some are not. This fact is important. When Goldschmidt discusses race and religion in Crown Heights, it applies to all types of Black Hebrews. Goldschmidt, a White Jew who grew up in Brooklyn, is familiar with Black Hebrew churches. The Gideon Knights Church that is a subject of this project is located in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, a few minutes away from Crown Heights. Goldschmidt describes how the religious factions are adamant in their claim to be descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Goldschmidt (2006:202) says that White Jews do not consider their whiteness to be an indication of their ties to ancient Israel. The Lubavitch Hasidim, one of the sects of Judaism, say they are connected to Israel by the seeds of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The connection is by a unique Godly soul inherited by the patriarchs. The Black Hebrews say ancient Israelites

were black. (Black Hebrews are largely concerned with the phenotype⁴ signs. Thus, the White Jews are imposters. In the case of the Black Hebrew Christians the issue of Christ's skin color is brought within the shadow of race and religion.

As of result of oppressive experiences White Jews and Blacks in America retain a feeling of being marginalized. White Jews feel marginalized because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. Blacks in America are marginalized because of their black phenotype that results from the composition of their genotype. The author says this informs the preoccupation with race in America. The author asserts that American *racial marginalizing attitudes often spill over into biblical hermeneutics*.

There are several Scriptures used by Black Hebrews to support their belief that "blackness" is a definitive feature of the original Israelites. We need to take a look at a few: *My skin is black upon me . . .* (Job 30:30 KJV); *I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem . . .* (Can 1:5); *Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me . . .* (Can 1:6); *For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black . . .* (Jr 8:21); *Our skin was black like an oven . . .* (Lm 5:10). A few Black Hebrew Christians employ Revelation 1:14-15 John's description of Jesus to contend that he was a man of color: *His head and his hairs were white like wool . . . And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace*.

Goldschmidt (2006:187) says Black Hebrews believe King Solomon was Black, using evidence in Song of Songs 1:5: *I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, . . .* In Exodus 2:10 Black Hebrews argue that Moses had to be a Black African in order to pass as a grandson of Pharaoh (Goldschmidt 2006:187). Black Hebrews cannot use the canonized version of the Bible to support their claim to being descendants from the biblical Hebrew Patriarchs (2006:205). Too many years have elapsed since the death of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Much biblical historical information has been lost or distorted.

Goldschmidt compares how ancient Israelites observed Passover to today's White Jews and Black Hebrews. Today, Black Hebrews keep the Passover differently. Black Hebrews who do not believe in Jesus exclude Him from the Passover. Black Hebrew Christians include Jesus

⁴ *The observable properties of an organism that are produced by the interaction of the genotype and the environment* (Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary).

in the Passover, while White Jews do not. The White Jews possibly keep the Passover more as the ancient Israelites by using the whole lamb uncut.

Goldschmidt (2006:227) gives an account of a Black Israelite Passover Seder to demonstrate how this Holy Day is taught to children. They are taught to understand their history in light of Deuteronomy 28. At Black Hebrew Passover Seders, "bitter herbs are eaten to recall slavery in Egypt." On the walls of one synagogue hangs an image of a slave bound around the neck with irons and chains. This is an antiquated picture of a Black slave in the South. Under the picture was written the curse of Deuteronomy 28:48. *Some Black Israelites still feel punished today because of their disobedience to Yahweh.*

Goldschmidt says (2006:224) that Orthodox Jews and Black Hebrews share the belief that sinning against Yahweh caused the destruction of the temple. Sinning means disobeying His Commandments and His Ordinances, and incurring Yahweh's wrath. As a result of sinning, Yahweh scattered Israelites throughout the world. The difference between Orthodox Jews and black Hebrews centers on how that dispersion took place and who was involved.

2.3 UNIQUE THEOLOGICAL IDENTITY

What follows with regard to the unique theological identity of Black Hebrew Pentecostalism is based upon my 30-year association with Black Hebrew Pentecostals in New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Kentucky and other states throughout the United States of America.

As has been stated in a previous section the research at the New York City Public library for Humanities and Social Sciences, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture: New York City Public Library, and the library at the University of the Free State have all proven there is no available scholarly material on Black Hebrew Pentecostals. In addition, the researcher did not find any non scholarly or unpublished material on Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Therefore, the researcher concludes this paper is ground-breaking data for the academy. In this section the Bible is the primary source of reference. The purpose of this chapter is to present a general overview of the theology, even though the theologies of Black Hebrew Pentecostals vary within the Black Community. More time and effort would have to

be expended in order to do acceptable scholarly research into the main theology of Black Hebrew Pentecostals.

Sabbath

The fourth Commandment (Ex 20:8-11) that teaches the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath is foremost in the minds of the Black Hebrew. It is the foundation of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal's faith, informs religious consciousness and guides their daily experience. Keeping the Sabbath is in obedience to the Scripture: *Wherefore the children shall keep the Sabbath, to observe throughout their generation, for a perpetual covenant* (Ex 31:16). To break the Seventh Day Sabbath is to commit an offense against God that can warrant severe punishment. Polluting the Sabbath could lead to loss of jobs and property. Observing the fourth Commandment (Dt 11:27) will lead to greater blessings.

Sin

Failing to keep the Seventh Day Sabbath is only one form of *sin*. Among the others are committing adultery, a breaking of the seventh commandment. Defining adultery becomes problematic for some Black Hebrew Pentecostals who practice polygamy. Many of these Black Hebrews reside in Atlanta Georgia, New York, other states in America, the Republic of South Africa and Israel. The Black Hebrews who indulge in polygamy do not consider such practices to be adultery. For these Black Hebrews polygamy is not sinning.

In America, the government has outlawed polygamy. However, some Black Hebrews teach that a man can take more than one wife. Churches that practice polygamy defend their teachings or theology based on the lives of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Each of these men had more than one wife and are not considered to be sinners according to Scripture. In fact, these Patriarchs were blessed by Yahweh. Black Hebrew churches that approve of polygamy differentiate this practice from the sin of adultery. Adultery is defined as a married man or woman having a sexual affair with someone other than a spouse. It also includes a single woman or man involved in an intimate relationship with a married individual.

For the majority of Black Hebrew churches, however, polygamy is adultery that constitutes a sin. These churches condemn a man taking for more than one wife. These Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches look to the Second Testament as their source: *A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife . . . ; Let deacons be the husbands of one wife . . .* (1Tm 3:2; 3:12. NKJV). Though these verses refer to bishops and deacons having one wife, these Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches interpret the Scripture as applicable to all men. All men should have only one wife, regardless of religious rank. The title the man holds is unimportant. If a man takes more than one wife he disobeys I Timothy 3:2 and 3:12. The man is thus found condemned in polygamy and adultery.

Disobeying the dietary laws (Dt 14:1-19) and not observing the eight Holy Days (Lv 23) are also considered sins. In summary, sin is the refusal to comply and act upon any commandment of Yahweh. To be disobedient is to incur the wrath of Yahweh.

Resurrection of Christ

The resurrection of Christ also shapes the main theology of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal (Phlp 3:10). The belief that Jesus rises up from the grave is indicative of the Christian faith. This does not necessarily hold true for all Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches teach that since Christ was the Son of God He could not die. Jesus was divine. Therefore, if He did not die there could be no resurrection.

Most Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches believe Yahshua (Jesus) died, stayed in the grave three days and nights (Mt 12:40). He then rose from the grave. Many Black Hebrew Pentecostals do not believe Yahshua (Jesus) died on a Friday. They believe he was crucified in the middle of the week (Dn 9:27). This belief distracts from the importance of Sunday being the day of resurrection for the Lord.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals do not generally believe Jesus rose on the first day of the week. Black Hebrew Pentecostals prefer to use the term “first day of the week” for Sunday. The Hebrews prefer to use first day because the Sabbath is the Seventh Day. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches believe that Jesus had already risen when the First Day began. These churches teach Jesus rose on the Sabbath (Saturday), and that the women who followed the

Jewish custom of observing the Sabbath Day, would not have gone to grave sight on the Sabbath Day. They would have had to wait until the Sabbath ended.

The Sabbath ends when the sun goes down on Saturday evening. It is dark. Night time begins a new day. A day is interpreted in the Bible as “evening and the morning” (Gn 1:5). A day does not begin at midnight. Therefore, after the Sabbath was over, *Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher*” . . . (Jn 20:1). When the sun went down in the evening, on the Sabbath (Saturday), it became dark. This is when the first day (Sunday) of the week began. The first day (Sunday) did not begin “early in the morning.”

Hell

Another teaching of Black Hebrew theology is the interpretation of *hell*. This word usually conjures up memories of pain, fire, thirst and suffering (Lk 16:23-26). The explication of the duration of the suffering may differ amongst Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Some say it is an eternal torment. Others believe there is a burning in hell followed by no more existence.

Millennium

The theology of the *millennium* and the great tribulation is viewed differently by Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Some are pre-millennium believers (Mt 24:27-31). Others adhere to the post-millennium teachings (Rv 20:4-6). There is a discussion amongst Black Hebrew Pentecostals regarding the great tribulation as it relates to the millennium. Black Hebrews believe that the great tribulation is a time of suffering. The millennium is a time of absolute peace during the second coming of the Messiah. There is disagreement amongst Black Hebrew Pentecostals regarding the timing of the millennium and the interpretation of the great tribulation. There is no consensus amongst Hebrews when the great tribulation will take place. Some Black Hebrews Christians argue that the great tribulation is now in America. Other Black Hebrew Pentecostals dispute the claim that the great tribulation is in America. They believe that this time of trouble, as well as the millennium, will take place in the future. These Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe only Yahweh knows when the great tribulation and the millennium will occur.

Heaven

Understandings of heaven also differ among Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals view heaven as a place, while others interpret it as a state of mind. The Black Hebrews who believe that heaven is a physical space see it in three-tiered dimensions (2 Cor 12:1-5 NKJV). They hope that one heaven can be physically inhabited by souls departing from earth. Deeply concerned with end times, these Black Hebrew Pentecostals emphasize the return of the Messiah. Their focus is on what happens after we depart this world; they live with the daily expectation of the *parousia*.

Focused on the Messiah's return, those heavenly-focused Black Hebrew Pentecostals live like pilgrims traveling through this world. They call it an unfriendly place, and view living on earth as a struggle. Their eyes are affixed on heaven as they wait for Yahshua to return. They anticipate the Messiah taking them to a heavenly home of rest (Jn 14:2). In some respects, these Hebrew Pentecostals have little concern with the activities of this world.

To other Black Hebrew Pentecostals, seeing heaven as a state of mind, gives them strength and hope and is useful to the physic of the believer. To them the notion of heaven serves multifarious purposes. By using heaven as a Christian crutch it tends to lessen the stress of life. It helps to eliminate anxieties of the uncertainties of tomorrow. Hope for today and anticipation of tomorrow helps the Black Hebrew Pentecostal to cope with daily problems. These Hebrews prefer not to consciously place emphasis upon heaven, and rarely make use of the term. They do not believe any human being will actually live in heaven. Yahweh lives there. When Yahshua (Jn 14:2). says He will go to prepare a place for us He does not reveal the location – it remains a mystery. There are houses at this place. The houses may constitute a city. This group of Black Hebrews takes no interest in *parousia*. They rarely preach a Gospel of “Jesus is soon to come,” focusing instead on life in the here and now.

There are Black Hebrews who turn to the Book of Revelation with regard to a holy city coming down from heaven (Rv 21:2); biblically it is not called heaven. A city has people and life. The Black Hebrew Pentecostals look at the city that comes down from heaven: *Then I, John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, . . .* (Rv 21:2 KJV). They compare the cities where they live to the city descending from heaven. One is terrestrial and the other celestial. Taking all of this into account some Black Hebrews rest

their theological outlook of the world on John 3:16a. Here Yahweh asserts “He loves the world.” This group of believers – like Yahweh – love the world and the city where they live.

Many Black Hebrew Pentecostals live and work for Yahweh’s world today. The eschatology of tomorrow plays little role in their theology. They desire to make this earth a more habitable existence with Christ. Such a group can be found in the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn, NY. In the Holy House of Israel men and women sit apart during the services. The congregation was started in the late seventies by Black Rabbi who was very fluent in Hebrew. He followed the Hebraic rituals. The community outreach and political activism make this group unique. They have operated a host of community programs employing teenagers for the summer. They have mobilized the neighborhood to gather votes for politicians. They have solicited large sums of money from area merchants to support church’s community programs. They see their mission as working for Yahweh in the world of today.

Views on heaven shape the way Black Hebrew Pentecostals conceptualize death. Some Black Hebrews approach death with an attitude that it is not reality, but a state of mind. It is possible if death is a state of mind that no one really dies. There could be a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Scripture with regard to death. Humans may leave this life and enter into another existence.

Trinity

Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals are Trinitarians and others are Apostolic. The apostolic belief holds that Jesus and God are separate. They refer to Scripture as their primary source. In Genesis 1:26, it is written *Let us make man in our own image*. The interpretation is that a conversation is taking place between God and another who is neither named nor identified. In Genesis 11:7 God discusses a plan to go down to the earth to “confound their language.” God is referring to the people who are building the “tower of Babel.” Here too, we are not given the identity of the person to whom God is speaking. Black Hebrew Pentecostals interpret than in each case, God is speaking with His Son, Jesus. These biblical passages make it impossible for Black Hebrews to accept a notion of a “triune God.” They reject the traditional Christian theological teaching of Jesus and God as One. For Black Hebrew Pentecostals of this persuasion there is strong evidence of two Persons. This is the foundation of the apostolic belief.

The Black Hebrew Pentecostals refer to Genesis 1:12 as convincing proof of the existence of two separate Persons. Genesis 1:12 reads: “after our likeness.” (Can you give more of the passage?) “Our” refers to Jesus and God, according to this perspective. This shows that Jesus was there with His Father at the time man was being designed.

Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals acknowledge that a number of Scriptures in the Bible substantiate a Trinitarian belief. One example is John 1:1: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (NKJV). Equally there are Black Hebrews who argue there are several Scriptural references that support an apostolic belief, for example *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation* (Col 1:15 NKJV). The Trinitarian belief and the apostolic belief pose a dilemma. The church’s doctrine generally determines teachings of the church.

Traditionally the trinitarian belief has often been declared unexplainable: a mystery. This becomes problematic for Black Hebrew Pentecostals who see the Apostolic position as a non-mystery: God and Jesus are separate. To the Black Hebrews the apostolic belief of Jesus and God being separate Persons is explainable: a non-mystery. Black Hebrew Pentecostals prefer to base their faith on the non-mystery of the Apostolic doctrine.

To help resolve this issue of the Trinitarian and Apostolic belief, some Black Hebrew Pentecostals teach their followers to look to the Council of Nicaea formed in 325 CE to debate this very issue (McKim 1996:188). The vital issue before the Council is whether Christ is “of the *same substance* with . . . the Father” (1996:188). This highly controversial question had been raging for between two factions. One was headed by Arian, who said Jesus was not the same substance as God, and the other was led by Athanasius who said Jesus and God are one. Emperor Constantine summoned the Council of Nicaea “to deal with Arianism” (1996:188). In the end, Constantine makes a decree in favor of Athanasius. The result is the creation of the “Nicene Creed.” Reportedly, Athanasius said that he wished his group would have won by persuasion. The decree failed to put an end to the controversy, which continues today. The role that Emperor Constantine played in the forming of the Nicene Creed is frequently retold in some Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. The question that always rises is how can a White pagan Gentile man make a decision about a Christian religious issue? Several Black Hebrew Pentecostals reject Emperor Constantine’s authority.

Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe Jesus was a Created Being before His earthly ministry. The biblical support of this belief can be found in Colossians 1:15. In this verse, there are two decisive descriptions of Jesus: image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. Jesus— like human beings - was created a in the “image of the invisible God.” This reflects Black Hebrew Pentecostals apostolic belief of the continued separation between Jesus and God.

Several Black Hebrews’ belief that Jesus is “the firstborn of every creature” or that He is created rests with another Scripture Revelation 3:14: *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God* (NKJV). In this passage, Jesus refers to Himself as “faithful and true witness.” What is more important is that Jesus refers to Himself as “the beginning of the creation of God.” This verse is important because it substantiates Jesus as a created being.

Citing further support, Black Hebrews refer to the prayer of Jesus in John sometimes referred to as “the prayer of intercession.”⁵ Jesus looks up to heaven and prays to His Father: *I came out from thee . . .* (Jn 17.8). The Black Hebrew Pentecostals examine this declaration of Jesus closely. By the use of a metaphor the Black Hebrews interpret this to mean that God “birthed Jesus.” This is based on Jesus saying He came out from God.

Still, there are biblical references that seems to contradict the idea of Jesus as created, supporting a Trinitarian belief. Some Black Hebrews respond to John 10:30 by the use of the “intercessory prayer” found in John 17:11 They also refer to Jesus’ words in John 10:30 *I and my Father are one* (NKJV). The being of One is the critical issue. Jesus says He and the Father are one. The Hebrews will show this is not the only time Jesus makes reference to “Oneness in God.”

Some Black Hebrews argue that the biblical notion of “oneness” of God does not only apply to a union between God and Jesus. They refer to the “intercessory prayer” of Jesus Christ found in John 17.11. “Holy Father keep through thy name those you have given me, that they may be as one, as we are” (KJV). Here Jesus prays for those God has given Him (Jn 17:11).

⁵ Scofield Reference Bible KJV

Jesus wants these special followers to become one as He and His Father are one. When the disciples become one with Jesus and God a triad is formed of the three. Within this triad, each retains a separate and individual identity. This is made possible by the conception of the “oneness,” just as the oneness of the trinity entails individuality. Conversely through the individuality of the conception of the “oneness” some Black Hebrew Pentecostals find biblical evidence that seems to support the belief of the trinity.

Jesus as Savior

The majority of Black Hebrews theologically interpret Jesus to be a personal Savior. But how Jesus saves is a question with different replies. Some groups of Black Hebrew Pentecostals, such as the two churches being studied, experience Jesus as a “Protector.” Generally, the members in these congregations who hold this image of Jesus are older adults who lived through the “Jim Crow” era of America. This was the period in American history before the enactment of the Civil Rights Laws of 1964. Older Blacks relied on the protection of Jesus to save them from real possibility of lynching that were perpetrated by White people in the South. Lynching of Black people in the South was a practice considered above the law. Whites who lynched Blacks were rarely prosecuted by the law. The older Black Hebrew Pentecostals carry scars and painful memories of ill treatment at the hands of Whites before the passing of the Civil Rights Laws. They experience Jesus Christ as a personal Savior and “Protector.” Jesus protects older Black Hebrew Pentecostals today from “black on black crime” in their neighborhoods.

Several Black Hebrew Pentecostals in the two churches studied in an age group between the ages of 20 and 40 have not experienced racism in the same way as their elders. Their experience with Christ differs. This group is more goals oriented. They aspire to higher education and well-paying professions. They are more likely to experience Christ as a “Provider,” who takes care of their material needs. These mature adults age 20-40, are quick to acknowledge Christ’s divinity. These Black mature adults pay tithes and give offerings to the church. Tithes and offerings represent a means of getting a blessing from Christ. Members between 20 and 40 believe that by providing for the work of the Gospel through their donations, Christ the “Provider” will attend to their material needs.

Teenagers have a unique way of experiencing Christ tha similar in both of the churches being

studied. They like various forms of Gospel music, and have been exposed to it since they were children. They describe the music as mystical and spiritual. This music takes on the form of a highly mystical and spiritual nature. As such notes are not used or non-existent for singing a song or playing an instrument.

Instruments are played by ear in Black Pentecostal churches. The emphasis is on the “ear.” Ear is used as an anointment from Christ by the teenagers immersing themselves in the music. Many teenagers observed described Christ as an “Anointer.” that helps them to play the instruments better. In the Black Hebrew Christian churches all age groups recognize a teenager cannot sing or play unless under the anointing of Christ. This is accomplished by the teenagers surrendering their lives to Him. The adults in the congregation often judge how well a teenager plays by measuring their anointment based upon the feeling from the music. Adults play and sing instruments as well and they too are judge on their anointment from Christ.

Titles and Names

Several Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches use various *titles* for the name of the Son of God (Mt 8:29). Some Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches use the title Jesus exclusively for the Son of God. Another may use only Yahshua, and the third uses both, such as the two churches be studied. These churches are aware that Jesus is the Greek name for the Son of God, but understands that Yahshua is the holier name for Jesus. Still, they teach that whether using Jesus or Yahshua, supplicants prayers will be heard. Black Hebrew Pentecostals churches using exclusively Yahshua would disagree. They contend that any other name constitutes blasphemy. To utter the Greek Gentile word Jesus pollutes the holy name of Yahshua. This is worthy of retribution by Yahweh Neither one of the selected churches fall into this category.

Other Black Hebrew Pentecostals use only Jesus. They do not use Yahshua, because of its heavy emphasis on Hebrew. These churches fear the congregants may become overzealous into Hebrew worship practices. They worry that if members become too interested in Hebrew rituals, they may forsake the belief in Jesus as the Messiah. This has happened on occasion by individual members and whole congregations. This took place in one of the churches in the religious body of the House of God.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals use various titles for God. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals use the title God to refer to the Creator. These Black Hebrew churches find no disrespect in the Greek title, but believe that new converts are more familiar with “God.” Again, they are also concerned that placing too much emphasis on being Hebrew may cause a Christian believer to convert to Judaism. Some members of Black Hebrew Pentecostals churches who have studied the Old Testament have forsaken Jesus as the Messiah. This has happened to an entire Black Hebrew Pentecostal congregation, for example in the religious body of the House of God.

Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches who only use the name of “Yahweh” are criticized by other Black Hebrew for using only the name of Yahweh. The criticism generally comes from churches using only God or using both God and Yahweh. Black Hebrew Pentecostals churches defend the practice saying Yahweh is a Hebrew name, and God is a Greek name. A true Hebrew would not call the Creator by a Gentile name. This is disrespectful. It constitutes an abomination before Yahweh. The churches in study do not fit into this category.

Other Black Hebrew Christians use both names for the creator. They recognize Yahweh as the holier name, but teach their members that prayers will be heard regardless of the title. They say the creator responds to either name and looks on the heart of the individual.

God

All Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe, as main line Christians, God is the Creator of this world. They believe that Black Hebrew Christians differ in their conception of *God*. The meaning of God for the Black Hebrew Pentecostals can reflect that of the individual members. The interpretation of God can also be viewed from the perspective of the Pentecostals collectively. Conceptions of God amongst the Black Hebrew Christians will vary. However, there are commonalities of beliefs for descriptions of God. For example, all Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe, as main line Christians, God is the Creator of this world.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe the rainbow in the sky is a sign from God that He will not destroy the world again with water. They also believe God is a “Destroyer” who will end the world with fire: . . . *both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*” (2 Pt 3:10)

NKJV). Aside from Destroyer and Creator, Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe God is “Love.” “He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16). Black, Hebrews believe God has multi-characteristics: He can be both destroyer and lover simultaneously.

Fundamentally, for Black Hebrew Pentecostals God is a mystery. This is evidenced in the conversation between God and Moses: “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex 3:6). When Moses asks for the name of God, He replies: *I AM THAT I AM*’ (Ex 3:14). Moses listened. He did not pursue further pursue the question. Black Hebrew Pentecostals are likewise silent about the nature of God.

Relation to Israel

Many Black Hebrews claim a direct lineage to ancient Israel. They believe they have a special place in God that differs from Gentiles. They were grafted into the plan of salvation by Yahweh through His Son Yahshua. The Black Hebrews are a vital part of Yahweh’s plan of redemption. They believe they are the chosen people of Yahweh because they have the oracles. Gentile Christians are “spiritual Israelites” but do not have the oracles.⁶ The Black Hebrew Christians look to Paul for evidence of them being chosen. “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Rm 3:1-2). As chosen people, Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe they do not need to give an acceptable theological conception of God. Their reason being, “I AM THAT I AM” (Ex 3:14) is explanation enough.

Still, not all Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe they are chosen people of Yahweh or descendants of Abraham. It is difficult to determine how they as Blacks consider themselves Black Hebrews if they question being descendants from Abraham. This topic requires further investigation at another time. Presently, those Black Hebrews who claim a relation to ancient Israel believe they have a special place in God that differs from Gentiles. They were grafted into the plan of salvation by Yahweh through His Son Yahshua. The Black Hebrews have been a vital part of Yahweh’s plan of redemption. A number of Black Hebrew Pentecostals

⁶ The term oracles frequently cause controversy within the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community. (Rm 3:1-2). A few Black Hebrew churches interpret Paul’s reference to Israel having the oracles to mean they are special from non Israelites. Other Hebrews argue that Israel is only special, like other people, when they believe in Yahshua as the Messiah.

believe because they are the chosen people of Yahweh they have the oracles. Gentile Christians are “spiritual Israelites” but they do not have the oracles. The Black Hebrew Christians look to a writing of Paul’s to prove they are chosen the people of Yahweh: *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God* (Rm 3:1-2).

Because some Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe they are the chosen people of Yahweh they respond uniquely to the conceptualization of God. Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe they do not need to have to give an acceptable theological conception of God. Their reason being, “I AM THAT I AM” (Ex 3:14) is explanation enough. The statement by Yahweh conceptualizes the meaning of God for the Black Hebrews. The “I AM THAT I AM” depicts the understanding of who God is for the chosen people of Yahweh: the Black Hebrew Pentecostals.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit (Ac 2:4 NKJV) is vital to the worship service and faith of Black Hebrew Pentecostals. There are several metaphors or conceptions of the Holy Spirit for the Black Hebrew Pentecostals. But before giving some interpretations of the Holy Spirit, I need to explain some of the differences in the religious worship of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. An explanation is necessary with regard to the attitude of Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches relative to the Holy Spirit.

There are three basic forms of worship: conservative, holiness and Pentecostal. The conservative Black Hebrew church is more traditional and structured in worship. The Holy Spirit is present but “sedate” meaning that it may or may not present itself actively in the service. The Holy Spirit is understood to be present because of their belief in Yahshua’s reference to the “promise” (Holy Spirit) (Ac 1:4). These church services appear more Hebraic. The manner of dress for the men and women tend to be more Hebraic: men wear yarmulkes and women colorful wrapped headwear. Men and women sit apart. Some of their services include both English and Hebrew. In these churches the men and women sit separately. In some ways these Black Hebrew churches appear more Hebrew than Christian. Their emphasis is to teach members to follow the Jewish “Levitical Laws.” For example, certain times of the month, during menstruation, women are considered unclean and cannot

enter the temple on the Sabbath.

Unlike the conservative Black Hebrew Christian churches, the Holiness worshipping Black Hebrew churches welcome the activity of the Holy Spirit. A metaphor for this type of Holy Spirit might be “Holy Spirit and Fire.” There is quite a bit of movement and loud singing. The drums beat with other instruments playing loudly. Hand clapping and feet stomping are inspired by the moving of the Holy Spirit. This is given great emphasis in the worship service of this Black Hebrew Holiness church. The Holy Spirit is received through prayer and a clean life. The receiving of the Holy Spirit is not evidenced through the speaking of tongues.

The Pentecostal churches teach that “speaking in tongues” is the sign of the Holy Spirit. This is a Pentecostal form of worship (Land 1989:482). This is referred to as a “Quickening Power” that lifts the saved person up to meet Jesus in the air. This is of course when Jesus returns for His church. In this type of church the major emphasis is on the receiving of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of the “speaking in tongues.” A parishioner who has not spoken in tongues, has not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To get the Holy Spirit, one must tarry before the Lord at the altar in front of the rostrum. The tarrying at the altar is always in front of the rostrum. When The Holy Spirit comes into the individual, he or she is transformed and will gyrate uncontrollably. Their tongues will loosen in their mouth, and immortal unknown tongues will be heard. At the moment the Holy Spirit enters the immortal unknown tongues will be heard. The Holy Spirit or the “Quickening Spirit” will speak through the transformed and quicken their bodies.

Baptism

Some of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches adhering to an apostolic faith *baptism* in the name of Jesus or Yahshua. These churches do not baptize in the name of the “Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” They are consisted with Acts 8:16 which says: *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus* (KJV). Another Scripture is Acts 19:6 (KJV). Apparently according to these Scriptures the Apostles baptized in the name of Jesus. These Scriptures indicate the Apostles baptizing in the name of Jesus contradict Jesus’ instructions: *Go ye therefore baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* (Mt 28:19). A few Black Hebrew Pentecostals offer no explanation of this verse but they present an argument: baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are only titles. While

baptizing in the name of Jesus is a Name.

Holy Communion

Some Black Hebrew Pentecostals share similar views of mainline Protestants with regard to *communion* services. Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches generally do not interpret the communion services to be the “substantiation” of Christ’s body. Nor do they believe Christ manifests Himself in any special way at the time of communion. Communion is kept symbolically. Some churches stipulate that a boy must be 13 years of age and have had a Bar Mitzvah. A girl must be at least 12 and have had a Bat Mitzvah. After these milestones, girls and boys are thought to have a better understanding of the significance of the communion. Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches use water or grape juice for communion to represent the cup of wine of Jesus. These practices constitute a symbolic way of taking communion.

Fasting

Fasting (Ac 9:9) in several Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches needs to be explored. In exploring the practice of fasting, Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches it should be pointed out this is not a unique phenomenon to these churches. Many other religious and perhaps non religious organizations teach and practice fasting. One of the great Hindu leaders was Mahatma Gandhi. He is known to have fasted for several days without food.

Fasting can be defined or placed in three basic categories. In the process of fasting a person can abstain from eating all food, some food, or may eat food sparingly. And in some Hebrew Pentecostal churches indulge in various forms and length of fasting. A few Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches fast for three days and three nights each month without even water or juice. These churches encourage members to come to the temple and sleep on the floor during this time of fasting. The members can go to work or school from the temple. Fasting is believed to bring worshippers closer There is a general consensus amongst Black Hebrew Pentecostals fasting will bring them closer to Yahweh. This is also belief of non Hebrew churches.

Some Black Hebrew churches believe that fasting empowers people to “cast out devils” (Lk 9:49). The ability to cast out devils through the name of Jesus Christ is vital to the theology

of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals because it demonstrates the power of Yahweh. A number of these churches believe the ability to cast out demons in a person requires fasting. Black Hebrew Christians are supported by Matthew 17:21: *Howbeit this kind goeth out not out but by prayer and fasting* (KJV).

CHAPTER 3. Temple El Shaddai *House of God The Holy Church of the Living God The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth The House of Prayer for All People, Incorporated*

Temple El Shaddai is the first Black Hebrew Pentecostal community to be the subject of research. I have applied the research principles outlined in Chapter One along with a qualitative methodology. While doing this I shall be looking at the questions formulated in chapter One to assist me in researching the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai. In researching the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai I also incorporated Downey's (1977:12) seven suggested ways of studying spirituality.

3.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Temple El Shaddai: *House of God The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth* is housed in an elongated, narrow one story red brick building at 143-02 115th Avenue, South Ozone Park, NY 11436. This building was once a private dwelling and sits amid well kept private homes. Most residents are African Americans, some are from the Caribbean Islands. This section of Queens consists predominately of working middle class people.

Many of the African Americans moved into the area from Harlem to get away from drugs and crime that plagued neighborhoods. The founder of Temple El Shaddai, Bishop Raymond Pyant moved his church from New York to South Ozone Park. The present pastor, Bishop Isaac Pyant, the son of the founder, lives a few blocks from the temple.

What is unique about this area is the positive change that has taken place. This solidly middle class area, had been plagued by crack cocaine several years ago. The youth involved with illicit drugs were not from poor depressed families and neighborhoods. On the contrary, many were from intact, two-parent families.

The founder, the present pastor, and his wife, were determined not to be pushed out of the neighborhood by drugs. Resolved to stay, they prayed, fasted and reached out to the community with love and the Gospel. The founder, the present pastor Bishop Isaac Pyant and

his wife, Lady Pyant were committed to taking back the neighborhood with love. Lady Pyant is a principal of a school in the New York City Board of Education who understands the problems troubling Black youths. With professional knowledge and spiritual insight she was able to reach out to the youth in the neighborhood by using her counseling skills as an educator.

Members of Temple El Shaddai are not particularly politically active, with regard to running for or holding a political office. However, the church leaders cooperate with local leaders to improve the neighborhood. Since the pastor and his wife own a home a few blocks from the church, they are as invested as the other neighbors in collaboration with local and city politicians. The pastor stresses to his members of the importance of voting during a political election. This democratic action is necessary to help change lives. This does not adversely affect their spirituality, but does give some semblance of involvement in the political process that ultimately touches the lives of everyone. For most Black people in America, the Democratic Party is the party of choice. Democrats have a reputation of championing the causes of Blacks and poor people. The pastor, like a great majority of Black folks in America, is elated over the election of the nation's first Black President Barak Obama.

Being a Black Hebrew Pentecostal denomination Temple El Shaddai does not experience any rejection by the people in the neighborhood. In fact, the pastor, his wife and the members of his congregation have always been welcomed in the neighborhood. Temple El Shaddai exudes spirituality and love of Yahweh and Yahshua to the area. This enhances their status as both good citizens and good neighbors. People in the neighborhood may not embrace the Black Hebrew Pentecostal faith, but they respect and admire the good works and spirituality of its people.

As African Americans or new arrivals from the Caribbean, many neighbors are familiar with Black Hebrew Pentecostals. Their belief in Jesus and Judaic practices is not a particularly strange phenomenon in South Ozone Park because Black Hebrews have resided in the neighborhood for several years. Therefore, this religion functions well in this environment

The founder of Temple El Shaddai, Raymond Pyant is also the previous owner of the building. In 1962, he moved from Pennsylvania to pastor a church in Harlem. He was sent by (name,) the Chief Apostle of the House of God The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth.

Temple El Shaddai is part of this worldwide religious body. Bishop Pyant moved the Harlem church to Queens in 1967 to provide service for many of the Black people relocating from Harlem to Queens. In 1968 he turned the church over to another pastor with the hope of starting a new church. He then founded Temple El Shaddai. In 1983, he purchased the building using some funds given to him by the House of God. Though he offered to give the deed of ownership to the House of God The Pillar and Ground of the Truth, church officials allowed him to retain the deed and obtain his own charter. The church is in the process of obtaining its own charter. The founder later sold the building to his son, Bishop Isaac Pyant who now holds the deed to the property. As pastor, the son hopes to strengthen the church financially so that Temple El Shaddai can purchase the building from him.

3.2 DISTINCTIVE FORMS OF SPIRITUALITY

Before entering Temple El Shaddai, Lady Pyant looks to the right of the doorframe and touches the mezuzah. The mezuzah, a powerful symbol of Judaism, is attached to the doorframe with small screws. It leans inward toward the sanctuary. She mutters, “God is worthy of it. God is glorious.”

The mezuzah is a small piece of parchment inscribed with the biblical passages Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. These passages are from two sections of the Torah (Online The Free Dictionary 2003:1). The word *Shaddai*, a name for the Almighty, is ascribed to the parchment. After rolling the parchment into a container you affix it to the right doorframe. The affixing of the parchment into a container to the right doorframe is in conformity with Jewish law. In carrying out this law it is a symbol of Israel’s faith. The mezuzah means “doorpost” in Hebrew. Mezuzah refers to one of the 613 commandments in Judaism.

Inside the temple the Ten Commandments on canvass hangs on the white walls. Letters of the Hebrew alphabet are spaced throughout the sanctuary walls. The Morgan David (Star of David) commands attention with its glittering gold appearance on the wall. There are oak wood floors and wooden pews. Three steps up from the sanctuary is the rostrum. At the back of the rostrum it is a mirror covering the wall.

In the service, men and women sit together, symbolizing their oneness in God and obliteration of gender differences. This is different from other Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. The oneness reflects a spirituality that is inclusive of all. This arrangement finds support in Acts 2:17, Men and women sitting together symbolize the newness of Christ within a Hebrew context.

On any given Saturday afternoon, you will see a young man walking toward the altar carrying a Shofar, a curved animal horn of many shapes (Online Shofar 1-3). Traditionally, a horn from a ram is used. The use of the Shofar is frequently cited in the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud and rabbinic literature. The horn does not come from a cow, even though cows are considered kosher meat. Some Jewish sects use the horns of a non-kosher meat to make the Shofar. What is used to make the Shofar is generally of little concern of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals.

After the sound of the Shofar permeates the sanctuary, the members stand. In unison they turn to face the East. The members raise both hands at shoulder level. Facing the East the congregation prays. The East is spiritually symbolic of a new day. The sun rises from the East. A Son shall return from the East (Mt 24:27). Jerusalem traditionally is known in Christianity and Judaism as the City of God, or the Holy City that rests in the East. Turning to the East, helps members feel in line with Yahweh's will.

At the Temple El Shaddai a young teenager begins to chant the She'ma. Blue and white fringes dangle from his waist, symbolic of a command issued by Yahweh (Nm 15:38-39). The yarmulke on his head is an ancient Hebrew custom that recognizes God's place above man. The yarmulke is worn when praying. This headwear is called a "cap" or *kippah* (Online Kippah :1-11). The men wear the kippah on several occasions. One of the reasons is in recognition that God is above mankind. The yarmulke is worn when praying. There is an exception to this practice in all of the churches within the House of God Pillar and Ground of the Truth. The men remove their yarmulkes when praying according to Scripture: *Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head* (I Cor 11:4 NKJV).

The tune of the She'ma, impacting the spirituality of the church is transformational. Each Black Hebrew Pentecostal church adopts its own tune when chanting the She'ma. After the

chanting of the She'ma, the members of Temple El Shaddai prepare for the next phase of the liturgy.

Women are not permitted to wear pants inside or outside of church: *A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God (Dt 22:5 KJV)*. Women must keep their heads covered at all times with a scarf or a hat during the services. They cannot wear low cut dresses or blouses revealing their breasts.

Temple El Shaddai follows the Jewish dietary laws and members drink pure bottled water. The pastor's wife is a distributor for a bottled water company and gives samples to members and visitors on the Sabbath. She claims the water she uses has healing qualities for various ailments. Members refrain from eating pork, or any type of fish that does not have scales like shrimp, lobster or crab.

Music heavily impacts the spirituality of the Black youth giving them a sense of euphoria. Gospel music accompanying the members singing the lyrics has a positive religious, spiritual impact that reflects on Yahweh. One or two "devotional leaders" typically stand in front of the altar, leading the congregation in devotional Gospel songs. The experience of the sounds and words of music transforms them and brings them into an experience with the divine. Gospel lyrics celebrate the dependence upon Yahweh's grace and mercy. The Gospel songs speak of Black racial struggles on earth. The lyrics in Gospel songs give Temple El Shaddai an identity. Gospel music impacts the spirituality of the temple and gives it an identity as a people who have experienced Yahweh.

Gospel music is often accompanied by loud shouting and uninhibited jumping. The sound and Gospel music elicits forceful holy dancing. Some members may roll on the floor under the unction of the Holy Spirit. The experience of sound and lyrics of Gospel music can elicit all of these motions and more. One or two members might experience the descent of tongues while the music plays. Another member might experience the gift of interpreting tongues. Another member might experience a different dynamic of transformational power of Gospel music. The impinging power of Gospel music on the soul may lead a believer to run throughout the aisle of Temple El Shaddai laying hands and anointing the members. The

Gospel music produces a liberating Pentecostal spirituality for Temple El Shaddai that sets the people free.

One of the members of Temple El Shaddai, a middle-aged woman, inserts plugs into her ears during singing and playing of Gospel music. She wants to preserve her eardrums, she says, and knows that others have sustained damage to their eardrums. This precaution renders her unable to feel stirred by the music and thus it does not impact her spirituality. In some ways she is in control because she has decided to not allow a phenomenon to impact her spirituality. This female member does not shout. She does not dance the holy dance. She does not speak in tongues or run into the aisles, anointing other members. She says she wants to experience the Holy Spirit.

Along with Gospel music in the services of the Temple El Shaddai are the *praise and worship songs*. Praise and worship songs have different musical themes than Gospels. For example, the songs are softer and more sedate. The singing renders a more conservative transformational experience in the presence of the Creator that may not include shouting. Speaking in tongues during worship and praise songs is usually minimal or non-existent. What usually is the norm is the experience of members standing or sitting quietly in their seats. The members' eyes are often shut in a solemn manner, whether standing or sitting. They bow their heads slightly. Standing in front of the altar of Temple El Shaddai are usually two praise and worship team leaders who direct the congregation in the singing of praise songs.

Praise and worship songs were introduced into worship at Temple El Shaddai, in the last few years. Prior to the use of praise and worship songs one or two persons called devotional leaders stood in front of the altar. The devotional leaders lead the congregation in devotional songs that were largely Gospel. In time Caucasian televangelism came into being on a grand scale (Sherron J R 2008). Many of these televangelists have large congregations. Black churches listened to their songs. These songs are largely of the praise and worship form.

Black pastors and their members viewed on television how the White style of singing impacted religious music (Sherron J R 2008) These songs carried a message of "Jesus is my friend", Black gospels, on the other hand, envision "Jesus is my deliverer" This is more desirable. However, there is no resentment of influence from white evangelism. Over the

years Black churches continued to experience exposure to White church worship. Through the exposure of mass media the conservative style of the Caucasian churches began to impact Black spirituality by influencing them to adopt their style of music.

Following the entry of the praise and worship songs another phenomenon entered the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches: *praise dancing*. Praise dancing in the Black churches is a form of ballet or a hip hop dancing set to religious music. The ballet style of praise dancing generally mimics the Caucasian churches. The Black churches, none of which include the two churches being profiled, who adopt hip hop provoke controversy because hip hop is a secular form of art. These churches defend their position by arguing hip hop art is part of Black spiritual culture that is appropriate for liturgical dance.

Temple El Shaddai does not have a praise dance team, but invites ballet style groups from other churches to perform in the sanctuary. Pastor Pyant believes ballet praise dancing has a positive spiritual effect. He opposes Black hip hop style of praise dancing. He believes the dancers, who wear revealing dresses and tight pants, are offensive to the people of Yahweh. He has forbidden members to participate in Black hip hop dance inside or outside the church.

At Temple El Shaddai, members are forbidden to listen to secular music. Because secular music places an emphasis on the flesh, it is thought to corrupt the spirituality of the members. Secular music carries listeners to a transformational experience of worldliness and secular humanism. This of course places emphasis upon the “intellect, freedom, and dignity of human beings” (O’Collins & Farrugia 2000:111).

Black rap music may emphasize the “freedom of human beings” but certainly not the intellect or dignity of human beings. Rap music often highlights the degrading social conditions of Black people, and degrade women’s bodies. Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches critique black rap for its glorification of violence, black on black crime, use of illicit drugs and sex. There is often a romance of killing and prison life. Black rap is seen as generating a depressing influence on spirituality. Temple El Shaddai speaks strongly against members listening to Black rap. The musical style, the mannerism and even the attire of Black rappers find its way into many of the Black churches. This includes the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches, except the two under study. Black rap synthesizes with Christian Gospel, calling itself gospel rap. Advocates of this new form of music, say rap has a new identity with a new

message that appeals to Christian youth. They say it is a spiritual force for Black folks that can lead them into the presence of Yahweh.

Like gospel-rap, gospel-jazz is another controversial music form in Black churches. Many of the same arguments for rejecting gospel-rap are in use to oppose the listening of gospel-jazz. Therefore, Gospel-jazz is not widely accepted in Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches.

The pastor of Temple El Shaddai carefully scrutinizes love songs appropriate for the members' listening. Because love songs celebrate the feelings between two people, they are believed to be secular and this is negative to the Black Hebrew Pentecostals. It is thought that love songs can impact the spirituality of Christians unfavorably. Temple El Shaddai guards against secularism. Pastor Pyant does not reject all love songs. The Bible does speak of the love of one human for another (Eph 5:25) This is more spiritual. The other church under study agrees with Pastor Pyant. We can detect Eros love in the lyrics of love songs that shows respect for each other.

In Temple El Shaddai, the members are predominately Black. Still, race does not appear to be of any major concern to them. There is one American Indian family, and only one White, Italian teenager, 17. The adopted son of the pastor and his wife, the youth has grown up in this Black Hebrew Pentecostal congregation. At 13, he received his Bar Mitzvah at Lexington, Kentucky, during the general session of the House of God Pillar and Ground of the Truth. On occasion, he blows the Shofar on the Sabbath.

Every Father's Day, Bishop Isaac Pyant preaches at an interracial church in Pennsylvania. A Black female is the pastor of the church. The pastor of Temple El Shaddai has never discussed the issue of race in his church. He embraces people of all colors. This impacts the pastor's and the church's spirituality giving it an inclusive characteristic. However, like many Black churches he does talk about social justice issues concerning Blacks.

3.3 *NORMATIVITY & AUTHORITY*

To examine the normativity of Temple El Shaddai one must consider the ethical rules, patterns, and models used to judge human behavior. The norms exist to counter acts of

sinfulness. Normativity helps members make the right choices in the face of worldly temptations. Choices made by the members make reflect their spirituality.

Temple El Shaddai and other churches within the House of God Pillar and Ground of the Truth have Twenty-Four principles to guide them. They are taught as the Doctrine of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. All churches within the body must abide by the Twenty-Four Principles (Hamner 2007:D). These principals are bolster spirituality in all churches in the movement. The Twenty-Four Principles were established by the founding Bishop Johnson at the time of formation of the House of God The Pillar and Ground of the Truth

The Bible plays a role in the normativity of Temple El Shaddai. However, to understand Temple El Shaddai and most Pentecostals' reaction to the Bible, it is necessary to comprehend the *Scripture's relationship to the Holy Spirit*. But first and foremost for Temple El Shaddai the question must be asked, what is the Bible? According to Temple El Shaddai the Bible is inerrant, Pastor Pyant and his parishioners are familiar with this biblical verse: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness* (2 Tim 3:16 KJV?). This verse is interpreted to mean the Bible is infallible and this impacts the temple's spirituality.

This verse falls within the shadow of another one that guides the spirituality of members: *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but spirit giveth life* (2 Cor 4:6 KJV). The experience of the Spirit supersedes that of the written word. This is the heart and soul of Temple El Shaddai and the entire Pentecostal movement. The work of the Holy Spirit is valued over words, because the *spirit giveth life*. Words are secondary. In fact, every church within the Pentecostal movement probably has a roster of preachers who could neither write nor read the Bible. But they could preach and teach the Word of God through the life of the Holy Spirit.

The pastor's authority is another guiding force in the life of the congregation. The pastor - through the authority given to him by the House of God The Pillar and Ground of the Truth - runs the church as prelate and chief administrator. The pastor is responsible for carrying out the Twenty-Four principals. The pastor exercises his authority with the rules and regulations of the House of God. The pastor attends quarterly meetings with the Eastern District Bishop.

Annual financial reports from each congregation are submitted to the general assembly in Kentucky where they are discussed.

Bishop Isaac Pyant as pastor of Temple El Shaddai has the responsibility of seeking funds for the financial running of his church. The House of God The Pillar and Ground of the Truth (the umbrella organization) does not provide funds for the daily operations of Temple El Shaddai or any church within its organization. Temple El Shaddai generates revenue through tithes and offerings, for the financial running of the temple. When a special need arises in the church, such as air-conditioning in the sanctuary, Bishop Isaac Pyant the pastor asks members to pledge a specified amount of money

The pastor Bishop Pyant oversees the ecclesiastical and administrative affairs of Temple El Shaddai. The pastor does not receive a salary. Instead he receives a free will offering that is separate from the tithes on the Sabbath day. This offering is free will because there is no asking of a set amount. The weekly Sabbath offering varies from one to the other. The pastor uses tithes and other offerings for paying utilities and for the upkeep of the church.

Although the pastor does not share responsibilities with his wife, he does share some of his ministerial and administrative duties with her. His wife holds the prestigious title of First Lady. This is an honorary title given to the wife of any pastor. But more importantly she holds a female ecclesiastical appointment by the House of God as Elect Lady. This is equivalent to a ministerial title. The bishop consults his wife on matters affecting the church.

The First Lady of the church, Elect Lady Pyant, holds a PhD. She is a principal in a public intermediate school in Far Rockaway, New York. As Elect Lady Dr. Pyant administers as much control over Temple El Shaddai as her husband. The first lady is the first to arrive at the temple on Friday evening. She prepares the sanctuary, while here husband is out picking up members for service. She greets members as they arrive, and gives orders to the youth. The members follow her instructions. The first lady's husband reacts at times as swiftly as the members. The Elect Lady and her husband work as a team and provide a harmonious tone which impacts the spirituality of the members.

On Saturday the *Elect Lady* conducts the noon Sabbath school. Following Sabbath school, she may confer with the bishop regarding the afternoon meal that is free to all who attend.

Sometimes, there are special presentations during the afternoon meal break. The Elect Lady schedules these events. This impacts her spirituality and in some way helps to define her spiritual nature as an organizer. Because the First Lady is structured, the members understand what is expected of them and comply with her instructions. She presides in the rostrum for her husband when he speaks in the Saturday afternoon services. At Temple El Shaddai, members unofficially consider her the assistant pastor, perhaps even her husband.

Although the pastor of Temple El Shaddai has autonomy over his church, there are still higher authorities he must answer to in the House of God: the Twelve Apostles who are appointed by the Apostle board that consist of ordained bishops. They have ultimate ecclesiastical control over the churches within its organization. When Temple El Shaddai needs a determination on a religious issue, it makes use of the hierarchical chain. For example, the pastor consults the State Bishop, who then contacts the District Bishop. This bishop could take the matter to the Apostle Board of ordained bishops. They serve for life. They will consult the Twenty-Four Principles, the Bible, and other sources in order to arrive at a final decision.

Since Temple El Shaddai is under the auspices of *House of God The Holy Church of the Living God The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth The House of Prayer for All People Incorporated*, we need to briefly discuss the history of this Black Hebrew Pentecostal denomination. This religious organization follows the Hebrew Pentecostal faith. They observe the Seventh Day Sabbath (Ex 20:8-11). They keep all of the Hebrew Holy Days as Sabbaths (Lv 23:1-4). The House of God was founded by Bishop R.A.R. Johnson (Online House of God, Inc. 2006:1). in Washington D.C. in April 4, 1918. Before that, he had organized a small religious group he called “Commandment Keepers” in 1910. This small religious group became the House of God The Pillar and Ground of the Truth Expanding the movement Bishop Johnson organized churches quickly in the United States, Africa, Cuba, and Jamaica. Today the House of God is a global Hebrew Pentecostal church.

3.4 DISTINCTIVE THEOLOGICAL IDENTITY

The doctrine of *everlasting life* impacts the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai because it produces a concern of wanting to obtain it. The members know they can receive the promise

of everlasting life before they leave this world because of the assurance made by Yahshua: He is the way to everlasting life (Jn 8:51).

The notion of cheating death is central to hearing and believing the Word. If Yahshua is the way to avoid experiencing death, then he becomes the symbol of everlasting life. There are multiple symbols of death. These symbols are too numerous for this paper to discuss. However, whatever the interpretation of death the members of Temple El Shaddai view the opposite of it as everlasting life.

Temple El Shaddai believes that before everlasting life, the dead in Christ are resurrected like Yahshua. The ninth principle of the Twenty-four Principles of Temple El Shaddai supports the resurrection of the dead. It is also biblically based: *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed* (1Cor 15:52N KJV). There is nothing particularly unique about Temple El Shaddai's belief in the resurrection of the dead. Other Christian organizations believe this also because Yahshua rose from the dead.

The belief in the death and resurrection of Christ is no small matter amongst believers in Christ. Not all believers in Christ believe the Messiah died. For some believers who deny the death of the Messiah there can be no resurrection. These groups we find frequently within the Black Hebrew community in the New York City area, and other parts of America.

Those Black Hebrew churches who reject the death of Christ, and yet they continue to refer to themselves as Christians, may appear to be anomalous until examining the definition of Christianity. The definition of Christianity does not mention the belief in the death and resurrection of the Messiah as a prerequisite to being a Christian. The definition only refers to a follower of Christ. This fits a broad category of believers. The topic of defining a Christian is not the intent of this paper. However, many questions are generated in view of the fact that Temple El Shaddai and many of the churches within the House of God The Pillar and Ground of the Truth do not perceive themselves as Christians. To search for answers would require extensive research. However, we shall briefly touch on this subject.

The resurrection of Christ for Temple El Shaddai differs from some Christians. The resurrection of Christ for many traditional Christian churches is critical and symbolic of their

faith. The resurrection of Christ impacts greatly upon traditional Christians' spirituality that gives hope that they too some day will be resurrected from the dead. The resurrection of Christ impacts the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai in that it is not the finality of their faith: it is a hope of expectation.

For Temple El Shaddai the hope and expectation of the resurrection of Christ generates and empowers energy. The *generating energy power impacts* Temple El Shaddai's *spirituality* by influencing their faith to extend horizontally, rather than vertically. Temple El Shaddai's faith becomes inclusive others. The generating energy of the resurrection of Christ impacts the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai with a new vision: one of broad sightedness that reaches out to others who are different.

The pastor Bishop Pyant argues that Temple El Shaddai is different in their *rejection of themselves as Christians*. They call themselves Pentecostals because it does not categorize people. It is clear to the members of Temple El Shaddai why they are not Christians, even though they are followers of Christ. Temple El Shaddai sees traditional Christianity as setting standards. In setting standards they categorize people. In doing this traditional Christianity determines who is an authenticated believer in Christ. In acknowledging Christ Temple El Shaddai rejects Christianity's categorization.

Even though Temple El Shaddai rejects the categorization it does share some commonalities with traditional Christianity, for example the *new birth*. Temple El Shaddai believes all human creatures must experience a *new birth* (Jn 3:1-7 KJV). The new birth for Temple El Shaddai is symbolic of a sinner confessing his or her sins (Hamner 2007:D). After confessing their sins these sinners experience a new birth.

The new birth happens in a three-step process. The first step is confession of sins and accepting Yahshua the Messiah (Hamner 2007:D). The second step is self sanctification in which the confessor rids him or herself of bad habits. The third step is the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to the Pentecostal faith this experience is evidenced by speaking in tongues (Ac 10:44-46) (Land 1989:482). This final step of conversion impacts a member and transforms him or her into a new dimension with the Holy Spirit. The person is changed and forsakes all worldly practices for the Messiah to live in him or her.

Though these practices are found in other Pentecostal churches, Black Hebrew Pentecostals are unique in their emphasis on Old and New Testament practices. Temple El Shaddai has a double lens in which to view the receiving of the Holy Spirit as total conversion in their lives together with both the Old and New Testament.

Because Temple El Shaddai is a Black Hebrew Pentecostal community, the researcher was approached by a Christian who wanted some information about Temple El Shaddai being *Black, Hebrew and Pentecostal*. Temple El Shaddai is considered a Black church because the members are predominately Black. However, there is one American Indian family and one Italian youth. Understanding the Hebraic nature of Temple El Shaddai is more problematic and can be unclear to its members. What is problematic is getting a definitive statement from Temple El Shaddai on how they relate to the Hebrew part of their faith.

With regard to the question of Temple El Shaddai being Hebrew, a discussion that took place on the *Holy Day, Feast of Weeks*. The discussion could possibly shed some light on the Hebraic nature of Temple El Shaddai that hosted several other Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. Among them was Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. There were a few churches from the House of Pillar and Ground of the Truth. The Eastern District Bishop of the House of God was giving a lecture about the authentic Jew observing the Holy Day, Feast of Weeks. A female pastor, calling herself a prophetess, from the congregation interrupted the Bishop and asked the congregation who is an original blood Jew. No one from all the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches present, including Temple El Shaddai, stood up. Perhaps they do not consider themselves blood Jews? The researcher stood and said: *I don't know about you other Black people, but I am an original blood Hebrew*. Even though the researcher is an observer, he felt compelled to speak because he felt annoyed and amazed that no Black person admitted openly to being an original Jew. The researcher began to explicate why he accepts himself as an original Black Hebrew. He related an experience he had with two White Jewish storekeepers years ago. These Jews claimed they were Edomites. They enlightened the researcher that he was the real Jew.

Perhaps some semblance of enlightenment, with regard to the Hebraic nature of Temple El Shaddai and the other churches within the House of God being Hebrew can be interpreted from the writing of Hamner (2007). He writes on an unnumbered page the following: "Hebrew Pentecostal denomination teaches the relevance of both the Old and New Testament

principles pertaining to proper religious practices and current day worship of God. The designation proclaims that we are the descendants of God (Elohim) through the covenant he made with Abraham the Hebrew.”

There is another theological distinction of the identity of Temple El Shaddai. This theological distinction is vital to the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai because it determines how the members view the relationship between Yahweh and Yahshua. Temple El Shaddai’s members believe *Yahshua and Yahweh are One* (Hamner 207:Y).

Because Yahweh and Yahshua are one and there is the possibility of the indwelling of the Messiah in people of different religious faiths: when they call on God they are calling on Jesus. The indwelling of the Messiah is made possible by unity of the Son and Father being one Spirit. When a non-Christian accepts God into his or her life, he or she simultaneously receives His Son. A further argument presented by Temple El Shaddai is that when people of other religious persuasions acknowledge Yahweh, they are accepting the Principles of Yahshua (Hamner 2007:D) and the requirement of being converted is questionable. These beliefs constitute a distinct theological identity of Temple El Shaddai.

A distinctive theological identity of Temple El Shaddai is seen in that although they believe Yahshua and Yahweh are One, they do not consider themselves trinitarians. It is unclear why Temple El Shaddai does not call themselves trinitarians. Temple El Shaddai argue that they are apostolic. This belief impacts its spirituality and causes them to accept Yahweh and Yahshua as One while rejecting the trinitarian doctrine. This reflects upon the baptismal practice of Temple El Shaddai.

The baptism practice of Temple El Shaddai is unique in some ways and common in others. The pastor of El Shaddai baptizes “in the name of Yahshua Messiah” according to Principles of the House of God. This is done in accordance with Scripture (Ac 2:38). Baptizing in the name of Yahshua the Messiah is part of the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai. Baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ or Yahshua the Messiah is an acceptable form amongst many Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches.

What makes Temple El Shaddai unique and separate from other Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches, is not their *practice of baptizing* in the name of Yahshua the Messiah. It involves

baptizing in the name of Yahshua while believing “Yahshua is Yah, Yah is Yahshua.” Most churches titled trinitarian that believe Yahweh and Yahshua are one baptize is in the name of the *Father, son and Holy Spirit*.

Some Black Pentecostal churches teach that baptizing in the name of Jesus or Yahshua does so with the belief that Yahshua and Yahweh are separate Persons. This type of church is categorized as belonging to the apostolic faith. A trinitarian church baptizes in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Reciting the Ten Commandments on the Sabbath and all Holy Days is a distinct theological feature of Temple El Shaddai (Ex 20:1-17). These Commandments are vital to the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai because they give the members a sense of what it means to be obedient to Yahweh. Because some Black Hebrew Pentecostals believe they are the true descendants of Israel, they believe the dynamic transformational phenomenon of the Ten Commandments brings the members of El Shaddai into a distinctive experience with the Creator.

The unique applicability of the Ten Commandments plays a vital role in the House of God Pillar and Ground of the Truth. They look at the preamble of the Ten Commandments that is addressed to the people of Israel. Since the House of God and Temple El Shaddai identify with ancient Israel, the conclusion is the ten Commandments uniquely apply to them

For Temple El Shaddai, the strict observance of the *fourth* of the Ten Commandments becomes vital. This is critical because it impacts their spirituality in receiving rewards for their obedience:

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5:18-19 NKJV).

Black Hebrew Pentecostals lift up Matthew 5:19 in keeping the 7th Day Sabbath. The reward for this is called *great in the kingdom of heaven*. This verse symbolizes the distinctive theological identity of Temple El Shaddai, and all of the churches within the House of God and Black Hebrew Pentecostals churches that are not part of the House of God. The pastor of Temple El Shaddai is adamant about not breaking or teaching against any part of the Ten

Commandments. Because Yahshua does not identify the least Commandment, the bishop embraces all of them. He is afraid of not keeping the least Commandment. This might affect his reward. Such concern impacts his spirituality and causes him to be vigilant in his obedience to Yahweh.

The Bible plays a unique role in the distinct theological identity in the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai and to the Pentecostal movement at large in that it helps to define their faith. The Bible is the *Living Word*. The Bible has a life of its own. It works with the spirituality of the believer and enables him or her to receive revelations from Yahweh. The Bible is second in importance only to the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the Bible is read with a spiritual eye through the working of the Holy Spirit. Members of Temple El Shaddai, like most Black Hebrew Pentecostals must experience the *moving of the Holy Spirit* within their spirituality that leads to a transformational experience with Yahweh. The Bible supplements the Holy Spirit by giving knowledge: *Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest* (Mt 11:29 NKJV); *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1 Tm 2:5). These are very familiar Scriptures to Temple El Shaddai and to most Pentecostals.

Prophecy is another spiritual gift with distinctive theological qualities for Temple El Shaddai. The pastor of Temple El Shaddai is used by the Holy Spirit in prophesy. Temple El Shaddai does have one individual designated as a special prophet. There is a good reason why no particular saint is venerated as a prophet: *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one to another the prophecy* (1 Cor 12:7, 10 KJV). Pentecostals have a fundamental teaching, that all of the seven gifts of the Spirit, including prophecy, belong in every church. The pastor of Temple Shaddai has called people to the altar and he has given to them the word that Yahweh has given to him.

Using the Bible to test the legitimacy of a saint prophesying juxtaposes the practice of Temple El Shaddai and most Pentecostal churches. Temple El Shaddai does have one individual designated as a special prophet, similar to Ellen G. White in the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Ellen G. White is scripturally proven to be a prophet. There is a good reason why no particular saint is venerated as a prophet: *But the manifestation of the Spirit is*

given to each one . . . to another the prophecy (1 Cor 12:7, 10 KJV). Pentecostals have a fundamental teaching, that all of the seven gifts of the Spirit, including prophecy, belong in every church. Shaddai has called people to the altar and he has given to them the word that Yahweh has given to him.

Another unique feature of Temple El Shaddai, and other churches of the House of God, The Pillar and Ground of the Truth, that is traditionally a norm, is the use of water instead of wine or grape juice for the Holy Communion. Water is used because it flows from the body of Yahshua. This is supported by pivotal events in the life of the Messiah (Jn 19:34-35). Blood and water flowing from the lifeless body of the Messiah is symbolic of the vital substance that sustains life. Paradoxically in the blood there is life with the water. For Temple El Shaddai and the House of God “Water always has been used for salvation with the blood” (Hamner 2007:Y). When Yahshua speaks to His disciples at the Passover supper He does so within the context of blood and salvation (Mt 26:28). The blood is symbolic of the new covenant and cannot be injected: *for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off* (Lv 17:14 NJKV).

While Yahshua is conversing with His disciples He is holding a cup in his hand. He extends the cup to His disciples and asks them to drink from it. What is in the cup is symbolic of His blood. According to Scripture Yahshua does not specifically name the potion that is in the cup. He gives a generic inference that has a double meaning for something earthly as well as heavenly (Mt 26:29). According to the pastor of Temple El Shaddai this Scripture is critical for taking water for sacraments. The pastor asserts Yahshua makes a critical statement: *‘But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom’* (Mt 26:29 NKJV). The members will not take of the fruit of the vine like the Messiah until a future time in the Kingdom.

The members of Temple El Shaddai take communion once a year. Communion is taken during Passover because they believe there is no reference in the Bible for the administration of communion services at any other time. For Temple El Shaddai and the House of God, Yahshua is their Passover (Hamner 2007:Y).

Since communion is tied into a Feast Day of the Passover, there is no age requirement for partaking of Holy Communion. A person must be of sound mind, body and soul. They must believe in Yahshua. The Holy Communion impacts the spirituality of the one taking communion by remembering the death of the Messiah

3.5 NOTIONS OF TRANSCENDENCE

In this section on notions of transcendence we shall look closely at how the members of Temple El Shaddai perceive God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We shall also examine how the members communicate or reach out to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Yahweh is described by Temple El Shaddai as being measureless and timeless. Through this essence, Yahweh communicates in natural and unnatural ways that impact our spirituality by cause people to have many different experiences with Him. One way Yahweh communicates to us spiritually is through His written Scripture. Yahweh speaks to us through His Word by bringing Scriptures to our mind. This impacts our spirituality giving us a closer sense of His presence. The Bible allows us to try other spirits to see if they are of Yahweh through the use of the written Word of Yahweh (1 Jn 4:1).

In the Scriptures, Yahshua is often described as the “second chance to get it right” by Bishop Pyant. Yahshua is the Savior who gives us an opportunity to be saved. As such Yahshua impacts the spirituality of the members of the temple as one with an open door policy to salvation. This is one unique perception of the Savior in comparison to others.

Jesus is seen as the bearer of good things in life: The good things in life for a believer can include health, peace and joy and a host of other things that can impact the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai. This impact on the spirituality causes the members to see Jesus as a provider. He can do this through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is alive and gives life to those who possess the Holy Spirit. In the Bible, Yahweh blows His breath into the dust that He took from the earth (Gn 1:27). For Black Hebrew Pentecostals, the breath of Yahweh is the Holy Spirit. Frequently characterized as a wind (Ac 2:2), Yahweh’s breath permeates every human creature in His image even sinners. This takes place irrespective of religious affiliation.

Temple El Shaddai teaches the Holy Spirit has dynamic transformational power. The Holy Spirit impacts upon an individual's spirituality and gives them a new identity. The Holy Spirit is symbolic of the baptizer. When a member of Temple El Shaddai receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they are reborn as non-sinners. This becomes possible because the Holy Spirit is the dynamic that transforms the brother or sister. The Holy Spirit that is also symbolized as the "quickenning power" that allows the experience of translation to take place in the life of a saint to meet the Savior. Members of Temple El Shaddai are aware of the "quickenning power" that will propel them to meet Yahshua in the air upon His return. The Holy Spirit comes into our lives and transforms us while impacting our spirituality that causes us to experience the dynamic of the Holy Spirit as a transformational power

There is a Scripture that helps to describe the living role of the Holy Spirit for Temple El Shaddai and the entire Pentecostal movement: *But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak* (Mt 10:19 KJV). This verse is critical in trying to understand what the Holy Spirit means to a Pentecostal. The Holy Spirit as a living entity impacts our spirituality in many with the experiences of life.

For example, when Christ says Holy Spirit will speak for you, it becomes your mouthpiece, your legal representative, your healer. The words coming forth are not your own. The Holy Spirit is symbolic of a mouthpiece or a lawyer. Temple El Shaddai and all Pentecostals hum a popular adage: "He is my lawyer in the court room" and "He is my doctor in the sick room."

Temple El Shaddai and other Pentecostals interpret the Holy Spirit to be a doctor. The doctor metaphor is interesting because there was a time when going to a doctor was frowned upon. A saint going to the doctor would be looked upon as having little or no faith in the belief in God or the power of the Holy Spirit. As older saints grew older and younger saints grew older both groups began to consult physicians, Temple El Shaddai is not an exception Temple El Shaddai and other Pentecostals get their inspiration from Mark 16:17-18 which they relate to the Holy Spirit: *In my name . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover*. The Holy Spirit as a doctor works through people, particularly through the presbytery of the church (Ja 5:14-15).

The Holy Spirit is a healer that is evoked by anointing oils. At Temple El Shaddai Jesus is the Healer who transfigures olive oil into healing power. A saint possessed with the gift of healing through the Holy Spirit is considered a *healer*. Generally, most Black Hebrew Pentecostals are believed to have the ability to lay hands on members and provide healing. This practice is reflected in James 5:14-15 where the sick call for the elders of the church. Pentecostals interpret this to mean: call on your pastor or a lay person with the gift of healing and to anoint you with olive oil before praying the prayer of faith (1 Cor 12:4, 9).

Anointing oil is olive oil transformed by the Holy Spirit. It is sometimes referred to as *Holy Oil*. The oil is held in the hands of the leader who invokes the Holy Spirit. This is what constitutes the oil being anointed, not by a man or a woman. The holy anointed oil impacts the spirituality of the church and caused the members to depend on the anointing oil to be applied to their hands and head. The anointing oil is used to anoint the walls of a home to drive the evil spirits out. The pastor has access to it and stores it usually in the pulpit.

Temple El Shaddai contends Yahweh blew His breath into the dust that He took from the earth (Gn 1:27). The Breath of Yahweh is often symbolized as the Holy Spirit. His Spirit is also frequently characterized as a wind (Ac 2:2). The Spirit of Yahweh's Breath permeates every human creature in His image. Temple El Shaddai contends the Spirit of Yahweh impacts the living creature's spirituality bringing them into a relation with Yahweh. This takes place irrespective of religious affiliation.

Temple El Shaddai teaches the Holy Spirit has dynamic transformational power enabling human beings to become transformed. The Holy Spirit impacts upon the individual's spirituality that gives them a new identity. When this occurs a transformation takes place. *The enactment of the transformation of a saint's life through the experience the Holy Spirit is critical to understanding spirituality of Temple El Shaddai.*

The Holy Spirit is symbolic of a *baptizer*. It enacts the baptizing of an individual. When a member of Temple El Shaddai receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, this phenomenon impacts his or her spirituality giving them a new birth. The Holy Spirit brings the brother or sister into an experience of being baptized that is transformational in nature. This becomes possible because the Holy Spirit is the dynamic that transforms the brother or sister. As a

result of this, transcendence is a reality by the aid of the Holy Spirit that is also symbolized as the *quickenning power*.

The phenomenon of the “quickenning power” allows the experience of translation to take place in the life of a saint. As a Pentecostal church the members of Temple El Shaddai are aware of the “quickenning power.” The quickenning power impacts the spirituality of the members of Temple El Shaddai and causes the members to anticipate the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

3.6 DISTINCTIVE MORALITY

Temple El Shaddai teaches righteousness is part of the quest for eternal peace and everlasting life. (2 Pt 3:13). Righteousness is living holy according to the dictates of Yahweh. It signifies a covenant between Yahweh and believers. Members of Temple El Shaddai believe that this covenant is contingent upon keeping His Laws, Statutes and Judgments.

The righteousness of the saints is vital to their transformation. Temple El Shaddai as a Black Hebrew Pentecostal church is aware of the criticality of righteousness. The church knows only through righteousness can members hope to receive the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Through righteousness members of Temple El Shaddai fulfill their obligation of a covenant relationship between themselves and Yahweh.

Honesty goes hand in hand with righteousness. The Bible prohibits stealing, cheating, and lying (Exodus 20:1-17). Honesty reflects the virtues of respecting another’s property, as well as truth-telling and trustworthiness.

Integrity is another aspect of righteousness. Integrity is honesty in the face of temptation. The moral virtue of integrity will encourage a saint to be aware of how he or she interacts with another individual so as to avoid being offensive (Mt 7:12). This morality is distinctive to many believers of the Messiah and it will impact their spirituality.

The House of God has basic moral principles to which all the churches must adhere. For example, premarital sex, which constitutes fornication, is forbidden (Harris 1996:2).

Abstinence of sex before marriage predicates on Hebrews 13:4. Single people cannot use condoms because they are not permitted to have sex until married. The Bible prohibits homosexuality (2 Ti 3:3). The religious body forbids women from having abortions. Adultery is breaking of the Ten Commandments. This is important because it prohibits any man from having more than one wife. The House of God frowns on divorce. The House of God also teaches against euthanasia. These moral principles impact the Temple El Shaddai and all the churches within the House of God and challenges They must obey the rules of the religious body.

Temple El Shaddai has to deal with lust of the flesh in pre-marital sex (Hb 13:4). Pre-marital sex is an immoral act according to Scripture and it is equated with fornication according to the Word of Yahweh (1 Cor 6:13, 18). The churches have a formidable task trying to teach the youth morality and to abstain from sex before marriage. The church also prohibits couples living together, saying that it constitutes a sin, even when the couple is engaged to be married. Couples planning to marry are encouraged to live separately until the wedding: *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge* (Heb 13:4 NKJV).

The Twenty-Four Principles dictate that paying tithes and offerings is righteous behavior: (Mt 3:8-10). These verses are interpreted literally leaving no room for excuses, regardless of income or economic status.

Principle number six has to do with the moral virtue of eating the right food as ordained by Yahweh. To obey is to receive a double blessing (Lv 11:1-47). Yahweh confers a spiritual blessing to those who comply with His word, and for those who eat selective foods their bodies will be blessed (Hamner 2007:D). The diet impacts the spirituality of the members of Temple El Shaddai and gives them healthier and holier bodies.

3.7 DIVINE-HUMAN RELATIONAL DYNAMICS

Documenting the divine-human dynamic is difficult because this relationship is highly personal. In this section, I will examine first-hand accounts of a young man and two women's experience of the divine-human relational dynamics.

The impact of Judaism on Michael, a son of the pastor Bishop Isaac Pyant is reflected inside Temple El Shaddai is. He left this world in 2007. He was 17 when he contracted a blood virus that attacked and enlarged his heart muscle. A doctor determined he could have treated the heart problem had Michael come to him earlier. He was told there is no known medicine that could totally eliminate the condition.

As a teenager, Michael attended church on a daily basis. Michael was engrossed by the Hebrew Pentecostal movement of the House of God Pillar and Ground of the Truth. He developed a deep interest in Hebrew rituals and elicited the aid of White Jews to teach him their practices in Judaism. Michael studied intensely, learning to read Hebrew and to read the Torah.

He loved the Holy Days and taught members new ways of observing the Feast Days that was closer to the practice of orthodox Jews. He taught how to observe the Passover in more traditional ways, such as the practice of the feast. Michael encouraged men to wear yarmulkes and prayer shawls in the temple. The members learned to sing the She'ma and to hold their hands up when facing the East to pray. He placed on the white walls of the temple letters from the Hebrew alphabet.

Soon Michael found himself wanting to leave Christianity and practice Judaism. This alarmed both his parents who prayed that he does not convert. Michael relented.

As his ailment progressed he underwent a heart operation. Doctors put a defibrillator in his heart, saying it was the only possible treatment. The wire in the defibrillator became unattached and the defibrillator stopped. At the time he had been preparing with his mother and father to attend the Annual Convocation of the House of God The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth in Lexington, Kentucky. The doctors informed him his heart was too weak for the trip, and recommended a heart transplant. Michael refused. He was concerned about the possibility of receiving the heart of a Gentile.

His mother pleaded with him to have the heart operation and stay and not go to the convocation. Despite the odds of failure, she wanted Michael to have the operation. Michael

refused. He went with his family and some members of Temple El Shaddai to the convocation in Lexington, Kentucky.

On one of the days at the convocation Michael's heart condition had grown worse. His legs had given out, and he needed to be in a wheel chair. Suddenly the Holy Spirit descended upon him. To the amazement of onlookers, he rose to his feet and began doing the holy dance. His mother and others watched with amazement the miraculous healing power of Yahweh. Later that evening Michael decided to take a shower in his hotel room. Standing in the shower his heart gave out and he passed from this world. This was interpreted the people of the temple that Yahweh had anointed and prepared Michael earlier to come home to be with Him.

Another member of Temple El Shaddai had a unique experience. Before coming into the full presence of the Lord, she lived with a drug pusher who sold about a gram of cocaine a day. She was a cocaine addict for 17 years, who had a steady stream of mucus running from her nose. She no longer had hairs in her nostrils. She had no interest in attending church. One day when she was home Yahweh spoke to her and gave her a message. This day would be the last time that she would snort cocaine. The message she received was without solicitation. It was Yahweh's grace.

There was no major dialogue between the member and Yahweh. The member had not heard from heaven before. However, although she had not been a practicing member of Church, she recognized the voice of the Creator with unmistakable certainty. That night, she met with a girlfriend, and told her she would not snort cocaine again. Her girl friend refused to believe her. Yahweh's Words had impacted the spirituality of the woman and gave her confidence that she would not use again. From that moment forward, she lost the desire for her drug of choice. She joined the church. Yahweh restored her life and even the hairs in her nostrils.

Another middle-age member had a divine-human experience of a physical and visual nature. After attending Temple El Shaddai, she was alone in her house. She felt the presence of Yahweh. She says it was like a thin blanket draped over her face. A distinct feeling of love trumped the earlier feeling of isolation. Soon afterwards she received disturbing news. A 16-year-old girl that she knew and loved had been murdered. She was overwhelmed by grief. She asked Yahweh to do something to ease her pain and to give her a sign. Riding in a car

that night, she saw three bright lights shoot through the darkened sky. Watching the light streaking across the sky assuaged her pain and lifted her sorrow. The three lights in the sky impacted the spirituality of the member and eased her sorrow. She did not know where they came from. The three lights were like three people with flashlights. Months later an Elder from the church was riding in his car and he saw the same three lights that followed him for half a block.

These scenarios are believed to be mediated by the Holy Spirit. They stand as testimonies of the mysterious nature of Yahweh. These mysteries that may seem incomprehensible to some reflect the reality of the divine-human relational dynamics.

A theologian once asked this researcher how a Hebrew Pentecostal would qualify to stand before Yahweh? Hebrew Pentecostals keep all ten of the Ten Commandments. Yahshua said: *Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 5:19 NKJV). Yahshua does not state which is the least of the commandments, However, Hebrew Pentecostals keep all ten Commandments; therefore, Hebrew Pentecostals would qualify well standing before Yahweh in their divine-human relational dynamics.

3.8 IMPACT OF SPIRITUALITY

To begin to discuss or to comprehend how the distinct spirituality of the Black Hebrew community impacts the spirituality of its parishioners there has to be a clear understanding of how they perceive themselves psychologically. What foundationally constitutes Pentecostals socially, economically or politically is that they function from the perspective of *being in the world but not of the world*. Being in the world but not of the world must be thoroughly understood. The researcher is aware that other religions may be familiar with this adage and may make use of it; however, Pentecostals give it a more esoteric meaning.

Being in the world but not of the world presents the greatest challenge to the Pentecostal. They believe that they are physically in the world but spiritually they are only partially of the world. This impacts the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals by shaping the way he or

she sees the world. For Pentecostals, “the world” generally denotes sinners who are destined for hell if they do not repent. For the sinner, the world is life on earth, with no awareness of the spiritual world. Black Pentecostals inhabit two worlds, the physical world and the spiritual world of Yahshua: “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn 18:36 NKJV).

Pentecostals believe they share in a world with Christ that is related to His Kingdom. Yahshua began His ministry preaching about the Kingdom (Mt 4:23). Yahshua instructed His disciples to pray: *Thy Kingdom come* (Lk 11:1 KJV). So in the final analysis being in the world but not of the world can be interpreted by Pentecostals to mean that they are separated from the world and they are different from other people in the world.

In retrospect we have established that being in the world but not of the world firstly consists of a physical world and spiritual worlds. There is a physical world for sinners and a spiritual world for sinners here on earth. Like the sinners there is a physical world for Pentecostals. In fact, Black Hebrew Pentecostals and sinners occupy the same space in the physical world. The spiritual world of the Pentecostal is not of this *earth* but of Christ’s heavenly world of the Kingdom.

For Pentecostals living a double reality of physicality and spirituality can create a psychological trauma of trying to determine where they belong and who they are. Black Pentecostals are aware of their double existence, but live in apprehension of slipping unwittingly into the other world of sinners (Phlp 2:12). This a possibility if the member becomes too involved with world practices, such as attending alcoholic parties and secular dancing. This is called “backsliding.” The Pentecostals try to balance a physical and a spiritual life. The sinner is not aware of the duality of his or her existence: *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them* (2 Cor 4:4).

Because Pentecostals are working out their own salvation with fear and trembling, it sets them apart from much of society. But realistically society impacts their spirituality because Pentecostals are physically in the world. So Pentecostals struggle in society trying to remain spiritually loyal to the world of Christ, while encountering the temptations society holds for them, such as leaving the church to sing worldly songs for money. For Pentecostals fighting

to refrain from worldly temptations constitute working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals may forego some of the traditions of the culture that they live in. For example, refusing to pledge allegiance to a flag or swearing on a Bible that constitutes being irreligious. Pentecostals find themselves separated from society when it challenges their spirituality and threatens their spiritual world. They believe that the esoteric world of Christ is always challenged by opposing powers. Therefore, Pentecostals understand these decisions as challenges that force them to work on their spirituality. At times, they feel compelled to separate from other people in society. This triggers a psychological dilemma. How does a saint, who has taken him or herself away from society, help a sinner come to Christ?

On the other hand, too much contact with sinners could lead to a spiritually diseased syndrome. This danger of spiritual contamination can persuade Pentecostals. The adverse effect could cause the saint to shun and perhaps to scorn the unbeliever. In so doing the Pentecostal could feel spiritually superior.

The feeling of superiority may not be limited toward sinners, but also Christian denominations that are not Pentecostal, particularly if they do not speak in tongues. In keeping with the spiritually superior attitude of the Pentecostal believer there is a distinction between a sinner and an atheist. This is important because Pentecostals often categorize people and they are sometimes judgmental. A sinner is not necessarily an atheist but an atheist is a sinner. A sinner may believe in the existence of God, but is disobedient to God. An atheist denies the existence of God. For the Pentecostals both the sinner and atheists constitute the world.

Categorizing or making spiritual judgments about non-Pentecostal Christian denominations becomes problematic. For example, First Day (Sunday) worshippers generally eat pork, fish, and scavengers of the sea, such as shrimp and lobster, and they are trinitarian. Seventh Day Adventist church observes the 7th Day Sabbath. But they do not eat pork, and scavengers of the sea; however, they are trinitarian. Categorizing or making spiritual judgments about these two trinitarian organizations would prove difficult.

Some Black Pentecostals contend that First Day worshippers are not saved and shall not go to heaven because they do not keep the Seventh Day Sabbath that is a Commandment. They refer to the Scriptures to support their argument (Ex 31:14 NKJV).

But the majority of Black Pentecostals are more ambivalent about the question of salvation for First Day worshippers. On one side, there is this thought and feeling that they can be saved; on the other side, there is this belief that they cannot be saved because First Day worshippers profane the 7th Day Sabbath. In the psyche of Black Pentecostals, there is a great divide between Christian theologies that observe the Sabbath or keep Sunday. Most Black Hebrew Pentecostals are more judgmental about Sabbath keeping than they are about speaking in tongues. Keeping the Seventh Day Sabbath brings Black Hebrew Pentecostals closer to the Messiah and separates them from other Christians.

Black Pentecostals, although separate from society in many ways, must function within the culture's economic and political system. Black Pentecostal communities are situated within a distinct American society with its own identity and its capitalist system, such as raising money for various functions.

Economically the dollar defines America. The dollar is the fabric that holds America together says President Obama:

Our religious traditions celebrate the value of hard work and express the conviction that a virtuous life will result in material reward. Rather than vilify the rich, we hold them up as role models, and our mythology is steeped in stories of men on the make—the immigrant who comes to this country with nothing and strikes it big, the young man who heads West in search of his fortune. As Ted Turner famously said, “In America, money is how we keep score” (Obama 2006:177).

These words coming from the President of the United States gives an in-depth glimpse of the dynamic of America. He begins by candidly asserting that America's religious heritage is ultimately intertwined with money. The dynamic of money drives most religious denominations' spirituality in America: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and others. Black Hebrew Pentecostals no exception despite claims to be in the world but not of the world. Pentecostals preach and teach Malachi 3:8-10. Bring the tithes and offerings into the church and you will be blessed. Keep your tithes and offerings at home and you shall be cursed. For those who want a double blessing, bless the woman or man of God with extra

money. The critical verse for Pentecostals that depicts the dynamic of money is: *for the labourer is worthy of his hire* (Lk 10:7 KNJ). This is interpreted to mean giving money to a servant of God is a Christian's duty.

From September to April, money flows in Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. There are countless pastor anniversaries, choir anniversaries, church anniversaries, Men and Women's Day celebrations, testimonial dinners, Bar Mitzvahs, Bat Mitzvahs, birthday celebrations, and other events that bring in thousands of American dollars. Yet during these critical months Pentecostals will lay claim to being in the world but not of the world. These money making events questions the truth of this adage.

The distinctive spirituality of the Black Pentecostals does not preclude them from engaging in politics, although few, or no Black Pentecostals, run for political office. This issue requires more research. When they register to vote, Black Pentecostals are usually Democrats. Most Pentecostal churches encourage their members to vote and to take part in this democratic process of America. There is good reason for Pentecostals to vote. The more people who vote in an area, the better services the community will receive. And even though Pentecostals may shun society, they do enjoy the goods and services that are offered through the political process. Again being in the world but not of the world is questionable and impacts the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals because like others they enjoy the goods and services of the world. They reconcile this by arguing that Yahweh wants the best for His people.

3.9 SUMMARY

Temple El Shaddai is made up of people of mixed backgrounds. This impacts the spirituality and gives it more of an inclusive characteristic. This differs from other less diverse Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches that are predominantly made of Black parishioners. The spirituality of Temple El Shaddai embraces outsiders and there is a feeling of assimilation with people of different religious persuasions.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is evidenced by the speaking in tongues, brings with it a *quickenning power* that moves the members. Shouting, laying on of hands, while running up

and down the aisles, is distinctive of the worship service of Temple El Shaddai. The Holy Spirit is vital to the spirituality of members allowing them to experience the dynamic power of Yahweh.

Worship services are unlike any Christian service. They are a unique blend of Judaic and Christian rituals. For example, a young man blows the Shofar to begin the service. The people will rise to face the East and recite the Ten Commandments in unison. A young lad wearing a yarmulke will chant the She'ma and the congregation will join in. The women of Temple El Shaddai all must cover their hair during the services and no woman is permitted to wear pants during the services. Following the devotional service singing, shouting, and speaking in tongues the pastor brings a message. The pastor's wife usually presides for her husband to speak.

The 7th Sabbath Day impacts the spirituality of the members of Temple El Shaddai by defining their salvation. The pastor has authority over the Temple El Shaddai, though he must abide by the Twenty-Four Principles established by the House of God Pillar and ground of the Truth.

Temple El Shaddai views Yahshua as a Healer with His Powerful Father Yahweh. Righteousness and integrity are taught as virtues as well as tithing.

Fornication by indulging in pre-marital sex, living together without being married, homosexuality, committing adultery and more are taught as vices to abstain from. These vices impact the spirituality of the members of Temple El Shaddai and lead them into sin. Listening to secular music and against secular dancing is considered a vice by Temple El Shaddai. Therefore, members of Temple El Shaddai must shun all of these practices in order to avoid being a sinner.

Pentecostals, as virtuous as they are or desire to be, struggle with being in the world, but not of the world. Voluntarily separating themselves from the world, Pentecostals can at times be psychologically judgmental. For them this is the right attitude. Voluntarily separating themselves from First Day (Sunday) worshippers who observe Sunday and reject the 7th Day Sabbath often becomes problematic and traumatic. Many times of these churches are friendlier and cooperative than Sabbath churches.

Trying to disconnect from American society where religious tradition encapsulates money, frequently proves challenging to the Black Hebrew Pentecostal's spirituality. Black Hebrew Pentecostals often benefit from being part of a moneyed society like America. As a result of this, how realistic is the Pentecostal's well known adage: *in the world but not of the world*?

In retrospect the adage in the world but not of the world that fits many Pentecostal churches may not accurately define the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai. The spirituality of Temple El Shaddai is more ecumenical embracing and feeling assimilation with people of different religious persuasions.

Appendix: Field Notes – Qualitative Research

I could only conduct two focus groups and three personal interviews. Two of these were lengthy. Availability of time was the problem. However, I was able to perform several observations. The difficulty in holding more focus groups was the result of Saturday evening being the only available hour to meet with the members of the church. Unfortunately, because the members had been in service for hours they are fatigued and ready to go home. Sunday or any other day of the week for a group session was not an option.

The following field notes are the results of my interviews and focus groups. The field notes are in the vernacular of the researcher and interviewees and group members.

Temple El Shaddai is a member of a world-wide religious body: *House of God Holy Church of The Living God: the Pillar and the Ground of the Truth: The House of Prayer for all People (Hebrew Pentecostal)*. Twelve Apostles administer this religious body. All of the churches within this Hebrew Pentecostal movement must adhere to the “Twenty Four Principles” (Hamner 2007: D).

In my field-work of Temple El Shaddai I used hand-held tape recorder for church services, group sessions and personal interviews. Each session shall have its individual tape with the date of the recording. After using my tape recorder I shall transcribe each session in to field notes in the following way.

Date
Time
Location
Interview: Observation/church service
Place where conducted
Name
Address
Telephone Number
Cell Number
Email
Male/Female: Adult/Child
Gender Preference
Age
Religious Faith
Name of Church
Description
Secular Title
Religious Title
Profession or type of work/Student – Grade level & Subject
Educational Background

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Events
Problems

Suggestions
Verbal & Physical Expressions

EVALUATION

Valid/Trustworthy

FUTURE QUESTIONS

Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches are very private. Therefore, I agreed to the pastor's request not to divulge the names of the members in his congregation without his permission. As a result I refer to the members by gender and as participant.

The following are my field notes from my tape recordings:

(Note: **FIELD NOTE NUMBER 1** deals with my visit to the Lemba tribe in the Republic of South Africa.)

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 2

Date: 31 May 2008, Saturday evening. Time: 16h00. Location: South Ozone Park, Queens, NY. Observation: church service. Name of church: Temple El Shaddai. Religious Faith: Hebrew Pentecostal. Description: One level private dwelling that has been converted to a church. There are bars on the windows in the sanctuary and the bathroom. There is a Jewish star on the white walls in the sanctuary. There are about 25 people in attendance. Event: Family and Friends' Day. The female pastor of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ of Brooklyn, NY brings the homily. This pastor recognizes the Holy names Yahweh and Yahshua but she uses the Greek names God and Jesus. There is much music, singing and shouting.

Valid/Trustworthy: Temple El Shaddai is suitable for studying its spirituality.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 3

Date: 5 June 2008, Friday evening (beginning of the Sabbath). Time: 22h00. Location: South Ozone Park, NY. Name of Church: Temple El Shaddai. Present: Four teenagers and nine adults. The teacher of the Bible study is the 79-year-old founder, Bishop Raymond L. Pyant, Sr. The subject deals with where we are going to spend eternity. The teacher asks me to read John 24; Revelation 3:6 and Psalm 9:3. The bishop takes a theme *this is that*. Bishop Pyant asks many questions, for example: what is happening in Israel today? Does it have anything to do with prophecy? Who is Jesus? What is His color? He then asks: does Yahshua give us a level of spirituality? In evaluation this is a critical issue to my study of Temple El Shaddai's spirituality.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 4

Date: 7 June 2008 (Sivan 4, 5768), Saturday (Sabbath) Sabbath school lesson number 37: Satan and Worship. Time 12h15. Location: South Ozone Park, NY. The teacher for Sabbath school is the pastor's wife. In the lesson she covers B. Forms and Service: 1. Satan has his own doctrines. Her Scriptures are Jeremiah 10:1-8 and I Timothy 4:1-4. Jeremiah refers to

cutting down of trees, which most Hebrew Pentecostals interpret to mean Christmas trees are forbidden. I Timothy 4:1-4 talks about “doctrines of demons.” The teacher includes Christmas trees as part of the doctrine. Note: The religious body *The House of God* publishes all the Sabbath school books for use world-wide. All hundreds of churches study the same teachings of the Sabbath school lesson.

During the lunch break (14h00) I sit in the downstairs dining-room and overhear a conversation between the pastor’s wife and one of her sons and daughters. I later ask her who she was referring to. She says her son Michael. She informed me of his passing as a result of a blood virus attacking his heart muscle. He played a major role in implementing several of the Hebrew rituals.

FOCUS GROUP NUMBER ONE

Time: 20h00 at the church in the evening. Location: sanctuary. In attendance: 11. Gender and age: Two teenage boys, 16 and 17; one female, 30; four females, 50; one man, 70; one female, 70; one female, 20; one man, 50.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Question Number 1: What is spirituality?

Responses:

A lad (16 years) answers: Belief that God works in our lives.

A lad (17 years): Connection, God is there for us every day.

A female (aged 30): Spirituality reconnects to the Father.

A female (aged 50): Spirituality is wisdom and faith in Jesus.

A female (20 years): It is trusting in the Word and keeping the Ten Commandments and reading the Bible and doing His will.

A female (60 years): My personal walk and my bond with Christ.

A female (aged 70): Doing the will of God, trusting, loving, and hoping. The work of salvation with the connection with the Sabbath, and hearing my call and doing His work.

Another female (70 years): Connecting ourselves to whom we want to be by the Creator.

A man (aged 50): Spirituality is part of that which started out in the Garden of Eden.

A man (aged 70): A true spirit in the life of Jesus and a spirit of God.

Question Number 2: What or Who is the Holy Spirit?

Responses:

A lad (17 years): Spirit of God in us.

A lad (16 years): Holy Spirit is trust in the prayers Jesus gives us.

A female (30 years): Connects us to both Jesus and God.

A female (70 years): Wisdom and faith.

A female (20 years): Love and wisdom.

A female (60 years): It guides the believer on the path to eternity. The Holy Spirit is force.

A female (30 years): Something that leads you in the right path. God opens our eyes on a more spiritual path. The Creator works more on a righteous way through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the glue to the operation.

A female (60 years): Comforter, peace alive and brings us back to God.

A female (50 years): Insight, a voice that speaks, wisdom and joy.

A male (50 years): The Holy Spirit cannot see me. The Creator knows me through the root of my mind.

An old man (79 years): the Holy Spirit is redemption.

Note: It took over an hour to ask and to get responses for the two questions. It is approximately 21h15 and the members feel tired from a long day in church. I conclude my questioning.

Evaluation: Replies are unique and candid because I inform the members not to respond with Scripture references, but from the heart.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 5

Date: 9 June 2008, Monday, Location: Brooklyn, NY. Name of Church: Faith Hope and Charity, female pastor. Event: Holy Day with several names, such as, Feasts of Weeks, Pentecostal Day or the Hebrew name Shavuot. The time is 14h00. Sabbath school starts two hours late. One of the bishops of the House of God begins teaching about the Holy Day, Feasts of Weeks that is contrary to the understanding of most Hebrew Pentecostal churches. He argues before the congregation there is no significant connection between the Holy Day, Feasts of Weeks correlating with the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit falls. These events have no relationship with one another. Problem: A controversy ensues with many members in the congregation disagreeing with the bishop's statement.

Another issue that arises is counting the days from the Passover until the Feast of Weeks. The founder of Temple El Shaddai corrects the congregation by instructing them to count 43 days and not 40 days after the Passover to arrive at the appropriate date to celebrate the Feast of Weeks. He reminds the members that Yahshua spent three days and three nights in the grave after His death. Here is when the counting process should begin.

Evaluation: The members of the congregation do not always agree with its religious officials. The congregants are willing to voice their opinions.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 6

Date: 13 June 2008, Friday evening. Time: 20h00. Location: Inwood, NY. Name of church: Wings of Faith. Religious Faith: Pentecostal of the First Day (Sunday). Event: 25th Anniversary of the pastor of the Wings of Faith. Temple El Shaddai has a close working relationship with the Wings of Faith. This is a small narrow church and the devotional leader a woman wears pants. This is not exactly common attire for a Pentecostal church, especially a devotional leader but occasionally it happens.

Evaluation: Typical Pentecostal service with the pastor of Temple El Shaddai preaching for a long time. He lays hands on some congregants and gives words of exaltation: about two hours.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 7

Date: 15 June 2008, Sunday. Time: 11h00. Location: Route 88 in New Jersey heading west to Pennsylvania. Interview: with pastor of Temple El Shaddai. Location: interviewer riding his car and sitting in the front passenger seat. Pastor's name: Bishop Isaac Pyant. Age: late 50s. Gender: male. Secular title: Worker for New York City Housing Authority.

Background information on pastor: He believes and teaches the Holy Days. He is born to a mother and father who are Commandment keepers of the 7th Day Sabbath. Bishop Pyant started preaching at age 15 and received ordination at age 19. He has been in the House of God all of his life. Yahweh begins to unfold spiritual realities to him at an early age: prison and homeless shelter ministries. Later Yahweh gives him a street ministry.

Bishop Pyant: The spiritual nature defines the inner part of man and houses the soul.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES:

Researcher: Define soul.

Bishop Pyant: Soul is the dwelling place of the Almighty, the first beginning of man.

Researcher: Define Yahweh.

Bishop Pyant: Beyond measure. Without time.

Researcher: How does He communicate with you?

Bishop Pyant: He shows me nature through things. A stranger came up to me. He was homeless and drunk speaking the holy name of Yahweh and Yahshua and he convinced me to use the name. The wine drinker was walking and talking to himself. This man influenced me by the Almighty revealing wisdom.

Researcher: How does Yahweh communicate with you in other ways?

Bishop Pyant: Spiritual ways. When the Scripture comes to me a whole lot of things happen and looks natural. I don't understand and know a lot about it. You have to try the spirit with the spirit.

Researcher: How do you try the spirit with the spirit?

Bishop Pyant: Through the Word a spirit comes to you. It could be Satan. Try this spirit. If it does not correspond with the Word, it is not of God. Satan tried to get Yahshua on the mountain. He used both the natural and the spiritual to try to confuse Yahshua. Though weak from fasting, Yahshua was uplifted through the spiritual zone by the Word coming out of the mouth of Yahweh.

Researcher: Do you feel there are errors in the Bible?

Bishop Pyant: No! No errors in the King James Version. Everyone interprets the Bible how God's spirit deals with you. I tell my people if a part of the Bible is wrong then all of it is wrong.

Researcher: In your view is everything written in the Bible considered accurate?

Bishop Pyant: I consider accurate what we know. We won't know until the Almighty comes back and then we will know what is meant by this and that. We will find if your opinion is right or mine.

Researcher: So you don't consider any writings in the Bible an error?

Bishop Pyant: No, the writings are accurate. But the interpretation is what makes it this or that way. In other words it creates problems.

Researcher: Paul wrote that no woman should usurp authority over a man. How do you see this writing?

Bishop Pyant: At the time of Paul's writing there were no women over men. Now women have jobs where they have authority over men. Some religions have problems with women. They don't understand a woman preacher is just a vessel. The only way the author is subject to the law is when he breaks the law, but if you are a law-abiding citizen you will have no problem with the law. It will not pull you over. Law is law. A lot of marriages are broken up by men who feel they can knuckle woman under. We can learn from one another and what our needs are.

Researcher: If asked a question about any errors in the Bible, how would you answer?

Bishop Pyant: No errors! None at all in every word. Only errors in our interpretation of the Bible.

Researcher: Are versions of the Bible free of errors or just one version?

Bishop Pyant: King James Version only one without errors.

Researcher: What version and language of the Bible is more authentic?

Bishop Pyant: I read a lot of Bibles, maybe ten. I'm old-fashioned, I am inclined to believe that the Kings James Version is the one that has mastered all of them and the rest of the Bibles get its information from the Kings James Bible which is the most authentic version.

Researcher: How do you see Yahshua in your life?

Bishop Pyant: I see Him as my salvation to the Father. I see Him as my second chance to get it right.

Researcher: How does Yahshua communicate with you?

Bishop Pyant: Yahshua is the bearer of my soul.

Researcher: How do you believe in the Trinity?

Bishop Pyant: For me there are two voices, Yahweh and Yahshua. They become one voice.

Researcher: You see Yahshua doing miracles? What role does He play in your life as far as miracles are concerned?

Bishop Pyant: He is my salvation. He is my second chance to get it right. I am able to say I am glad He died for me and I am not alienated out of the body of Christ.

Researcher: When you pray, to whom do you pray?

Bishop Pyant: Whatever comes into my mind. Yahweh, Yahshua I believe they are one. People try to separate them. I pray to the Son. He takes my prayer to the Father.

Researcher: But how do you consider them One?

Bishop Pyant: You give me a message to take to my father. Knowing our relationship you know I will carry the message accurately. Otherwise why give the message? You will mess it up. He knows me. As the son he knows I will take the message back to my father.

Researcher: Doesn't that seem as though there are two?

Bishop Pyant: Even though I am the messenger, I am the off-spring to the one I am trying to get the message to.

Researcher: But how do you see this being different from non-Trinitarians? You don't say anything about the non-Trinitarian people trying to separate the Three?

Bishop Pyant: They are trying to separate the electricity from the switch. You turn on the electricity it is still there.

Researcher: But how do you see your Trinitarian belief different from non-Trinitarians? That is my question.

Bishop Pyant: Well non-Trinitarians came to Jesus, but Jesus is the messenger who carries the message to Yahweh.

Researcher: Yes, but how do you see the difference?

Bishop Pyant: Well, like I say they try to separate. You and I believe all three work hand in hand with one another. I am in my Father and my Father is in Me. Try to separate them and put them in different categories, but I put them in the same category.

Researcher: In your particular faith, how different is it from other Christian faiths?

Bishop Pyant: Mine differs in that I believe in the Commandments of God, in Old Testament and the New Testaments feast days, Yahweh's laws and statutes. There is a great big difference, even though there are similarities. We worship with the same songs, and order of service. There is a difference in belief in Old Testament and New Testament. Most other Christians don't really believe in the Old Testament. We believe in both. There is a difference between us like night and day.

Researcher: In terms of diet what is it you don't eat?

Bishop Pyant: According to Scripture we don't eat anything not sanctioned by Yahweh. We are not strictly kosher, but we do not eat crab, lobster and frog legs.

Researcher: Moses came down from mountain and heard the music. What is your attitude toward music?

Bishop Pyant: Nothing wrong with music, in order by itself. Music orders your attitude and mind. It sets and orders your body language. You have to be careful about music. It sends a message and language all of its own self. Old-fashioned gospel music doesn't mix with worldly music

Researcher: You don't believe in mixing music in or out of the church? Which one?

Bishop Pyant: Either one. Because the same message out of the church is trying to come into the church. Always been that way from ancient time. Blow the horn and the trumpet and then the dance. Didn't a war dance send a message to go to war? Celebrate music and dance.

Researcher: You blow the Shofar in your church?

Bishop Pyant: It is a call to order during Commandment time. Calling to order is not the church's traditional way to send a message. We are now about to read the law. Gospel songs are sung and music played in the service.

Researcher: What message are you sending out in gospel music during service?

Bishop Pyant: That is why I say devotional leaders must be careful what songs they are singing. The devotional leaders want to send out a good message in gospel songs. The

devotional leader sets the atmosphere and the tone for worship and praise through gospel music.

Researcher: Any other reason why devotional leaders are important?

Bishop Pyant: Yes! In worshipping God you must call on devotional leaders who have a good spirit. Otherwise, what is the purpose?

Researcher: What is supposed to be the purpose of a devotional leader?

Bishop Pyant: A spiritual movement and a special moment for the Lord. Not to mention it ought to be spiritually different songs that send different messages.

Researcher: You mention dance. That is a good one. Can you give a definition of dance?

Bishop Pyant: What you do with your feet: body language. What you do with yourself. Now they have praise dancing. We have seen it and it should be done in the spirit. Praise dance depends on the minds and hearts of people. People, when performing, get mixed-up with what is entertainment and what is spiritual. But the body can perform with the spirit. Any of the actions the body displays, can be performance. It depends on the individual. I've seen praise dance bring on the spirit and then I have seen it just being entertainment. Bodily exercise with the Bible profits nothing. But praise dancing with the spirit brings on the spirit.

Researcher: And how does it bring on the spirit?

Bishop Pyant: Like I said body and language if you're speaking to the Lord and directly communicate with him and at the same time you open your mouth to sing praises. Praise dances bring out the same spirit with the use of the body. If I sing, people will shout. This is because of verbal language. Body language brings on feelings. Where your spirit is, your body can go anywhere. Praise is done in the right spirit. People are not looking to the spiritual dance, but at the body.

Researcher: Another issue. White people's style of praise dancing is more like ballet. Black people's style of praise dancing is more break-dancing with Black movements. Look as though Blacks do a type of break-dancing more often in the world, but they are calling it praise dancing, using religious music.

Bishop Pyant: Like I said, in movement or like singing gospel music differs from worldly music. Take the gospel out of the music, it's worldly.

Researcher: I saw a well-known entertainer with John P. Key defend contemporary gospel. This entertainer played with a rock band. He said people talk about style but the message is in the music like rap, hip hop. How do you feel about this?

Bishop Pyant: If you look at songs of old they send a message to the soul. People came to Christ. The song Amazing Grace causes people to run to the Lord. I have never seen gospel rap do this. It sends a whole different message from real gospel. People get it mixed-up with entertainment. This makes people to just want to listen to the music. That is why, when people are looking for spirituality, they go back to soul music like gospel so they can feel God. Never throw up hands, surrender to the Lord. In rap they get mixed-up with the crowd. It started out with young people, but how many of them give their lives to the Lord? After the entertainment stops, they start using drugs. Only a few go out into the world to save souls. Like Yahshua, "Many follow me for my loaves," Open up and say rap is over and get serious about walking with the Lord. We need to go back to the old-fashioned way. Be careful what you draw into your church today.

Researcher: Be careful what you draw? What is the problem?

Bishop Pyant: I like a message sent out that will get the church jammed-packed with people.

Researcher: What type?

Bishop Pyant: God-fearing people come to the church.

Researcher: How do you distinguish the people?

Bishop Pyant: You look at the mind set of the people. For example, a new member joins the church and does not stay long, because after real church spirituality gets a hold on him he leaves because he has the wrong mind-set.

Researcher: What is real spirituality?

Bishop Pyant: Real spirituality means you have to worship Him in spirit and truth. I come to Christ to get a message in order to help society in a real way.

Researcher: You don't want just a church?

Bishop Pyant: After the entertainment, the interest is over. Their attention span is short. They want a quick fix for a major operation.

Researcher: As a pastor, do you preach against gospel rap?

Bishop Pyant: I don't badger people about it, but I'd rather listen to gospel rap than to worldly music.

Researcher: Will you allow gospel rap in your church?

Bishop Pyant: Sure! The Bible says he who wins a soul is wise. Allow a gospel rapper in, but hopefully the rapper will leave with a different outlook. They have a chance to be saved.

Researcher: You own your building personally?

Bishop Pyant: Yes! I will do like my father did when he turned the building over to me. I will let the church buy me out.

Researcher: Your father paid for the building?

Bishop Pyant: He refinanced it. He took his name off and put my name on.

Researcher: You are responsible to pay all things?

Bishop Pyant: Yes.

Researcher: Does the church help you pay for your expenses?

Bishop Pyant: No and we have no 501 c 3. I am planning to retire this year or next year. I would have worked 20 years in November.

Researcher: How do you feel today about growing more in the Lord? Define growing in the Lord.

Bishop Pyant: To me growing in the Lord means God has more and more knowledge to add to our understanding about His mysteries. And these are clearer to me than when I was young in the Lord.

Researcher: What is spiritual eyesight?

Bishop Pyant: Whatever God has for you to do.

Researcher: How do you get it?

Bishop Pyant: Power of the Holy Ghost.

Researcher: How do you get the Holy Ghost?

Bishop Pyant: Calling on the name and mature in the Lord. Seeking means doing more and looking and searching.

Researcher: Through the searching you get the Holy Ghost?

Bishop Pyant: No, through the Holy Ghost you receive It into your life and He makes a change in you.

Researcher: Once this change comes, what happens?

Bishop Pyant: Your whole life turns around. Once you thought wrong, now you think right.

Researcher: When did this transformation come in your life and when did you begin to think

Bishop Pyant: Well I was a hotheaded teenager to whom everything seemed satisfying. I found what our forefathers were trying to teach us about spirituality. I thought smoking was cool and I was not killing myself

Researcher: You experienced only one change?

Bishop Pyant: I changed from a lot of things. My eyesight on things got better and I knew I could not fight my own battles.

Researcher: What is your definition of heaven?

Bishop Pyant: Heaven is to be in the presence of God. I don't really know, it means a place or another atmosphere. I believe where the presence of the Lord is, we can experience Him at any time.

Researcher: What happens after we leave here?

Bishop Pyant: There is another presence and change of body and atmosphere. Scripture even teaches us once we leave here, we don't come back.

Researcher: What about the great tribulation? Are we in it now?

Bishop Pyant: No not in it now. I read great tribulation for those who did not accept Him, they will be given a chance.

Researcher: About hell, what is your definition?

Bishop Pyant: I think it is a state of mind. Some say hell is on earth. Their minds are full of chaos and confusion and if I look at the situation around the world I really believe hell is a state of mind.

Researcher: Is hell all mind?

Bishop Pyant: Yes, your life is chaotic by your state of mind. If this is hell, then I am in a heavenly body in hell. Even in hell with a heavenly state of mind hell can't touch me. In a heavenly state of mind with flames of fire all round me, I don't feel the burning and my clothes are not singed.

Researcher: If hell is a state of mind, what then is heaven?

Bishop Pyant: Yes, there is a little piece of heaven in joy, harmony, peace and state of mind.

Researcher: Is hell ever a place?

Bishop Pyant: Yes, it can be a place, a city, state or country.

Researcher: When a person dies, does he or she go to a place called hell?

Bishop Pyant: No! No one is going anywhere just yet. When time comes, they will go to heaven or hell.

Researcher: Do people who go to hell burn forever?

Bishop Pyant: No! The Bible says the sinner will burn forever. For me that is a state of mind. Whatever state you lived on earth, you will live forever. Chain-smoking, lighting one cigarette after another. Hell is like chain-smoking. You sin and sin and keep sinning. That is the natural fire people perceive to be hell. A hellish life continues and people want to find peace. Not like people thinking of hell.

Researcher: Will there be constant burning?

Bishop Pyant: Yes! But not like people think. That constant thing of sinning gives a burning sensation, not really burning but a burning sensation. Like a bad marriage living in hell.

Researcher: Describe your own spirituality? How would you describe that?

Bishop Pyant: Well I guess that ah, ah, makes me think. Spirituality is being trapped in a natural body.

Researcher: In relation to God how would you describe it from that point of view?

Bishop Pyant: I would say we are and I am in the flesh part of God.

Researcher: And how is your relationship with God?

Bishop Pyant: Not perfected, but I am reading.

Researcher: When will it be perfected?

Bishop Pyant: No man knows. We must endure to the end. To me we won't be perfected until Yahweh says: well done, my good and faithful servant.

Researcher: Is that the end of the world?

Bishop Pyant: No, not necessarily the end of the world, but of our lives.

Researcher: How do you see Scripture: Be ye perfect as I am perfect?

Bishop Pyant: A meaning to follow the format set before us like Job. We're not perfect until He says we are perfect.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 8

Date: June 15, 2008, Sunday. Event: Father's Day church service. Time: 13h30. Location: Poconos Mountains in the state of Pennsylvania.

This is a Sunday observance church that fellowships with Temple El Shaddai. Every Father's Day Bishop is the speaker. A Black woman is the pastor. During the entire services she wore a black robe with jean pants underneath. The congregation consists of White and Black people and a mixture of other nationalities.

The pastor's wife, her daughter and another sister lead the devotional services. All of them use Yahweh and Yahshua. This is very unique of Temple El Shaddai wherever they attend, whether on the Sabbath or the First Day they use both the Greek and Hebrew names. What is more important, is that the First Day churches accept them using the Hebrew names for God and Jesus.

Analysis: The members of the visiting church did not shout and the members of Temple El Shaddai did not shout. Bishop Pyant spoke long but not as long when there is shouting. He usually speaks for a long time. He did not shout or walk in the aisles. One Black musician of the host church wears dark glasses during the entire services. A White member admonishes the Black musician for wearing black glasses during services.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 9

Date: June 16, 2008, Monday. Time: 18h28. Location: Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. Because the sister lives in Queens but works closer to this church, she prefers to come to the Gideon Knights Church after work. Interview: Individual. Place where conducted: 202 Herzl St., Brooklyn, NY 11203.

Female: Adult. Age: 56. Religious Faith: Hebrew Pentecostal. Name of Church: Temple El Shaddai. Religious Title: Sister. Secular Title: Education Director of an Early Childhood Academy. Educational Background: Master of Science in Education in Reading Literature at Walden University and a Bachelor of Art degree at the University of Maryland.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Researcher: How long have you been with Bishop Pyant?

Sister: Three years coming up to four or five years. When I saw that they taught the Bible, I liked it. I had been searching for a church that teaches. I did not want preaching fire and brimstone. My grandmother took me to a Seventh Day Adventist church. I had some knowledge of the Sabbath. Temple El Shaddai teaches the Hebrew language. I love the words. They teach about the feast days. Seventh Day Adventist did that a long time ago. El Shaddai keeps the Sabbath all day long.

Researcher: What does your pastor teach about wearing pants?

Sister: He has never. I believe the church doctrine teaches against wearing pants. I do wear them but not to church. I am beginning not to wear pants like I used to. But if it has to do with religion or culture, I could see not wearing pants anymore.

Researcher: What is your response to the music?

Sister: Too loud to me. I like Country and Western music and Southern Gospel. I don't like praise and worship and Catholic music. I use a set of ear-plugs during the service.

Researcher: What is your attitude toward Holy Days?

Sister: I observe them.

Researcher: How do you define heaven?

Sister: I'm working on that one because I am still unsure. I am still not used to believing heaven is a place. I am learning that heaven is not just a physical place but a spiritual essence here on earth. You cannot go there after death. I believe in the Bible Kingdom and hence the Holy Spirit is part of that. Heaven is not just a state of mind. Heaven is an experience of

walking in a heavenly state while here on earth. So, when you eventually go to heaven, you will not be lazy and idle.

Researcher: Define Hell.

Sister: Hell used to be a final place for those not saved. The founder teaches man does not have to permanently stay in hell. Hell is a holding place.

Researcher: Can anyone get out of hell?

Sister: Yeah! I learnt in Sabbath school you can come out of hell through repentance. Sometimes hell and bondage are in the mind. This separates us from fellowship with God.

Researcher: Is hell a holding place after death?

Sister: Yea! Where Satan is. The story of the rich man and the beggar in the bosom of Abraham proves that.

Researcher: How do you get to hell?

Sister: I think you would have heard the gospel.

Researcher: Define death.

Sister: Physical body returns to the ground but spirit doesn't die. The soul returns to God who gave it. The spirit could live on.

Researcher: What influence did Bishop Pyant have on your spiritually?

Sister: He is very influential. One thing, he does not change. He is the same person in or outside of church. He stands for his principles.

Researcher: Do you consider yourself an original Hebrew?

Sister: I don't know but we are taught about being a Hebrew.

Researcher: How do you feel in your heart?

Sister: Probably yes. A certain pulling growing up as a child saying I don't have any rituals. Everybody has some, but where are mine? I like the Holy Feast Days when we are taught about Hebrew history and rituals and we learn about the Sabbath. It is right for me. When I was young, I had no choice, but to keep the Sabbath. I left but I came back into the Sabbath.

Researcher: What made you go in the Sabbath with Dr Pyant?

Sister: I heard his teaching one Friday evening and I loved it.

Researcher: Is the written text important to your spirituality?

Sister: I like books on the history of Black mankind.

Researcher: How did these books influence you?

Sister: What they did was to open my eyes to see there is a lot about the Bible and history that we don't know. It opened up my mind more and I can appreciate and understand the Bible more because I am alive.

Researcher: How do you greet men inside the church and how do you greet men outside of the church? Do you give a holy kiss or shake hands?

Sister: Normally we give a hug.

Researcher: What intense or special experience have you had of God's presence?

Sister: Having a thin blanket draped over me and I knew that was God.

Researcher: How did it make you feel?

Sister: A loving and distinct feeling came over me. It did not give me goose bumps. The feeling was light as a touch. Another experience I had with God is when a teenage girl got murdered. I lived in her home for sixteen years. I went home and I said: "God, do something for me." I felt so overwhelmed that I said: "Lord, show me something." I saw three lights in the sky and I don't know where they came from. The three lights were like three people with flashlights. Months later an Elder from the church was riding in his car and he saw the same three lights that followed his car for half a block.

Researcher: How did you feel?

Sister: God said: "You asked me and I heard you."

Researcher: What do you strive for with Yahweh?

Sister: I want to be in the spirit.

Researcher: What does that mean to you?

Sister: I want to be able to separate my physical body from my spiritual being. I know there is another dimension. I want to be able to step out of time to timelessness. I just want to be able to be in the spirit. I feel myself sitting at His feet, He will always understand what I am.

Researcher: You are Trinitarian?

Sister: I'm a little confused on that; I need to check with Bishop Pyant.

Researcher: Tell me about the human spirit

Sister: What is the human spirit?

Researcher: I have Scriptures.

Sister: Can you tell me?

Researcher: Take Acts 7:59.

Sister: I want to come out of this spirit and walk with his spirit.

Note: We had a lengthy discussion. The sister ends with a desire to receive a new name in heaven.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 10

Date: June 17, 2008, Tuesday. Time: 19h00. Location: 880 Clarkson Ave. in my home.
Interview: On the telephone pastor's wife Age:50-60. Religious Faith: Hebrew Pentecostal.
Name of Church: Temple El Shaddai. Religious Title: Elect Lady & First Lady. Secular Title: Principal. Educational Background: Medgar Evers College BA, New York University MA, Queens College MA, Waldon University PhD.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Researcher: How different are you as a Hebrew Pentecostal?

First Lady: Believe in how in the Bible Yahshua as God differs.

Researcher: What is your response to music?

First Lady: Music in spirituality depends on who is playing the music. If sincere, and the purpose is to praise the Lord, music can touch someone.

Researcher: What is your response to the Holy Days?

First Lady: The purpose of the Holy Days is for you to reflect on yourself and to enhance your spiritually. The purpose of the Holy Days is to discover who you are and where you come from.

Researcher: What are your thoughts on the Bible?

First Lady: Authentic in terms of purpose of writing to awaken man to God and add to God in him.

Researcher: Are there errors in the Bible? Any specific part of the Old or New Testament?

First Lady: Errors were made in transcribing. The Scribes may not have written things other than what was told to them. There were always transcribing problems. And remember King James was not a religious person.

Researcher: What version of the Bible is authentic?

First Lady: One not more than the other. All saying the same thing but one more clearly than the other.

Researcher: Do you read other writings than the Bible?

First Lady: Many books other than the Bible.

Researcher: Define Yahweh.

First Lady: [These are her comments that may appear confusing]. The names Eau and Trans from Aramia ancient Egyptian language are names used for God before the name of Yahweh. The West could not understand the female god Eau giving life. It makes sense to believe name of Yahweh comes from a woman god named Eau. However, it does not matter God gets Its name from a female entity. What is important is that God is a spirit. Furthermore, according the ancient African Egyptian language a woman came before a man. Western men try to make Yahweh more masculine. Researcher: What does Yahweh do for you?

First Lady: He allows me to know Him and to know no greater power. Yahweh minimizes anxiety and sees things in a different light.

Researcher: Define Jesus.

First Lady: Jesus – Personification of Yahweh in the flesh. Jesus lets us know who we are and what color His children are. He demonstrates love for each of us.

Researcher: What can you say about the human spirit?

First Lady: Vulnerable by emotion. Our psychic plane is more spiritual. The soul is deeper.

Researcher: Define soul.

First Lady: Breath of God between flesh.

Note: First Lady relates a story how she became delivered from a cocaine habit and found Yahshua.)

Researcher: What made you stop?

First Lady: God just called me. It shows how great God is

Researcher: What is your attitude to the problems in the world?

First Lady: We must have problems in the world. With problems we can witness how God is able to change things. We can see how God will use people to change things and move in our lives spiritually. Because of problems it will cause us to stay focused and keep looking for God's spiritual help.

Note: The First Lady ends the interview by saying she wants a new heavenly name.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 11

Date: July 22, 08-July 26, 2008, Tuesday – Saturday. Time: 08h30. Location/Event: The Church of the Living God Pillar and Ground of The Truth–Annual Convocation. Observation: convention. Place where conducted: Lexington, Kentucky. Name: National Headquarters building. Religious Faith: Hebrew Pentecostal.

OBSERVATION

Building- arge conference building built approximately 2003-arge Hebrew Star in front of the building. The sisters in the church wear white dresses and skirts almost every day. The sisters do not wear pants. The men adorn themselves largely in religious regalia and white suits. All women wear head covering and many little girls wear them also.

Men come from churches in the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Canada and various states in America; 477 churches throughout Africa. The Bishop assigned to Israel is trying to establish a church in Jerusalem. A Bishop from Zimbabwe expressed a need for food and money for the hungry in his country. He also needs funds for education and land for buildings. There is talk at the conference of building schools to draw people in Africa to the House of God Pillar and Ground of the Truth.

Approximately 500-600 people attend and more people arrive for the Saturday afternoon services. White is to be worn by all members, men and women. A Bishop from America, in charge of all the churches in Africa, made a statement: "God makes a way. We don't have to beg when a lady stands and suggests taking an offering now for the Bishop from Zimbabwe."

Only the Bishop, his wife and father from Temple El Shaddai attend the annual conference House of God Pillar and Ground of Truth held in Lexington Kentucky. In the Leadership Training class at the conference more men than women attended, about fifty. Some men wear yarmulkes at the conference. Young people, approximately hundred or more, have their own program.

There are no female bishops here. There are twelve Apostles – one of them is the Chief Apostle who is an ordained bishop. Women are pastors but are often called Elect Ladies. This religious body highlights the difference between men and women ministers.

Men run to the front of the church and shout more than the women. This is not the norm because in most Pentecostal churches the women shout more than men.

Blue Knights are young men who participate in the service. They wear yarmulkes and assist bishops. The 1st Assistant Chief Apostle places less emphasis on 7th Day Sabbath and Feasts Days. He emphasizes more the centrality of Jesus Christ. The 1st Assistant Apostle also emphasizes eating clean and seeing Jesus as the Lamb during the feast days.

There is a renewal of feet washing in the House of God. This includes the whole congregation. Feet washing is done because Yahshua washed His disciples feet during the Passover.

The Chief Apostle makes a declaration that if anyone leaves the Commandments he or she cannot be saved.

Boys from different churches within the House of God have Bar Mitzvahs in December and girls have Bat Mitzvah in March. These boys and girls receive gifts at the annual conference in July at Lexington Kentucky.

FOCUS GROUP NUMBER 2

Date: 19 August 2008, Saturday. Time: 20h00. Location: Sanctuary. Name of church: Temple El Shaddai. In attendance: two teenage boys ages 16 and 17; three adult men; six adult women.

Administration of the “Spirituality Wheel: A Selection for Spiritual Type” (Ware 1995:49).

All participants are in receipt of Ware’s twelve categories with four statements in each category. All of this information comprises pages 50-52 in discover your spiritual type. The test takes about 90 minutes.

Remarks: Participants had mixed reactions. They discussed the accuracy of the results and whether the results were pertinent to understanding their spirituality.

Bishop Raymond Pyant looks at his results and feels the test is very accurate in depicting his spirituality type.

The First Lady voices her dissatisfaction with the test. She judges it to be inconclusive and confusing. She does not like the test.

CHAPTER 4. GIDEON KNIGHTS FREEDOM CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

In this chapter, I use anecdotes to reflect the uniqueness of the faith found within the spirituality of the Gideon Knights Church Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. The anecdotal spirituality of the Gideon Knights Church reflects the uniqueness of its faith within its spiritual growth.

Listening to members and clergy and watching behavior are essential tools for the field work. In researching the spirituality of Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ hearing and seeing shall be vital for the field work. This is necessary in order to take a phenomenal approach to the examination of the spirituality of Gideon. Documenting what the researcher sees and hears is imperative to the fieldwork. This is critical in order to be acceptable to the academy. What can be problematic is the researcher is also the presiding bishop over the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. As such, I am in a unique position to observe the church. However, I must remain impartial and take note of my feelings and anxieties over how this work would be viewed by the larger church community. I proceed with caution and spiritual confidence in Yahshua the Messiah that my work will be beneficial to both church and the academy.

4.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The Gideon Knights Church began as a prayer band in the home of Prophetess Pastor Mother Williams in the late 1950s. She resided at 474 Marcy Avenue in Brooklyn, New York. Born in Wilmington, North Carolina, Mother Williams migrated to New York in the late 1930s and joined the church run by Pastor Creg. The pastor was known to have a gift of healing. This church at the time observed the First Day (Sunday). The pastor of this church received a revelation that the 7th Day Sabbath was right. She then brought the church into the Sabbath. Some members left, but Mother Williams stayed. As she learned about keeping the Seventh Day Sabbath, Mother Williams discovered her real identity as a Black Hebrew. Later, misunderstandings between Mother Williams and the pastor prompted Mother Williams to begin her own religious work.

Shortly after the inception of the “prayer ban,” meetings were held the home of Mother Williams, she and another woman were praying in Pastor Williams’ home at midnight. A great and mighty voice awakened them and said: “Name this band the Gideon Knights Prayer Band. And I shall establish it a church in a church and a church out of a church. Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Sherron F G 1975).

The Gideon Knights Prayer Band became an established church in 1966 with only a few members. Its charter reads: “Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. In 1967, Pastor Williams moved her young church to a small commercial store at 330 Tompkins Avenue in Brooklyn, an economically depressed area. The church remained at this location until 1970.

As a woman, Pastor Williams experienced condemnation from several male ministers in the Gospel. Some ministers attempted to persuade her husband that God had never called a woman to preach. Even from family members she often received non-cooperation.

In 1970, a young man from a First Day church joined her church and soon became a deacon. He was a New York City Firefighter who observed crutches and canes on the walls of the sanctuary that had been left by people who received healing through Prophetess Mother Williams. He had met Mother Williams two and a half years prior to joining her church at the First Day church where he tarried and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When the young man left the First Day church to join the Sabbath church, the two pastors met in the street. The First Day pastor berated Mother Williams for stealing her member. Mother Williams responded that the man wanted to keep the Sabbath. This comment enraged the First Day pastor. They severed their close relationship. Both pastors would die without reconciliation.

The young man entered the ministry as a local minister, and he was ordained an Elder a year later. With the young man’s support the church moved to larger quarters at 486A Gates Avenue, around the corner from the old church. Later the church purchased a two story brick building where the young man helped convert the building into a temple at its present location, 202 Herzl Street. This too is situated in an economically depressed area of the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. There are some working families, but many families are on social assistance.

At this time the pastor and a large percentage of the members were without a high school education. There were no holders of college degrees. Men were mostly porters or on social assistance. Only one young woman worked in the office as a clerk. Most women were domestic workers for White folks or received social assistance. The members acknowledged education but did not particularly embrace it.

The working of the Holy Spirit was vital to Gideon's membership. The Holy Spirit impacted heavily on the members' spirituality by making them feel precious in the sight of Yahweh. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit defined and defines Gideon's identification. The Holy Spirit worked through the late pastor in prophesies. She gave out *holy prescriptions* for any ailment. Barren woman with her prayers and *holy prescriptions* conceived. Members valued the Holy Spirit more than education because they believed the Holy Spirit could help them go to heaven.

The educational makeup of Gideon has changed. The change began in the eighties. Today most members hold Master's degrees. Many children attend specialized schools. One 5-year-old boy received a \$33,000 scholarship for kindergarten. No member is receiving social assistance. Members hold professional positions in the job force. Education impacts the spirituality of churchgoers because of its economical rewards.

Members credit the Holy Spirit for the educational shift in the church. The Holy Spirit working with education is supreme (2 Tm 2:15). Studying with the Holy Spirit helps the educational process. Thus the Holy Spirit with education impacts the church's spirituality. It makes them see that Yahweh as the Creator has not only a particular group of people.

Both Sabbath and First Day churches adored Prophetess Mother Williams. Although Mother Williams loved and observed the 7th Day Sabbath and the Holy Days, she often found more acceptance as a female pastor in First Day churches that opened their pulpits to her. She appeared to have more in common with Sunday keepers. She visited First Day churches on Sunday. She occasionally interrupted her Sabbath service to attend Sunday churches' luncheons on a Saturday. Mother Williams loved to be loved regardless of Christian affiliation.

Mother Williams and her husband bought a home in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. At the time Brownsville consisted of mostly African Americans. Today, there are Latinos who own grocery stores in the neighborhood. Nigerians have moved into the area, as well as people from the various Caribbean islands. Asians live in the area operating their restaurants. Brownsville is still classified as a depressed area, but there has been a massive development of well kept private homes. However, the area has many social problems like drugs, high dropout rate among high school students and high teenage pregnancy rates.

Brownsville experienced a massive turnout on Election Day for the Democratic Black presidential candidate Obama. Blacks in the area traditionally did not take part in the election process. Some adults voted for the first time in the presidential election. Others had not voted in more than 10 years. One Black district reported an unprecedented 34,000 voters at the poles supporting Obama. His candidacy made history in Brownsville.

When Mother Williams expressed interest in a vacant building in Brownsville, next to 202 Herzl Street, she asked one of the Elders to contact a real estate governmental agency called Housing Urban Development (HUD). The Elder negotiated a price of \$2,500 for the vacant building adjoining the pastor's house with HUD offices. The church bought the building and decided to renovate it. One of the Elders received a building permit from a city agency and became supervisor of the work project. In September 1980 the church moved from 486A Gates Avenue to 202 Herzl Street. A few years later an Elder discovered that a well-known electronic chain store owned a vacant lot adjoining the church building. The Elder approached the owner who offered to sell it to him for \$1. Two years later, the Elder saw a vacant two story building across the street from the church. He asked Mother Williams if he could enquire about the building and then contacted a city agency which asked him to offer a price. The Elder offered \$250 for the building. The city accepted. Later, the city demolished the building, but Gideon owns the property.

Prophetess Mother Williams actively pastored the church until she was about 93-years-old. She was in excellent physical health. Two years later, in 2003, Mother Williams refused to eat and began to lose weight. Alzheimer's disease set in. She eventually only recognized her husband and a son. One of the Elders asked Mother Williams to give him the pastorate of Gideon. She agreed only after consulting her husband. He consented. In October 26, 2002 the Elder officially became the second pastor of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus

Christ uncontested. This took place a month after the pastor's husband died. He was 94. Also on this date, 26 October 2002, Mother Williams became 95 years old. She died in May 2003.

In January 2008 the pastor felt moved by Yahweh to give the pastorship over to his wife. On March 15, 2008 his wife became the third pastor of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. Her husband was ordained as the bishop of the new bishopric to form other ministries: *The Order of the Gideon Knights of Yahshua Messiah*. The ordination impacted the spirituality of the new bishop by releasing him of the responsibility of pastoring. He says he became more opened to the Spirit of Yahweh in doing His will.

The contextual background of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus impacts its spirituality in that it helps to categorize a type of spirituality. The type of spirituality for the church seems to have developed from authoritative and less communal to less authoritative and more communal.

4.2 DISTINCTIVE FORMS OF SPIRITUALITY

Visibility, or how members conduct their lives inside and outside of the temple, is an important factor in the spirituality in the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. We shall be concerned with how the members conduct their lives in and out of the temple. This is vital in order to determine how they live their lives publicly and privately.

Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ reads and *recites the doctrine* four times a year during the taking of communion. The members stand while the pastor reads the doctrine. The purpose of reading and reciting the doctrine is to reinforce the principles of the church and to hold the members responsible for obeying the canon. When the pastor completes the reading and the reciting of the doctrine the church secretary brings a warm bowl of water, a bar of soap and a towel for the pastor. After the washing of hands the pastor asks one of the Elders to read Matthew 27:24-25. The washing of the hands before the congregation symbolizes that the members will be held accountable in the presence of Yahweh for obeying the doctrine of the church. The pastor has fulfilled the responsibility of teaching the principles of the church. Afterward, the doctrine is read and communion is served.

Part II 8 of the doctrine forbids women to wear pants inside or outside the church because of the Scripture: *A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your god* (Dt 22:5 NKJV). Society has little influence over older women wearing pants. The younger women wear pants to work and school. Some young women wear them to church services. Mothers of the church will reach for a choir robe and cover the pants of women wearing pants in the church. This is a continuous annoyance for the pastor and the bishop. Many women have been spoken to by the pastor, but to no avail. The pastor continues to pray for the disobedience of the younger women. They are encouraged to attend church with the hope they will change. However, one young minister has relinquished the wearing of pants.

Women are instructed to be modest in their appearance. Lipstick, nail polish, designer nails, rouge, eye shadow, etc. are not allowed to be used by church women based on I Timothy 2:9. Lipstick is not a major problem. The other issues are. The pastor continues to instruct teenage girls to refrain from using lipstick and nail polish. There is more compliance with regard to not wearing lipstick than the wearing of nail polish.

Although it is mandated that women cover their heads during services (1 Cor 11:5-6), only a few women in the congregation abide by this rule. The bishop and the pastor have bought small white prayer caps for the women to wear during the services. This was met with little success. Many women prefer to attend services without having their heads covered. They offer no excuse. The bishop and pastor feel disappointed but the women are encouraged to attend services. Prayers continue to go up for them to comply to the rules of the church.

Women are forbidden to wear low cut blouses, skirts with long splits and tight fitting garments that are inappropriate for a woman in the Black Hebrew Pentecostal Church. The pastor repeatedly reminds members of these rules, but some women insist on wearing low cut blouses because of modern trends and clothing styles. Some members have little problems with women wearing inappropriate clothing. Other disregard their clothing and some are annoyed for this can be a source of embarrassment for onlookers when women in low-cut blouses shout and their breasts are revealed. The mothers of the church are taught to run for a choir robe or a scarf to cover the shouting sister. The pastor privately counsels young women about wearing proper church attire.

All *seven Feasts of the Lord* (Holy Days) are observed by Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. The first Holy Day we shall look at is the Passover and its association with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These Feasts also flow into the Feasts of the Firstfruits (Ex 23:4-9). During the One of the rituals of Passover, observers eat unleavened bread with lamb. None of the lamb shall be left until the morning; the bones are not to be broken (Nm 9:12). The members interpret the lamb as the sacrificial Lamb of Yahshua (1Cor 5:7) whose bones are intact even upon his death on the cross (Jn 19:36).

Following the evening of the Passover the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins for a period of seven days to commemorate the people of Israel who fled Egypt. They did not have time to place leaven in their bread. Yahweh institutes the practice of unleavened bread as a feast. Leaven is symbolic of sin (1 Cor 5:7).

Members of Gideon Knights Church believe that the Feast of the Firstfruits takes place during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lv Note 23:10 NKJV). The observance is on the sixteenth day of the first month, Nisan. Gideon acknowledges the Feast of the Firstfruits, but do not make any special provisions for this Feast while observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Questions remain about what should be done with the Feast of the Firstfruits.

The next Feast is known by many names: “The Feasts of Weeks”, “the Day of Pentecost” and the Hebrew title “Shavuot”. Leading up to this feast Yahweh instructs the Israelites to “*Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath* (Lv 23:16). This traditionally is fifty days after the Passover. In Acts 2, 50 days after the Passover is the promise of the Holy Spirit that is the Comforter (Holy Spirit). Some members interpret a close affinity between the Feast of Weeks and the Day of Pentecost because of some similar events. Some members, even other Christians, view this day as the birth of the Christian church because the Holy Spirit being given to *all flesh* (Ac 2:12 NKJV).

In the Feasts of the Blowing of Trumpets Yahweh instructs Israel *to make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps* (Nm 10:2 KJV). The church celebrates this

Feast with a futuristic outlook. This Feast is reminiscent of the return of Yahshua and the future calling together of His church (Mt 24:31).

The Day of Atonement is a different and special feast of Yahweh. Some members argue the Day of Atonement is not a feast day because no feasting takes place. Those who consider the Day of Atonement to be a feast base their argument on Leviticus 23:1: “These are the feasts of the Lord . . . This declaration includes The Day of Atonement. Whether the Day of Atonement is or is not a feast day is unresolved. Still, on that day adults and children must fast from sundown to sundown and feast later. Two goats are used in the service. On the Day of Atonement the two goats are critical to ancient Israel and they have significance for the members of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. The two goats are symbolically different in interpretation of their individual ritual importance. The priest uses one goat as a burnt sin offering for the people of Israel. The other goat he uses as a live scapegoat (Lv 16:21). One member of Gideon views the live scapegoat as a type of Satan that carries all the sin. Another minister interprets the live scapegoat as a type of Yahshua carrying the sins of the world into the wilderness. The views are radically different. The pastor expressed her view of the scapegoat as Satan being cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years as is described in the Book of Revelation. The pastor supported her argument by referring to the Scripture (Lv 16:22, 26). In the story, the man washes his clothes after taking the scapegoat to the wilderness. The washing, she says, infers the goat is symbolic of sinful Satan that makes man unclean. For Gideon Knights Church there is no official interpretation .

The last feast of the calendar year is the” “Feast of Tabernacle.” Historically, this feast commemorates the time when Israel received instructions to keep this feast for seven days. Israelites are to dwell in booths. Gideon decorates the temple to represent a booth. Members bring fruits and vegetables to the church. The pastor distributes fruits and vegetables nightly to the members following the services. Leviticus 23:36 reads: *On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation.* This verse causes some controversy. A few members argue since Leviticus includes the eighth day in the Feast of Tabernacle there should be feasting on the eighth day. The pastor disagrees. She interprets this verse to mean that this Feast is a Holy Day without eating. The Feasts of Tabernacle is symbolic of the millennium in the Book of Revelation. For Gideon there is no official interpretation. This is a time of thousand years rest. The eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacle is commonly known amongst churches as the

“great day.” This gives another type for the Feast of Tabernacle. The pastor teaches the members this “great day” is a time of judgment found in the 20th chapter of Revelation.

The observance of the *7th Day Sabbath* from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday is part of the foundational ministry of the church (Ex 20:8-11). *The Seventh Day Sabbath is a vital distinction of the spirituality of Gideon*. More will be said about this later. Because of the centrality of the 7th Day Sabbath, members are required to observe this Holy Day and this has a significant impact on individual spirituality in obedience to the Ten Commandments. The reality of the members keeping the 7th Day Sabbath is not always within the guidelines of the Ten Commandments or the doctrine of Gideon. Some members do not always follow the guidelines of the Ten Commandments. This is a source of irritation for the pastor and bishop.

The pastor and bishop are troubled by members who do not attend services on Friday evening. Only a small minority of members actually attend. Most of the members do not live near the church. However, the pastor reminds them the rules of the church require all members to be in service on a Friday evening before the sun goes down. When the pastor admonishes the congregants for failing to attend Friday evening services; compliance is often still non-existent. She prays for their compliance.

In the final analysis the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ has many distinct forms that define its spirituality. However, as incomprehensible as it may appear, the attire of women is critical in the spirituality of this community. Various Scriptures instruct women how to dress as an example of a woman of the Messiah. A woman who rejects this teaching calls into question the authenticity of her spirituality.

4.3 NORMATIVITY & AUTHORITY

The Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ came under the authority of *The Order of the Gideon Knights of Yahshua Messiah* in March 2008. The Order’s first bishop received ordination in March. He focuses his attention on ministers, believing like his mentor the German theologian Bonhoeffer, that when Christ calls a person to the ministry the ultimate response is to give one’s life for the Gospel. As Bonhoeffer said: “Jeder Rug Christi fährt in den Tod” (“Every call of Christ leads into death”) (Bonhoeffer 1937:87). Christ makes

everyone He calls into the ministry an individual (Bonhoeffer 1937:92). As a minister of the Gospel the writing of Bonhoeffer impacts the spirituality of the bishop. Bonhoeffer helps him to see Christ more as a human whose life can be imitated by others.

The lay members and the deacons serve under the authority of the pastor. The pastor can appoint new ministers in the Gideon Knights Church after consulting with the bishop. The bishop, in consultation with the pastor, has the authority to ordain local ministers.

A few years ago members at Gideon partook of the Holy Communion once a year during the Passover season. This had been the practice since its inception in 1966. A new change has been instituted to offer Holy Communion on the fifth Sabbath (Saturday) of every month in order to strengthen the importance of the Communion Services. The members stand and recite the doctrine prior to taking bread, water or grape juice. The use of water and grape juice is new in the taking of communion. Traditionally, only water was taken because of the founder's rational teaching that water came out of the Savior's side.

Traditionally, anyone willing to partake of this sacrament could take communion. A person – adult or child - would merely have to search him or herself for righteousness. Now only boys having had a Bar Mitzvah and girls a Bat Mitzvah can take communion because they should have a better understanding of the significance of communion. There is a norm of the church that still remains: feet washing only during the Passover like Jesus and His disciples. There is one modification for feet washing. If a member refuses to partake of the Holy Communion, he or she cannot participate in feet washing.

Traditionally, sisters would not wash one another's feet. A husband and a wife were not permitted to wash each other's feet. Now the norm is only women wash one another's feet and only men wash one another's feet in order for the members to keep their minds on Christ and not the opposite sex.

Another traditional practice or norm of the Gideon Knights Church was permitting several Bible versions to be read during the service. In an effort to decide upon one particular version of the Bible to be read exclusively in the temple, the bishop called for a minister's For Gideon there is no official interpretation. Today, several versions are still used.

The way the members approach the Bible has impact their spirituality. Worshippers understand the Bible as vital to the ministry of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and it impacts its spirituality. As to how it impacts its spirituality is critical. The Bible impacts the spirituality of the members in the way they approach the Word of Yahweh that has been codified by man. For Gideon Knights Church, the Bible is an authoritative Book, yet it contains errors. Members rely upon the Bible for spiritual insight, yet reserve the right to determine if biblical passages have been accurately transcribed. Transcription is a problem that leads to the errors in the Bible. Viewing the Bible with a critical faculty makes readers conscious of the possibility of errors. Thus, the errors in the Bible impact the spirituality of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ because it makes them conscious of what they are reading and to be of aware accurate transcriptions.

Some norms of the Gideon Knights Church have changed along with the change of authoritative leaders. However, many norms remain useful and active.

4.4 DISTINCTIVE THEOLOGICAL IDENTITY

A distinctive theological identity for the members of Gideon Knights Church is obedience to the doctrine of the church. This impacts the spirituality of the congregants because it validates the church doctrine in the life of the member. This is particularly vital to the spirituality of Gideon. Obeying the doctrine identifies a member as a true follower of the principles of the church. By the members being obedient to the doctrine it impacts their spirituality because it entails a personal experience with the church doctrine. Disobedience to the doctrine impacts the spirituality of the member by invalidating the church doctrine and rejecting an experience with it.

Disobedience by the members of Gideon to various aspects of the doctrine constitutes a serious infraction and is problematic for the pastor. Disobedience of the doctrine shows that a member has not internalized that doctrine. Disobedience to the doctrine by some members has plagued the ministry of the church since the inception of the church. Yet disobedience to the doctrine is a reality. The reality of members disobeying parts of the doctrine is problematic for the pastor.

Disobedience can be assessed based on the actions of the members with regard to the internalization of the doctrine. The doctrine impacts the spirituality of the congregants in ways in which the members internalize the canon differently. The internalization of the principles dictates how the individual member interprets the instructions of the doctrine and how he or she allows the doctrine to impact his or her spirituality in a personal experience. One aspect of the doctrine deals with prophecy. And it is important how a member internalizes prophecy.

Prophecy is vital to the theological identity of the Gideon Knights Church. Prophecy from the founding of the church defines one of its purposes for existence. Prophecy is emphasized as a spiritual gifts of the church (I Cor 12:10). Gideon Knights Church looks for and expects the gift of prophecy to be in the church at all times, such as predictions of future and how to be healed. Other churches may resort to the Bible to determine if a brother or a sister is prophesying accurately. At the Gideon Knights Freedom Church members look to the Holy Spirit to make clear whether the speaker enunciates a revelation of Yahweh (1 Jn 4:1) by determining if the Spirit of Yahweh is with the speaker. Further evidence is the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Another distinctive theological identity for Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ is the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath. The acknowledgement of the Seventh Day Sabbath is the thread of commonality that binds the members to the church. Mostly all members are in attendance on Saturday.

Members of Gideon believe in the Seventh Day as a day of rest pertains. New converts are taught that Emperor Constantine I in 4th C.E. changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. A passage in the Encyclopaedia Britannica refers to Sunday as the first day of the week. This writing also explains why Christendom keeps Sunday in memory of the resurrection of Christ. The bulk of this discussion that revolves around Constantine emphasizes the first day as a Sabbath by “enjoining Sunday rest from labour (except agricultural)” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1962:566). This act by Constantine calls into question the authenticity of his Christian spirituality. The members question if a true Christian would change the Sabbath worship from the Seventh Day (Saturday) to the first day (Sunday). Some Christian theologians generally agree Constantine converted to Christianity (Corkley & Sterk 2004:88).

Other scholars question his sincerity. There might be other ulterior motives that lead to his conversion. These doubts arise as a result of the new religious Christian practices the Emperor instituted. One such policy of Emperor Constantine was the admittance of Christians into the military, a practice that runs contrary to the teachings of the Gideon Knights Church. A normativity of Gideon is no young person should become a member of the Armed Forces. Like Anabaptists and the Quakers, Gideon rejects the notion of Christian cooperation with military power (Campbell 1996:216). The military policy of the emperor precludes him from having the spiritual authority to tamper with the Seventh Day Sabbath (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1962:788).

Honoring Saturday as the 7th Day Sabbath is integral to the observance of all seven Hebrew Holy Days as true Israelites. The parishioners look to Acts, the second chapter that influenced their observance of the Hebrew Holy Days. In observance is the Feast of Weeks, in Hebrew Shavuot, and for some Christians, the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:5 makes reference to the observance of the Day of Pentecost as a Holy Day. This is one of seven Holy Days instructed by Yahweh to be kept.

The Seven Holy Days are part of the theological identity of the church. The Holy Days as a theological identity impacts the spirituality of the members. The seven Holy Days are found in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus (Tanakh). In this chapter Yahweh instructs Moses what days to observe as Holy Days. He says: *Do no work whatever; it is a law for all times, throughout the ages in all your settlements* (Tanakh 23: 31). On the seven Holy Days the pastor or one of the members selects readings specific to the Holy Day and will emphasize the words *throughout your generation*.

The verse *throughout your generation* is relevant to the church of Gideon because it refers to descendants from Abraham. However most members do not believe they are descendants from Abraham. They interpret *for all time in all your settlements* refers to them according to Scripture: *all citizens in Israel . . .* (Lv 23:42 Tanakh). As citizens of Israel it requires them to observe all of the Holy Days even if they are not descendants of Abraham.

The bishop is the only one claiming to be a descendant from Abraham. For the other members of Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ who are not born Israelites, the

citizenship of Israel impacts their spirituality. These members who do not count themselves descendants of Abraham perceive themselves as citizens of Israel through conversion. Scripture requires these members to observe all seven Holy Days *for all time in all your settlements*. The Blacks who are not Hebrews and follow the Gideon Knights Church in observance of the Holy Days find comfort in the second chapter of Acts: these Blacks are proselytes (Ac 2:5, 10). Thus they keep the Feast of Weeks.

According to the Scripture, the Holy Feasts take place in the Holy City of Jerusalem. This city in Israel is found in the Eastern part of the world. The reality of an Eastern city being chosen as the location in which the Holy Spirit is sent reflects the spiritual nature of the Jerusalem. This reality also sensitizes the faith of the members. This is a reality because the typology of Jerusalem reflects the presence of Yahweh. The symbolisms of the Holy City of Jerusalem are replete in both the First and Second Testaments. Spirituality is vital to the City of Jerusalem. In the interpretation of the Plan of Salvation is the City of Jerusalem. At Jerusalem, Yahweh's great Plan of Salvation unfolds and He reveals it to the world. Many receive salvation after the preaching of Peter (Ac 2:20:40 NKJV). At Jerusalem there is a global gathering of people. Many people have come from Rome: the West meets the East. Something new is about to happen at the Holy City particularly during the Feast of Weeks. Yahweh makes salvation available to all people. Salvation begins to become obtainable for the natural born Jew and the proselytes at Jerusalem (Ac 2:41).

From the Holy City salvation shall spread to the West and all parts of the known world. For the members of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ, the Holy City of Jerusalem symbolizes salvation. Jerusalem impacts the spirituality of the members who interpret a distinct theological identity of Eastern Pentecostalism where the Holy Spirit descended upon all flesh. Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ continues to follow the Pentecostal typology of religion that began in Jerusalem, such as speaking in tongues for the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. The Gideon Church continues to be part of the new Eastern Pentecostal faith of the multitude that gathered *in Jerusalem of Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven* waiting for the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:5 NKJV). Salvation comes to fruition on the Day of Pentecost in the City of Jerusalem.

The Gideon Knights Church congregation consists predominately of African Americans, one Haitian member and one member part Jamaican and part African American. There are no

members of any other nationality. Of this Black Hebrew Pentecostal group only one member definitely claims to be a Black Hebrew from the seed of Abraham: the bishop and researcher. The members identify as Pentecostal, because they believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But they have some doubts about being blood Hebrews. Some are Hebrews by virtue of observing all of the Holy Days, the Seventh Day Sabbath in particular, and the Ten Commandments. Thus, the racial makeup of the church impacts the spirituality of the Gideon Church because it determines how a member views him or herself in relation to being a member of a Black Hebrew Pentecostal church. In addition, it reflects on how an individual experience his or her life while identifying with a particular racial makeup.

There is no consensus about the nature of heaven. Members agree that the human body changes upon death or whenever Yahshua returns to earth (1Cor 15:42). Even those alive at the time of Yahshua's return will experience a change (1 Cor 15:51-52).

There are many interpretations of heaven given by the members. These comments are given at length in the appendix of this chapter. Meantime, we shall try to distill some of the comments in order to develop a logical argument. There was no consistency amongst the members as to what is heaven. Therefore, heaven remains a mystery.

Like the discussions about heaven, no consensus about the nature of hell emerged in the interviews. The members give many interpretations of hell. The full discussion of hell can be found in the appendix of this chapter. There was no consistency found amongst the members defining hell. Thus, hell too remains a mystery.

Therefore, heaven and hell are not unique theological identities because the ambiguity of heaven and hell seem to fit many faith communities. This ambiguity impacts the spirituality of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. Heaven and hell impact the spirituality of the members in a way that commonality can be seen in the differences of opinion of heaven and hell. Thus the Gideon Knights Church's spirituality as a Black Hebrew Pentecostal community can be defined as opinionated with regard to heaven and hell. One explanation for the dilemma is that the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ does not have an established doctrine that gives its interpretation of heaven and hell. Without such a doctrine it leaves room for individual interpretation of heaven and hell.

4.5 NOTIONS OF TRANSCENDENCE

In notions of transcendence, a *vital issue* with the Gideon Knights Church of Jesus Christ is the *Holy Trinity*. The members approach the trinity by looking at the controversy in 325 C.E: I Nicaea Council (Campbell 1966:23). The critical word that came out of the controversy surrounding the I Nicaea Council in 325 CE is persuasion. The conclusion of the council was that the Father and the Son are One (*'homoousios'*) (Berkhof 1937:86). This critical issue must be discussed first in order to better understand the importance of persuasion. The doctrine of the Son being of the same substance with the Father opposes the doctrine of *'homoiousios'* says that teaches: "Jesus Christ as 'like' God the Father . . . but not as being of the same substance as God the Father" (McKim 1996:132). One side of the dispute was Athanasius who contends the Son and the Father are of the same substance. Arius argues that the Son was like the Father but not of similar substance. The intent of this paper is not to discuss the controversy at length but to focus on the vital word: *persuasion*. However, not being persuaded in the controversy involves the Emperor Constantine.

Emperor Constantine presided over the (First) Council of Nicaea (Campbell 1996:20) and used his authority to secure a victory for the party of Athanasius by handing his decision to the Council in Nicea. The council adopted the following statement: "We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of things visible and invisible. And in Lord Jesus Christ, begotten not made, being of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father', et cetera" (Berkhof 1937:87). Berkhof makes it clear that the council's discussion unequivocally places the Son "on level with the Father as an uncreated Being and they recognize Him as *autotheos*."

Emperor Constantine's decision is not a clear victory. Athanasius would have preferred to have won by persuasion. Athanasius knows too well only through persuasion would this ecclesiastical matter be victorious. Athanasius knew that the council's decision, corrupted by Emperor Constantine, would not put an end to the controversy. In effect, a critical understanding of the The decision is challenging because it makes the determination of the Christian faith arrived at by on imperial caprice and court intrigues (Berkhof 1937:87). Athanasius anticipated that the question of the Oneness of the Father and Son would never be truly settled amongst Christians: He would rather have convinced the opposing party by the strength of his arguments. The lack of persuasion failed to convince Arians to accept the belief in the trinity.

A critical statement is made by the Council: *Lord Jesus Christ, begotten not made* In this declaration the vital phrase is “not made.” This incites a question of persuasion. There are three critical verses in the Bible. that have an effect on persuasion. Colossians 1:15 reads: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation* (NKJV). This verse refers to Yahshua. The second verse is Revelation 3:14: *And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God* (NKJV). The third verse is John 10:30: *I and am My Father are one.* This verse spoken by Yahshua adds credibility to the mystery of the Trinity. John 10:30 also serves as a redeeming factor for the phrase “not made.” Athanasius is correct, the controversy wages.

There are several Scriptures that support the doctrine of the Oneness of Yahweh and Yahshua. Likewise, there is scriptural evidence that buttress the separation of Yahweh and Yahshua. After examining all of the Scriptures pertaining to the Oneness of the Father and the Son, as well the separation between the two, the Gideon Knights Church sides with the ‘*homoiousios*’ argument put forth by the Arians: Yahshua is like Yahweh but not of same substance.

In the belief that Yahshua is the Son of Yahweh the members of the Gideon Knights Church have diverse views on who Yahshua is and what he means in their lives. For some members Yahshua is a troubling figure unlike human beings. Yahshua is privileged in His human form because of His divinity. Therefore, it becomes difficult to relate to His earthly life. There are other unique views and images of Yahshua. There are many distinct and different interpretations of Yahshua by the members of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ that impact its spirituality. Therefore, we would describe the spirituality of the Gideon knights Church as a commonality of different interpretations of Yahshua.

Likewise, the members of the Gideon Knights Church have mixed views of Yahweh that impact their spirituality. Therefore, we would describe the spirituality of the Gideon Knights Church as a commonality of different interpretations of Yahweh and Yahshua.

The Holy Spirit has a vital bearing on the spirituality of Gideon. For the Holy Spirit is a gift from Yahweh. A psalm of David reads: *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy*

holy spirit from me (Ps 51: 11 KJV). The possibility of Yahweh taking away the Holy Spirit emphasizes its symbolism as a gift: the gift can be lost (Heb 6:4-6). Members believe that the Holy Spirit is a gift that we can lose if we lose connection to Christ. The Holy Spirit is a gift of power and spiritual consciousness that we do not have to pay for. The Holy Spirit as a gift is within us. The Holy Spirit is a gift of power and spiritual consciousness. The Holy Spirit as a gift is symbolic of a little voice within.

Members of Gideon use the Holy Hebrew names *Yahweh and Yahshua*; others use the Greek names *God and Jesus* (see appendix). For some the preference is important and others contend that salvation comes with the names of Yahweh and Yahshua or God and Jesus.

4.6 DISTINCTIVE MORALITY

Members are forbidden to drink wine, liquor, beer, or any alcoholic drink (Lv10:9; Pr 20:1; Mi 2:11; Is 28:7; Eph 5:18 NKJV). However, the church is aware of the Epistle Paul wrote to Timothy (1Tm 5:23). Nevertheless, wine is still forbidden. Traditionally, Pentecostal churches view drinking of alcoholic beverages outside the faith of true Pentecostalism. Any member found guilty receives a label of a backslider. A backslider who wants to remain a part of the faith community has only one choice: repent. Gideon holds strongly to the Pentecostal teaching prohibiting the indulgence in alcoholic beverage. However, the church is aware of the Epistle Paul wrote to Timothy (1Tm 5:23). Nevertheless, wine is still forbidden.

Smoking or chewing tobacco is also prohibited. This is fueled by concern about individual's health as well as a spiritual understanding that the body is the temple of Yahweh (I Cor 6:19).

Like many Black churches today premarital sex and fornication are among the most pressing issues confronting the assembly. The oft-quoted biblical passage is: *Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body* (I Cor 6:13 NKJV). And there are others such as *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge* (Heb 13:4 NKJV). Preaching becomes the first method for teaching morals against the fornication of premarital sex.

The bishop and the pastor preach against these sins and look for practical approaches. They have been considering introducing specific procedures for “dating” inspired by the Amish practice. The Amish is a North American Christian group with 17th-century Swiss Mennonite roots. The Amish live simple, agrarian lives, rejecting modern elements, dress uniformly in plain clothing, practice foot washing and will not participate in state functions (McKim 1996:9). What is noteworthy is the Amish are members of an Anabaptist Christian denomination that speak Pennsylvania German or Alemannic German (Online Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2008:1). The bishop and his wife are neighbors to the Amish in Palatine Bridge, NY where they own a country home. They have observed that the Amish place various controls on dating. When a young man and a young lady enter into courtship, they are always in the presence of another person. That person can be a younger brother or an adult. The couple is allowed to be alone only after they are married. This practice helps to prevent pregnancies before marriage.

While the bishop and the pastor admire the Amish-style of courtship, they understand that such dating practices would not be well received at Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. This Pentecostal church is too modern. The late bishop and founder Mother Williams frequently admonished the saints of Gideon for dating. She contended Yahweh is unhappy with courtship. However, she never offered a solution how two single people in the Western society can become familiar with each other without dating. This is an issue the bishop and pastor found to be problematic. Unable to resolve the matter the bishop and pastor do not frown on courtship but maintain any sexual misbehavior between two single people is both forbidden and a sinful act of fornication.

Another taboo for Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ is *homosexuality*, which is scripturally forbidden. The pastor preaches against homosexuality. This is prohibited in the doctrine.

Another moral issue which has divided the church is “divorce.” Gideon Knights Church, like many Pentecostal churches, finds two challenging diametrically opposing Scripture readings on divorce. Mark 10:11-12 reads; *So He said to them, ‘Whosoever divorces his wife, and marries another, commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband, and marries, she commits adultery’* (NKJV). These verses seem to prohibit divorce. However,

within the same context Yahshua elaborates on divorce that suggests there are extenuating circumstances when divorce is an option: *Furthermore it has been said, Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce. But I say to you whoever divorces his wife for any reason except immorality causes her to commit adultery* (Mt 5:31-32 NKJV). The critical phrase that distinguishes one statement by Yahshua from the other is “except sexual immorality.” This phrase is problematic for Pentecostal churches, as well as First Day and other Sabbath churches. Some Pentecostal churches accept no divorce. Other Pentecostal churches justify divorce when there is reason to believe adultery has taken place within the marriage. Gideon has no official position. Still, the church struggles with accepting a divorcee as a member in good standing. The late Mother Williams, aware of the two conflicting Scriptures, said that the matter of divorce should be left into the hands of Yahweh. The church today continues with her policy. Gideon Knights Church accepts divorcees. The church leans more toward Mark 10:11-12. These verses impact their spirituality – leaving members with a desire to believe that the Messiah does not accept divorce.

Although the church has no definitive position on divorce or dating, it condemns adultery. This is breaking the Ten Commandments. On the surface, the issue appears uncomplicated. But receiving an adulterer into the church is problematic. The church has no official policy requiring the adulterer to publicly repent before the congregation. And there are questions in other churches as to whether an adulterer may hold an office in the church. This topic has not come up in Gideon. Adultery impacts the spirituality of the church because the prohibition against it is part of its doctrine. However, applying the doctrine that prohibits adultery can become a moral issue in the lives of parishioners.

The prohibition against fornication and adultery is understood by all ministers. Ministers receive counsel during infrequent Minister Council meetings on their moral conduct. One of the major issues and challenges to the ministers is subjecting their flesh to resist immoral sex. This is particularly a critical matter when a male or female minister is single, divorced (!) or separated from their spouses.

The Gideon Knights Church of Jesus Christ, like most Pentecostal churches, stresses the virtue and rewards for *living righteously*. Coupled with living righteously is the responsibility of the members to show integrity and treat others in a manner that would be pleasing in the eyesight of Yahweh, man and woman.

Righteousness as a virtue that includes keeping all Ten Commandments, particularly the fourth Commandment that is the 7th Day Sabbath. This would lead to the observance of all the seven Holy Days that are Sabbaths and subsequently they would be considered a virtue of righteousness.

The members of the Gideon Knights Church learn the virtue of respecting those in positions of authority in the church (Heb 13:17). Likewise, children learn the virtue of respecting their parents and older adults. Children are also encouraged to respect their peers, and their teachers in school.

The giving of tithes and offerings is a virtue that is stressed in the Gideon Knights Church (MI 3:10). This practice is a way of incurring blessings from Yahweh. Conversely, members are admonished that withholding tithes and offerings shall incur a curse from Yahweh (MI 3:8-9).

Though learning virtues, is important Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ stresses the prohibitions against vices. Vices of life are stressed more than the virtues. Prohibitions against the vices of life are vital because vices affect how we experience righteousness and holiness in our daily existence.

Thus there is a link between morality and spirituality. By virtue of the word morality it implies making value judgments with regard to our conduct. Any value judgment with regard to an individual's conduct will inherently impact his or hers spirituality because of the close association that confirms a link between morality and spirituality. The spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals is legalistic. There is a strictness of doctrine with regard to the Seventh Days Sabbath (Saturday), how it is observed, and how men and women may dress both in an out of church. Members are expected to follow Hebrew dietary laws.

4.7 DIVINE-HUMAN RELATIONAL DYNAMICS

The dynamics of a divine-human relationship cannot be accurately described because of the multifaceted experiences that do not lend themselves to one interpretation. Therefore, we shall

attempt to examine the *divine-human relational dynamic experiences* that occur in the lives of four members of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ.

There has been much written about the tragic events of 11 September 2001, when terrorists drove their planes into the Twin Towers. Prior to this day, a member of the Gideon had a mystical experience. An ordained minister at Gideon he has a unique gift: prophetic dreams. He had had this faculty for several years. Dreams impact his spirituality by causing him to be silent and withdrawn by them. In a dream before the devastating event the minister was shown a plane flying above his building that moved swiftly striking another building. At the time he did not understand the dream. A few years ago, the minister dreamt about a couple who was very dear to him. The minister shared another dream with the researcher. He told him of a dream he experienced some years ago about a couple who is very dear to him. In the dream he observed The husband and wife were sitting in the front row in a building, attending a funeral. The minister was not sure if the setting was a church or a funeral parlor. In the casket, was the body of a loved one. Later the couple he dreamt about, who are members of the church, would lose their unborn daughter and a funeral would take place. He never told the couple about his dream.

Another male minister reported an experience of the divine. He wasn't sure whether the experience was a dream or a hallucination. In this moment, there was no dialogue but Yahweh revealed to the minister that he would have a son and would name his son Daniel. Within a year, the couple had a son who was named Daniel.

In the second encounter he had with Yahweh, he was sleeping in bed and was awakened. In his dark bedroom, he saw a bright light image of Jesus on the wall. No words were spoken. The member saw Jesus wearing old fashioned-clothes. Jesus and the member did not converse neither did Jesus bring the member a message. The experience of Jesus brought solace to the minister who realized that Christ is near. The bright light of Jesus impacted the spirituality of the member by making him feel complete in the presence of Jesus.

The minister's wife spoke in reference to a divine-human relationship after her husband finished speaking. She admitted to having never encountered a divine-human experience. For years she had listened to many older saints revealing their supernatural experiences with Yahweh. Although whenever she shouted the holy dance, she felt a connection to the Creator,

she pleaded with Yahweh to give a mystical experience, to no avail. Then a few years ago, she dreamt that she would have a daughter. She was told to name the baby girl Shiloh. She conceived and delivered prematurely. A daughter came forth. She named her baby girl Shiloh. Little Shiloh entered the world stillborn. This experience impacted her faith, and her spirituality leaving her angry about the entire matter. For a short period of time she wrestled with why God would allow this to happen. Within a year she came to accept the experience as being in the Hands of God.

Another female minister revealed her unique divine-human experience with the Creator. This member's experience with Yahweh was of a life-threatening nature. Years ago the member found herself in the hospital in an emergency state. She was losing massive amounts of blood. She felt her soul was separating from her body. She prayed and begged Yahweh to let her stay on this side. Yahweh honored her prayer and reunited her body with her soul. She felt this experience strengthen her faith and impacted her spirituality that God answers a prayer. It increased her desire to live a better life for Christ.

This female shared another unique feature of her life. She is a dreamer. She does not dream about demons or anything of a like nature. But Yahweh communicates to her in dreams, revealing the future. She said she is not always able to interpret or understand all of Yahweh's revelations. One message Yahweh gave her involved the salvation of her mother. Yahweh's message made her understand that she could not save her mother. Her mother had to come to salvation through the blood of Yahshua the Messiah. The same member relates another dream.

As a teenager she experienced a weird dream. After her teenage years the dream vanished from her memory. The content of the dream did not resurface until her adulthood. At this time she was in a serious relationship with a man. With him the dream materialized. The member could not speak of the dream because it involved someone presently in her life. In addition she iterated it brought too much sorrow to discuss the dream. The dream of this female minister as a teenager impacts her spirituality by making her remorseful whenever the dream surfaces in her mind. What is equally relevant is that the teenage dream impacts her spirituality more forcefully as a result of it coming to fruition in her adulthood.

The Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ, like many other Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches, views its divine-human relationship in a similar way. And if there is a question of how Gideon Knights Church, or any other Black Hebrew Pentecostal church, would stand in the presence of Yahweh, it would be with humbleness of heart. Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ would stand before Yahweh humbly assured that it keeps all of the Ten Commandments, particularly the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath. Obeying the 7th Day Sabbath indicates total obedience to the Word of Yahweh. This enhances a divine-human relationship with the Creator for both the Gideon Knights Church and many other Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches.

The experiences described cannot be labeled. The experiences cannot be labeled because of the esoteric nature of the divine-human relationship that involves phenomena that are difficult to explicate.

4.8 IMPACT OF SPIRITUALITY

The topic of the impact of spirituality in the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ is very intense. One method in discussing the impact of spirituality is to begin by soliciting from the members their definition of spirituality. This process allowed the members to reflect on their own spirituality and express in their own words how to internalize spirituality.

Some of the replies to the question regarding spirituality are as follows: One male minister said for him spirituality is to be one with the Father. This minister argued spirituality symbolically brings him on the “same page” with the Being. Spirituality is to live like Christ in a relationship with the Father. A female minister explained spirituality for her is a connection with Jesus. She seeks Christ first in times of trouble. This brings about a connection in spirituality with the Messiah. Another man said that that being in Christ reflected just one type of spirituality among many. He went further to declare that there is a difference between spirituality and salvation. The brother explicated choosing the right spirit has a direct connection to salvation in Christ. Another brother interpreted spirituality symbolically as a belief in a higher power. Spirituality is where you believe Yahweh as your source. Spirituality is feeling the power beyond self and infuses on with an ability to inspire others. A female minister added prayer brings about a spiritual connection to Christ and God

by becoming one with them .But she cautions there are other spiritualities that people find intriguing.

The impact of spirituality of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church has much in common with the Pentecostal movement. Members see themselves as in this world, but not of this world (see chapter 3). However, prosperity impacts the spirituality of the Gideon Knights Church. Although the members of Gideon are economically blessed, the members may feel at times alienated from some portions of society, but they have found ways economically to relate to the community. This is proven by the church's missionary committee that organizes cookouts and musical entertainment for young people at a Catholic youth center for runaway teenagers. The missionary gives out clothing to the needy. In the winter they carry blankets to the homeless, along with hot food. In its prosperity, the Gideon Knights Freedom Church demonstrates a spirituality of humbleness that reflects its gratitude for having been blessed economically.

Politics impacts the spirituality of the Gideon Knights Church in a manner that none of the members of the church are politically active in terms of attending political meetings or holding public office. However, some members Gideon have attended community gatherings in the neighborhood and the church cooperates with the local block president in planning social events for the neighborhood. Gideon Knights Church sponsors various outdoor events for the youth and adults, such as annual picnics in a state park and apple picking in the fall. The members of Gideon Knights Church see themselves as part of the community and strive to improve services in the neighborhood. These efforts impact the spiritual identity of churchgoers and give the church an identity of spirituality that causes the church to interrelate with the community.

4.9 SUMMARY

The complexity in researching the spirituality of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ makes Matthew 11:4-5 so real: *Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and lame walk (NKJV).* Observing the Gideon church became a very intense experience in trying to research its spirituality and telling others about it. The intensity of the research at times borders on a

traumatic experiences. These result from the many occurrences the researcher experiences with the congregation with regard to acceptance of his work.

In close observation of the church, in individual interviews and focus groups, the researcher had to face critical revelations, for example, the diverse definitions of spirituality. The researcher discovered much of the insightful data he received regarding the spirituality of the members was inconceivable prior to attempting to examine their spirituality, such as notions of heaven and hell. As a researcher and being the bishop he attempted to remain neutral. He restricted his comments to probing questions that lead to more insight into the spirituality of the church.

One observation of Gideon Knights Church is its attitude in being open to criticism. This openness seemed to solicit questions that prompted discussions that openly revealed phenomena that impacted the spirituality of the members. This caused transformational changes in their lives in interpersonal relationships with others. The members appeared uninhibited in expressing personal views of the notions of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The members felt unrestrained in discussing matters of morality, economics, politics and education.

The openness of the Gideon Knights Church impacts its spirituality in that it fosters personal opinions and eliminates discomfort of personal criticism.

Appendix: Field Notes – Qualitative Research

The names of the persons interviewed or observed shall not be used in order to maintain anonymity. We shall use synonyms in place of real names. The members shall also, at times, be referred to according gender, age and possibly religious titles. The name of the founder of the church shall be used. I conducted three personal interviews, one of which is not included in this paper because I felt it was not suitable for answering my primary questions dealing with spirituality. I held two focal groups and executed several observations. As a final note: This dissertation will probably be accepted by some members in the church, and rejected by others. Some of the congregants may consider me violating the confidentiality of the church by disclosing the religious nature of Gideon. Therefore, under apprehension I write this chapter about the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. Thus, this paper may be of questionable value to the temple. Nevertheless, I am writing this paper for general knowledge about a unique religious organization.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 1

Date: 27 September 2008. Day: Sabbath evening. Time: 19h05. Location: Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. Interview: Individual. Place where conducted: Bishop/Pastor's study. Name: A male deacon of the church. Age: 38. Religious Faith: Hebrew Pentecostal.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Researcher: How do you call yourself? Do you call yourself Hebrew Pentecostal or Hebrew Christian?

Deacon Tyre: Basically: Follower of Christ Christian

Researcher: How many years have you been in Gideon?

Deacon Tyre: 8 years.

Researcher: What is spirituality?

Deacon Tyre: Spirituality concerns itself with wholeness. It is evident at times but comes and goes. It is not always there.

Researcher: How do you feel about wearing a yarmulke in church?

Deacon Tyre: I just can't see myself wearing a yarmulke and following others. I can't do something I don't understand. Wearing something without knowledge is hypocritical. Being hypocritical is missing real spirituality. I need more explaining about it.

Researcher: How were you drawn to the church?

Deacon Tyre: I was drawn to Gideon by accident. I came because of one death and a near death of my wife. These two tragic events happened within a month of each other. I am here by the leading of God. It's a challenge being here.

Researcher: How is it a challenge?

Deacon Tyre: I don't agree with everything that is done in the church.

Researcher: What don't you agree with?

Deacon Tyre: The power of God is suppressed in the church. But the power is not lost. Technology has come into the church and other entities. Gideon needs more total truth.

Researcher: What is total truth?

Deacon Tyre: Truth is something to be measured. We are caught in a worldly race. Think what this world has come to. For example, Gospel music in the church is too worldly. The lyrics are like a duck: weak. The attitudes and individual spirituality seem weak. The church seems to pass judgment on people. Take Brother Busby: people think he is crazy and they think Tarzan is deceiving. Me, I have a hot temper. There is no need to judge those two brothers. The church is not doing its fullest to help people. The church could do more.

Researcher: How do you feel about women wearing pants?

Deacon Tyre: Women have changed. Wearing pants does not affect their salvation. I have changed my attitude. I prefer women not to wear pants, but a woman wearing pants can make it into heaven.

Researcher: What is your feeling about the Holy Days?

Deacon Tyre: They are right!

Researcher: How do you know they are right?

Deacon Tyre: Elder Card told me to look at the moon and read it. He explained how the moon works. The Holy Days go according to the moon. We are held accountable to keep them. The Holy Days are essential to salvation, unlike wearing of pants by women that is not essential to salvation.

Researcher: How do you feel about the 7th Day Sabbath?

Deacon Tyre: The same way I feel about the Holy Days.

Researcher: Define heaven.

Deacon Tyre: Heaven is peaceful, no war, and no fighting.

Researcher: Who is going to heaven?

Deacon Tyre: Certain people are going to heaven: for example, children with Down syndrome, the mongoloid children, and physically deformed children of all types are guaranteed a place in heaven. These people society puts aside. The rest of us are always fighting with one another. Religions fight each other. We will have to fight to make it into heaven. I have to fight to make it into heaven. But these children have a place in heaven. They are the majority to make it in. We are in trouble without fighting. Who is to say these types of children don't love Christ?

Researcher: What is your feeling about hell?

Deacon Tyre: A place to keep out of.

Researcher: Who is going to hell?

Deacon Tyre: Religions are closer to hell. Religions are too busy fighting one another. That is why there are over 300,000 Protestant religions worldwide. Protestant denominations will be held accountable for their fighting. I am scared to open the door of the Bible. I can't close the Bible. The more I learn the more I become afraid. I just don't want to jump and sing. I struggle because of the man I killed accidentally at work. When I hear the part of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shall not kill." I have a problem. I see things in different ways. I see

Christians hurt in the name of Christ. A good person that studies the Word and does not go to church has a better chance of making it to heaven than some Christians. There is too much fighting.

Researcher: Are you an original Hebrew?

Deacon Tyre: I don't know. I can't really claim being an original Hebrew. To say this could be blasphemy. I can't prove I am a Hebrew. I would like to be able to give assurance that I am a Hebrew. It's like a double-edged sword for me. Members in society claiming to be original Hebrews can do harm. Some may feel that they are superior to those who are not original Hebrews.

Researcher: Are there errors in the Bible?

Deacon Tyre: Many errors in the Bible. People can read some of Paul's writings in the Bible and find support for their beliefs. There are many errors in the Bible; that is the reason for so many Protestant denominations throughout the world. We can't come to an understanding. There are so many errors in the King James Version, but the church keeps using this Bible. We don't learn much about women in the Bible. You hear about Mary, Jesus' mother. But you hear more about male minor and major prophets. In the Bible there seems to be the "blame the women" syndrome for the fall. Mother Williams had little education, but great gifts of the spirit. Where is ours today? It seems like the King James Version conquers our women. This Bible is dangerously used.

Researcher: Do you read any other books?

Deacon Tyre: Mostly the Bible. When we read the Bible in the church we go to war in the temple because it is tainted by men. God wants us to learn more. We need to help each other more.

Researcher: How can we help each other?

Deacon Tyre: We can help each other with our problems. We can do more missionary work, not just one day a month, but much more. We need to sit down with one another and explain the Word and understand that we have gifts from the Lord. We need to show love, kindness, and generosity toward one another.

Researcher: How do we do all of these things?

Deacon Tyre: By loving people more and by more people coming out for missionary work. More people support the church's scholarship fund than the missionary. People are jealous and show animosity. People complain they are being belittled. We tend to put people into categories. But Sister Gene shows much love. Mother Beans shows love and concern for everyone. Elder Card and Minister Doolittle helped me to come out of my depression. They tell me to let it go and keep going. If were not for Gideon and the love they give me, I might be dead. There is too much competition in the church.

Researcher: In what way is there competition?

Deacon Tyre: I can give you an example: favoritism. This son is favored over that person's son. This person's grandson is favored over that person's grandson. There is not enough uplifting of people. We need to pray for help.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 2

Date: October 4, 2008. Day: Sabbath. Time: 17h00. Location: Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. Interview: Place where conducted: Bishop's Study.
Male: Adult. Age: 34. Religious Faith: Hebrew Pentecostal. Religious Title: Ordained Elder & Youth Pastor for the young people of the church.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Researcher: What is Spirituality?

Elder: To me it is tapping into your inner spirit and soul. It's your inner being. It is not Christian. It does not belong to a particular religion. It is reaching for a higher power. It is reaching beyond something. You can see your own flesh. Really to me there are all kinds of spiritual emotions and beliefs. Spirituality is tapping into beliefs; even devil worshippers are spiritual. Spirituality is not flesh. In a sense it is a higher power.

Researcher: How long are you in the church?

Elder: Since 1992, 16 years.

Researcher: How old are you?

Elder: 34.

Researcher: What brought you to the church?

Elder: I met a female member of the church who invited me. I took to the church and I liked it.

Researcher: What did you like about the church?

Elder: I like the fact that it is small. I came from a large Baptist Church in Harlem. They have thousands of people. No one knew each other. There were small cliques. I had been going from nursery school to high school. I came here in college. I like small churches. I like establishing friendship with people. Not like the large Baptist Church where you get lost in a storm of visitors. They come from every part of the world. Bishop, when I came here I saw so many ministers. I got an aspiration to become a minister. I liked small Gideon. I was asked to give a testimony. I could see that I could grow. I could see my talents. I could see my ability to fit in and be happy, unlike being at Abyssinia. There was nobody in the pews who knew you.

Researcher: What was your reaction to this church being a Sabbath church that is different from the large Baptist Church?

Elder: The first time was in 1992. Sister Gene's former boyfriend, Sly, invited me also. He and I were college roommates. He was courting sister Gene at the time. He said come to church. Okay, I said. What time on Sunday? Sly didn't finish College. No, he said. They go to church on Saturday. I never heard of the Sabbath or Jewish people. Since Sly was a good friend of mine, I decided to go. He didn't understand Gideon's faith either. But he said, they are Christians and go on the Sabbath. When I got there I didn't know what to expect. It was different. I was not used to a group of people on the Sabbath. Nothing really happened. I thought the church was weird, worshipping on Saturday. But little by little I got to learn from your wife, who gave seminars and showed me the Sabbath in the Bible. In addition, we read and recited the Ten Commandments every week. As a college educated person I wanted to know right from wrong. Maybe if I would have had time to think about the Sabbath and

decide if I wanted to keep it, I might not have joined Gideon Knights. But June, your daughter, told me it was right, and we were dating at the time.

Researcher: How do you see yourself in keeping the Sabbath?

Elder: I can do better in keeping the Sabbath.

Researcher: In what way?

Elder: The first time the church told me things I could not do on the Sabbath, it was hard. For three years I went to the store after sundown, cooked, cleaned and watched television. I knew it was not right. But being around other ministers it got better. It was not perfect, but I improved. In a wary moment I may still cook or go to the store on a Friday evening after work. I'm still working on keeping the Sabbath better.

Researcher: In your wary moment for cooking and buying, how do you feel?

Elder: In our own minds, we can justify anything. In my own mind, I pretty much tell myself, I am not cooking or going to the store for profits: so this is not work, nor am I doing my own pleasure on the Sabbath. But deep down in my spirit there is no justification for breaking God's Sabbath. It is wrong to cook or go to the store. I use another excuse in that I do not leave work until dark, after sundown. I tell myself, I didn't get off work early. Therefore, I am justified in going to the store. We are not perfect; I am much better. I look at your wife. She is called to be the pastor. She deserves it. I see that I want to be like her with no justification or rationalization for breaking the Sabbath. I am working toward that end.

Researcher: How do you feel about the Holy Days?

Elder: I know they are right to keep. I believe in the Holy Days. I believe they can be part of my history. But I was not born in a Sabbath church. I think I still need to feel comfortable in the Holy Days. I'm still on my way to full realization that the Holy Days are for all people, not just the Jews. I grew up with White Jews who kept the Holy Days. I thought it was for them. Now I know it is for all people. But still I don't know if I can call myself a Hebrew. I have questions on being a Hebrew. But then I tell the people at my job that I keep the Holy Days. They always say, I didn't know you were Jewish. I tell them I am a Christian who observes the Hebrew Holy Days. Minister Doolittle said he is just coming to the realization of the importance of keeping the Holy Days. Obedience is the key for keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days.

Researcher: How do you feel about being a Hebrew?

Elder: I don't know if I am really a Hebrew. I don't know. According to my history my father is from Alabama and my mother is from Nova Scotia, Canada. I rationalize these Holy Days are not just given to distinguish between Jews and non-Jews, but to all people. Also, in answer to your question, it depends on what your definition of a Hebrew is. In a 2000 world how do you recognize a Hebrew? Do we make a distinction, by religious faith or by ancestral blood? Elder Card defines a Hebrew to the issue of being a proselyte. This helps with the question of being a Hebrew. If I am not a Hebrew I have been grafted into the Hebrew faith as a proselyte. Therefore, I have full benefits as a Hebrew. (

Researcher: Give me your understanding or belief about heaven.

Elder: It is a mystery. I don't know. I heard people talk about heaven. But the truth of the matter is I don't believe they really know what heaven is like. I think they will be shocked when they get there. Some people think angels are flying around heaven. I believe in the new City of Jerusalem. I think we will be with God and Jesus.

Researcher: What is your feeling about hell?

Elder: I think hell is a real place. I think about burning and damnation for eternity. I think of people begging to get out, and wishing they would have lived better lives on earth. People will have their worst experience of pain for their wickedness. Hell is a fiery place where the devil will torment those who are there forever. I think of hell like being in prison locked up in a cage.

Researcher: What do you believe about the Trinity?

Elder: I believe the Father is a separate person from the Son. I understand there are Scriptures to support the belief in the Father and the Son being one. But there are also Scriptures to prove that the Father and the Son are separate. When Jesus was baptized, it was God talking to Jesus, saying: "well done, my Son." When Jesus was on the cross looking up to God, He was talking to His father. From an educational perspective, I understand why people argue one way and others argue another way. I just happened to be more persuaded to believe the Father and the Son are separate. This is the teaching of my church. I don't believe it really matters whether or not the Father and the Son are one. The ultimate purpose of everyone is to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. I don't think you will be punished because you believe one way or the other. It is all about nothing.

Researcher: What do you think about drinking alcohol?

Elder: Drinking alcohol has nothing to do with the doctrine of this church. I grew up as a kid with a father who drank. When he got drunk he beat mother in the house, while my sister and I were told to stay in the car. The house would shake from my father beating my mother. I hate drinking. I do not deceive myself. I know ministers say there is a difference between drinking and getting drunk. They argue Jesus turned water into wine. I don't believe in intoxicating drinks. A kid in my college was killed by a drunken driver. Drinking a little wine for your stomach's sake is Paul's opinion.

Researcher: How do you see your relationship to God?

Elder: I see God as a Father who rules the earth.

Researcher: And how do you see Jesus?

Elder: I see Him as my Hero.

Researcher: What phenomenal experiences have you had?

Elder: Dreams: I saw two planes hit Fresh Meadow buildings, before two planes crashed into the Twin Towers. In another dream I saw Doolittle and Gene sitting in the front pew at the funeral of a relative. I never told either one of my dream.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 3

Date: October 14, 2008. Day: Tuesday. Event: First day of the Holy Day (Sabbath), Feast of Tabernacle. Time: 12h30. Location: Queens. Name of Church: Temple El Shaddai

Note: Several Churches attended, including Gideon Knights Church.

Information:

Temple El Shaddai put up a Hebrew Booth, outside on the front lawn of their church. Sabbath school started late. The Eastern district Bishop from the House of God taught the Sabbath school. He asked a question about the Feast of Tabernacle, and who does it belong to. He started reading, John 7:2, Genesis 23:38-43 that all born of Israel shall dwell in booths. The bishop stressed this point. He also stressed this is a Jewish feast. Bishop made a comment that he was reading from the King James Version. He wanted to stress the King James Version reads feasts of the Jews. He said Jews were told by God to dwell in booths, not anyone else.

This remark sparked a controversy: The Prophetess I AM asked: was there anyone in the congregation who was a real Jew? Bishop Sherron raised his hand to speak. The Eastern district Bishop continued to argue that being a real Jew or Hebrew meant very little if you did not believe in Yahshua.

Bishop Sherron continued to raise his hand to speak. His wife said: why not let him speak? Finally Bishop Sherron spoke: the bishop said he was a Hebrew not because of the Bible but because of two experiences as a firefighter inspecting two White establishments and they told him, he was the real Jew, and they were the Edomites. Bishop Sherron stated that at the time this occurred, he was in a First Day church, and he knew nothing about the Sabbath. Bishop Sherron told the congregants occasionally, when he rode by a Jewish synagogue at night, on his way to work at the fire house, Hebrew tongues would fall on him and he would chant in Hebrew. Bishop Sherron told the people he could not tell if some of the Black people in the church were Hebrews, he only knew that he was a Hebrew, and that he could not give an explanation. If Yahweh chose to reveal to him his true identity, there is nothing he can do about it.

Prophetess I AM said Black people should seek to know their true identity. The Eastern district bishop, the Pastor of Temple El Shaddai, and the Elect Lady of the church said that the belief in Yahweh was more important than being a true Jew. A female pastor stood and read Romans 2:28-29. She argued that being a spiritual Jew was more important than being a natural Jew.

The Eastern district Bishop said he is not Jewish. He argued that the Holy Day, Feast of tabernacle is kept differently than the Seventh Day Sabbath. He said you can do some work on the Feast of Tabernacle's Sabbath. He rejoined, Edomite children play games on the Feast of Tabernacle in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 4

Date: October 21, 2008. Day: Tuesday. Event: the last day of the Feast of Tabernacle. Time: 15h00. Location: Brooklyn. Place where conducted: Sanctuary
Religious Faith: Hebrew Pentecostal. Name of Church: Gideon Knights Freedom Church.

DISCUSSION, QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Researcher: The United States Government is corrupt. We as saints have to live with this corrupt government. Can we as saint in a way influence our government?

Answers: A female and male member: Yes!

Researcher: How can we as saints influence our government?

A young female minister: Vote! But Jehovah does not vote.

A female member: One person or saint cannot influence the government. It takes a group of saints to influence the government.

A male Elder: By voting you get services from the government. Take a stand for what you believe in.

Researcher: But how can voting change a corrupt and wicked government?

The same male Elder: We can change a government by putting our trust in what we believe. For example, put our trust in our money; it reads "In God we Trust."

A female member: But the government controls our lives. If we speak out we might go missing. I don't know.

The same Elder: Prayer changes things. We need to first vote, watch and teach our children the right thing.

Researcher: What about saints running for political office?

A male minister: This is a corrupt government in control; one individual does not make a difference. The government will turn a deaf ear. The majority makes a difference but not the minority. The government needs to start all over again. If we don't vote, we won't have a voice in politics. If you vote, you would be joining a corrupt government.

The young female minister: You don't have to destroy the government, in order to have a better government.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 5

Date: October 21, 2008. Day: Tuesday, evening, last day of Feast of Tabernacle. Time: 19h00. Location: Brooklyn. Focus Group. Place where conducted: Sanctuary.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Researcher: What is your definition of Heaven?

A lad (aged 12): The New Jerusalem.

Sis Text: Butter pecan ice cream and strawberry cake. I believe heaven is here on earth. I don't want to wait until here after.

Min. Gene: A world without any problems and serenity.

Mother Cook: Heaven to me is a place where every saint will find there will be no worries, no rent to pay, peace, harmony and joy.

Anthony: Heaven is a place of celebration and people full of joy.

The pastor: Heaven is a resting place of peace, love and joy.

A lad (aged 16): There is no sickness in heaven.

A lad (aged 11): No evil.

Elder Card: No death.

A lad (aged 16): I would like to ask. Do you think folks go back to looking like a kid again in heaven? That might mean there is no aging? Maybe we start all over from birth, when we go to heaven?

Sister Text: Who would baby-sit? We change in the body as a child or adult. We change from the terrestrial to the celestial body. We'll be a spirit. What does Yahshua say? We will be like Him. We will be neither male nor female. There is no male or female a spirit. I won't see my grandparents.

A female minister: It makes you stop and think: Will I know my father and my mother, like we sing and preach about? For example, we sing, when we get to heaven we will see our loved ones. The Bible says we will be neither male nor female.

A lad (aged 16): So a wife and husband will be not in love and know each other?

Elder Card: That is why Yahshua addressed this issue. You'll find He told the story about the woman with seven husbands and they all died. Yahshua said in heaven there will be neither male nor female.

Pastor: We will be like Him and see Him as He is.

Sister Text: How do we know a male will not look like a man?

Pastor: but what does the Bible say? We look like a spirit and not male or female.

Sister Text: But people on their death bed say they see their parents. Minister Doolittle saw his mother in his sleep.

Pastor: Yes, that's true. Mother Williams said: my mother on her death bed saw her mother, Sara, coming for her. There has to be a relationship. I believe people will know their relatives, even if there is a change in the body. Mother Williams never heard me mention my grandmother's name. God had to tell Mother Williams.

The young female minister: I believe they might know their relatives. My stepsister never saw her mother, and she described her. Many people have mystery stories. I believe until we are changed, we can see our dead relatives, while here on earth.

Researcher: My story is that my father's brother never saw me and he died. He always wanted to see me. In the middle of the night, I woke up, and I saw my uncle at the foot of my

bed. I saw him tall, and wearing a short brown leather coat. I later described to my father what I saw, and my father stopped grieving for his brother.

Elder Card: I don't think we answered the young lad's question. Will we still be in love with our husbands and our wives in heaven? Will there still be a kind of lust or tension between a man and a woman?

Minister Jean: I find it hard to believe that I will not still love my grandmother and my husband. I am on a mission.

A lad (aged 16): I have a question. People see spirits coming to them. And when they die, they can't rest. How do their spirits wake up?

Minister Jean: Do you remember the story in the Bible, about Saul asking the witch of Endor to bring up Samuel's spirit? This was against the teaching of Yahweh. When Saul dies, his soul will not be at rest. But his spirit will go back to God. We cannot go to gypsies and palm readers, asking them to bring up spirits.

A lad (aged 11): So, Samuel is dead and the witch with witchery in the Bible?

Researcher: She was afraid and Saul was afraid. Samuel said to Saul: This day you shall be with me.

A lad (aged 11): Does that mean he will be at rest?

Pastor: Samuel was at rest. I don't think Saul will be at rest. Saul did something he was not allowed to do in going to the soothsayer. He was cursed. Saul made an error going to the witch and asking her to call up Samuel and his punishment was you will die. Even in death the dead Samuel had power.

A lad (aged 16): So, is that curse still alive today?

Pastor: You cannot go to tarot card readers.

Elder Card: Going to a magician, soothsayers, sorcerers, witch crafters is a sin. You bring on curses on yourself. Our Heavenly Father is merciful, but He does not want us dealing with unclean spirits.

Sister Text: But people came looking for the clean spirit in Mother Williams, so they can find out what God is saying or hear something about their relatives. Was that a bad thing?

Elder Card: No!

Sister Text: But people go looking for the same thing when they go to a witch crafter. What is the difference?

Elder Card: I never asked Mother Williams what is going to happen. She would tell me. I never remember people coming asking Mother Williams to tell them something.

Sister Text: But they might have had, and I think they did.

The young minister: Shouldn't we seek to know the future? There are good spirits and there are bad spirits, but that does not stop a good prophecy from going through.

Elder Card: But you have to be careful of prophecy.

A lad (aged 12): The Lord gave messages to the prophets. But how they do prophesy? Are some gifted and some not true?

Researcher: Ok! Let's back to heaven. I am dying. Where shall I go? Do I go to the grave? Is my mind asleep? Do I go to a waiting station? Does my spirit go back to God? Where is heaven in all of this?

Sister Text: I believe when we die, we are not going to heaven

Pastor: I think we are using the word heaven to mean a physical place. Once we die we will go to a city called New Jerusalem. That is the final place that we refer to as heaven. When we immediately die, we do not go to a final resting place.

Minister Jean: It depends on the type of life we have lived. A lady I heard of claimed she died and went to hell. She started to pray in hell, and came out, and came back to life.

Researcher: I believe you go into another world.

Sister Text: So why not heaven? It could be like butter pecan ice cream.

Researcher: I believe we go to another world. I don't know if all the stuff we were taught as a child about heaven is a reality. I still believe when we leave this world we go to another world.

A lad (aged 12): I don't think we go into another world, until this first world is destroyed, and a new world comes into existence.

A lad (aged 16): You say when I die, I go directly to the other world. But don't I go to a place of rest before I go to another world? Do you dream in this other world? Maybe this world is just like a dream. So, which world is like a dream? If I die and go to a place of rest, will I dream about this world and the next world?

Researcher: I see you have many questions about what happens after death.

Deacon Tyre: To me there is something spiritual about the whole thing. I believe Mother Williams sees us and knows what we are doing. I think about the angels. When they walk on earth, do they have heavenly bodies? Or do they walk on earth and take over our bodies? The Bible says: be careful how you entertain strangers, for you entertain angels unaware. We should do angel watching.

Sister Text: Are angels real?

Pastor: Mother Williams had an angel step in front on the bus, so she could not get off and get hit by a car. A strange person came and helped Mark when he was unconscious. The stranger had a Bible in his hand, and then he disappeared. Mark did not die.

A lad (aged 12): The Bible mentions angels with male names, are they male or female?

Researcher: They take on the shapes of people. Some are men.

Researcher: Do you believe there is a hell?

A lad (aged 12): I don't believe in hell; it is called lake of fire.

A lad (aged 16): Hell is non-existent. It is not in the Bible. I don't know if there is a soul. I don't know if there is a hell. My father taught me there is no hell. He is a Jehovah's Witness, and God will not have a person burn forever. I am kind of in the middle about hell. I do not know God personally.

Minister Doolittle: I believe there is a place called hell. It is where people's souls go who have lived a sinner's life. They did not know God or keep His Commandments. Their souls are trapped. Something is going down in hell. I think their souls are being tortured.

Researcher: How often will they be tortured?

Minister Doolittle: Daily!

Pastor: Go back to Lazarus and the rich man. He wanted water. That gives us a clue that the rich man was not in the same place as Lazarus. The rich man was in a good place. What do you believe?

Minster Doolittle: What do you believe?

Pastor: I believe what the Bible says.

Sister Text: I am not sure how to define hell. Maybe many things can be hell, like cancer, severe sickness or domestic violence. You don't have to wait until you die to experience the hell of loneliness.

A lad (aged 11): I think if I go to heaven I will find rest. If I go to hell, there will be burning. I don't believe there is a pot of fire like in the cartoons.

A lad (aged 12): I believe hell is like earth. There is no clear light. Everything is dead, rotten and disgusting. The living conditions are poor. Once you get there, you don't want to be there. You realize that you are in a bad place, because you didn't want to listen.

Researcher: In hell, can you repent and get out?

A lad (aged 16): Did the rich man get out? Did he repent and get out?

Mother Red: I believe if you live right on this earth, and when you die, you are just gone.

A lad (aged 12): I believe if we die, and go to hell, we have no chance to change.

Pastor: The Bible says you can't praise Him from the dead.

A lad (aged 11): I believe chosen people of God can get out of hell.

Researcher: A church I went to, the senior bishop teaches you can repent and get out of hell.

Pastor: Repent and get out? You know Yahshua does not want us to teach that. I want to live right. Maybe people who did not know God and the Ten Commandments, and did not have a chance to repent, may have gotten out. But those who came out of the Ten Commandments and sinned did not have a chance to get out of hell.

Elder Card: The unrepentant sinner.

Pastor: The unrepentant sinner is not given a chance.

Minister Jean: What is the purpose and summary of these questions?

Sister Text: All these are our views. Nobody really knows.

Pastor: Hell is called Hades in the Bible. If you die in Christ, you escape the second death.

A lad (aged 11): Who are these groups of people?

A lad (aged 12): These groups of people are the church. The building is not the church. Anybody can make a building that will not last. The church is our souls. We must keep it clean. Yahshua is coming back for a church without a spot or a wrinkle. Of course we won't all agree what is the church.

A lad (aged 11): It is in the heart. A group of people coming together and focusing on God is the church.

Researcher: You gave a clue. What do the adults say, is there an understanding of a church?

Sister Text: Being on one accord to me is a church.

Other members: A body of the Messiah; the body of Christ; an English word for the Greek; A thing belonging to Jesus Christ; Church belongs to Jesus Christ.

Minister Jean: Wait! When are you going to be through with all of this questioning?

Researcher: I need information for my tape recorder so I can type notes. They are for my dissertation.

Evaluation:

A day or two later, the researcher spoke with Minister Jean. She said the children in the fellowship room were confused and upset over the discussion of there being no hell. She argued the children should not have been in the session. Some of the children said they could not sleep and were afraid. The minister added if her 5- year-old son was in the room, she would have taken him out because he would have asked a million and one questions. She complained the discussion should have been closed with Scripture. Children are smart, but

need wisdom. The 16-year-old lad is already confused. The minister remarked that the researcher should not have mentioned another pastor who said you can repent in hell. This should have never been brought up in the discussion, even if the researcher did not agree with the pastor of the other church.

Comments:

The researcher explained to the group prior to the group session, that he did not want the participants to use the Bible, because his dissertation calls for personal opinions. In addition, the researcher spoke with the youth, following the conclusion of the group session in the fellowship room. They appeared pleased with the sessions and offered no complaints. However, Minister Jean's remarks pertaining to the youth will be taken into consideration for future group sessions.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 6 (YAHSHUA VS. JESUS CONTROVERSY)

Date: October 25, 2008. Day: Sabbath. Time: 14h00. Location: Brooklyn. Observation. Place where conducted: Sanctuary. Name of Church: Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ.

Controversy:

The name of Yahshua becoming the official name to be used as the Son of the Creator: Yahshua replaces Jesus.

Discussion:

Minister Text: We were made in the image of God, like a child. Is Jesus not from the beginning?

Elder Card: Yahshua was there at creation. He was born of a woman and that made Him human. He was conceived of a woman and a man. He was with His Father from the beginning. The Trinity is blasphemy.

Pastor: Yahshua is the first creation.

Elder Card: I do not pray to God.

Pastor: You don't use the name God?

Elder Blue: I find myself using Jesus. This is all I know. I am being real. For years at the other church, I used the name of Jesus. I don't see anything wrong with it.

Elder Card: Do not embrace the thought. His name is not God

Researcher: A few weeks ago, I went to preach at Brother Jones' church on Sunday. I told the pastor I meant no disrespect, but could I preach in the name of Yahshua and Yahweh? The pastor gave his approval. I went to the First Day church and told them that I kept the Sabbath. I told them Emperor Constantine changed the Sabbath to Sunday and instituted Christmas,

which we do not keep. When I was finished preaching, the pastor said he should have visited my Black Hebrew Pentecostal church earlier.

Elder Blue: Maybe I have problems with the language.

Elder Card: It is not the language, Minister Germs. You are not listening to me. I am not being difficult; I want to go higher in Yahweh.

Minister Jean: I don't think you go higher by using the name Yahshua. I looked up the name of Jesus. It is just another name for Yahshua. I don't think saying Jesus prevents you from going higher.

Elder Card: You don't believe!

Minister Jean: I do believe!

Elder Card: You believe in the name of Jesus?

Pastor: You have to understand. The names Yahshua and Yahweh have to be put in your heart. When I first came to Gideon, I could not say these names either. I got down on my knees and told Yahweh. He has to put it in my heart.

Minister Jean: Are you saying, I see the devil in the name of Jesus, it blinds me, and maybe that is why I can't believe in the name of Yahshua? I saw my pastor, Mother Williams, heal people in the name of Jesus.

Minister Germs: People cannot accept the name of Yahshua by coercion. They need to know the founder of this church used the name of Jesus. This is going to cause trouble in the church, if we are going to say Yahshua all the time.

Pastor: Let Minister Germs talk.

Elder Card: Let's have a little order.

Deacon Tyre: Will I have a problem calling on either name? I am having a problem.

Pastor: Wait, no disrespect Elder Card. But we will end this right now. Whatever you feel comfortable with, you say. Using the name of Yahshua has to come from the heart. I say Jesus, and the sacred name of Yahshua. We got off the path; we need to get back on.

Elder Blue: For some people, this is an intellectual and emotional argument.

Pastor: I got down on my knees and said to Yahweh; put the name in my heart. People have to accept the sacred names. If you want it, get on your knees and pray. There is power in a name.

Minister Germs: We tarried in the name of Jesus.

Elder Card: So did I!

Minister Germs: We cannot throw away Jesus.

Elder Card: Pastor said study. Yahshua gave us a tool. We can say the same, or we can grow. We are not condemning anyone.

Mother Red: Smyrna's church only uses Yahshua and Yahweh and they have power.

Researcher: I saw a minister in Smyrna's church preach in the name of Yahshua and stop the traffic on the outside.

Note: Mother Red begins to shake in spirit. She then speaks in the spirit with her eyes closed: Pastor blesses her. Mother Red stomps and starts saying: glory!

The young female minister: I was saved in a Sunday church. But when I learned the truth, I moved.

Elder Card: I was saved in a Sunday church. I used to love to eat hog mows and chitlins. But when I found it was junk food, I did not eat this food anymore. Brother, you did not hear where the Scripture came from Elder Blue, Philippians 3:6. Give that verse to the new Sister Buckles. Yahshua's name is above all others. There is no contradiction. Yahshua saves; Yahweh saves. It is not about there is going to be an abolishing of the name of Jesus, and somebody is trying to change me. That is not the point.

Minister Germs: I'm just saying in prior conversation, it came up and now we are putting down the name of Jesus. You said something about the Bible earlier, I missed it. I don't feel Yahshua should be shoved down our throats. I'm in the name of Jesus. I'm saying, I agree with the pastor. We should say what we are comfortable saying.

Sister Buckles: I understand the pastor, the Seventh Day Adventist and the First Day worshipper, because I have experienced all of them. But, I believe what the pastor is saying, makes sense. You use the name you're comfortable with. If you like Jesus, use that name. If you like Yahshua, use that name. But when the Lord works through us, it will not matter. There should be no argument. Some of us have to get to this point.

Pastor: This is a faith journey

Minister Jean: After having spoken to Yahweh about this issue, I am not convinced yet. I still have a problem. I want to use the higher names of Yahweh and Yahshua, but I still recognize the power in the name of Jesus. When we got saved in this church, I saw the power of Yahweh and Yahshua bring us closer and make us stronger in Him.

Elder Card: We are the generation that got saved. It is all about the life I was preaching about. There is a call to power. We understand Jesus saves. But, Yahshua is His holy name. Yahweh is not equal to the name God. Yahweh is above it.

Pastor: Don't get caught up into one thing. We have to be obedient to Yahweh at all time. You must obey your pastor. Say what is in your heart. How many of you are comfortable in your heart, saying Yahweh and Yahshua? Raise your hands!

Note: Members differ.

Mother Cook: I don't say Jesus.

Minister Doolittle: I know the name of Yahshua, but I call on the name of Jesus. I ask the Lord to put the name of Yahshua in my heart. But it is hard for me.

Elder Card: Satan wants the holy names out of the Scripture.

Pastor: Mother Williams talked about the sacred names when I came to the church. But she used to go back and forth with the names of Jesus and Yahshua. Mother Williams told us this is His Hebrew name.

Deacon Tyre: How will people receive Yahweh and Yahshua when they walk through the door? Some of them may be First Day people. Will they be comfortable with Yahshua and Yahweh?

Elder Card: At the park service I used the sacred names. After I finished talking, a person followed me and asked me about the holy names.

Pastor: Let's talk about this another time. If you want to say Yahweh and Yashua, ask Him to put it in your heart.

Aftermath following the discussion:

In the main afternoon service, Minister Germs, the devotional leader, sang songs using the name of Jesus. Elder Card would not sing along with Jesus. The pastor got up to speak and addressed the issue that some were singing the songs using Jesus and some using Yahshua. She disapproved and wanted unity. One member got up and walked out of the church. The pastor sang a song hallelujah, so everyone could say Yah. She then asked who felt the Spirit of Yahweh when singing hallelujah. Some members said no, they did not feel the Spirit. The pastor admonished them and said she wanted and needed cooperation. Later the research bishop spoke to the congregation, in support of the decision of the pastor, that when a devotional leader says Jesus, say Jesus. When he or she says Yahshua, all must say Yahshua. Elder Card raised his hand and said that he could not utter the word Jesus out of his mouth. This was blasphemy. Nothing was resolved and the bishop advised the pastor to end the discussion and leave the matter in the hands of Yahweh.

FIELD NOTE NUMBER 7

Date: October 25, 2008. Day: Sabbath. Time: 18h20. Location: Brooklyn. Event: Focus Group. Place where conducted: Dining-room. Name: Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ. Male/Female Adults: Three males and three females.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

Researcher: What is spirituality?

Minister Doolittle: Spirituality is being with Yahweh on the same page. It is being one, alive like Christ and having a relationship with the Father.

Minister Jean: Connecting with Jesus the Christ and forming a relationship is important. It is seeking Christ at a time of trouble when He connects to your spirituality.

Minister Germs: There are all kinds of spiritualities. They differ between the spirituality of salvation and other kinds and degrees of spirituality. It depends on what type of spirituality you are talking about. But, whatever spirit you choose, make sure you choose the right one.

Brother Anthony: It is like a higher power beyond self. I believe it is not just God, but it is the mind of God. It is where you believe Him as your source that gives you inspiration to yourself. Once this happens you are able to pass it on to others that they may feel the power. It is feeling the power beyond self.

Deacon Tyre: Pray to connect and be with God. I would like to say Christ and God, but I can have other spiritualities.

Mother Red: It is the awesome connection with the Father.

Researcher: What does Jesus mean to you?

Mother Red: He is light. He died for me and the world.

The young female minister: To me, He is my way to the Father, an example of how we should be on earth and a path and a guide to connect to the Father.

Brother Anthony: In the flesh, He is God walking the earth. He is the highest of any power of God on high in the sky. He is the Power to guide and save us from our sins in the flesh. He died to take on the sins of the world, and to rid it of sin.

Minister Germs: He is the key to salvation. There is no other way to the Father, but through the Son. He is the Word. In the Bible our faith is built on Him. He is the key to my direction. He fulfills the Scripture of the Messiah coming back again.

Minister Jean: Out there being on the cross, He looks like a person. He is all human and feels like us, but He has the upper hand. He knows His purpose and He has less worries. I cannot connect fully with Jesus because He knows His purpose. He is not like us. He is not searching for His purpose. Jesus knows His reason for being tormented. There is no question He must die. But what is my purpose in life? Jesus has the upper hand.

Minister Doolittle: Jesus is the light of the world. He is our example of life and a Savior of help through storms and problems of this world. He is the higher power in places where He will always be.

Researcher: Describe Yahweh or God.

Minister: I have mixed emotions. He is a fair man spiritually, but at the same time, he has a violent temper. His thoughts are on destroying the world. He made the nation of Israel suffer for 40 years. He made people go through wilderness. That is down-right unfair. But, He has a better place for us when life is over.

Minister Germs: God is all adjectives. He is awesome, but confusing, unknown. I don't know if I understand God's reason for what he does. He seems to be not logical at times. I would like to speak to Him. He has an agenda, and we don't know His reasoning. He is confusing.

Brother Anthony: He feels my pain. But, like Minister Germs, He can be a bit confusing. Like issues that come up, I basically get direction from Him by praying. This way, I get to know Him.

Minister Germs: You mentioned getting to know Him. How do you get to know Him?

Brother Anthony: Interesting question, Minister Germs. If that confuses you, you pray to Jesus. God is a high power and the highest power. He is the perfect justifier. Everything done in the flesh, He understands, and God justifies it all. He is higher. There is none other. He can't be explained. He is the Chairman of the board of directors.

The young female minister: I cannot describe Him. I don't know Him well enough to describe Him. But spiritually, He is a mystery and the Creator. That is mostly what I know about Him.

Researcher: How do you know He created the world?

The young female minister: The evidence shows us. Through His Spirituality and healing power, He does many miracles. Through Christ my faith ultimately centers on Him being the Creator. He is the One no higher Spirit can every reach.

Researcher: Who created evil?

Young female minister: I believe God created evil.

Researcher: How do you feel about that?

Young female minister: He is just in His righteousness. We don't know everything about Him. We cannot know all of His ways. He created evil and it seems unfair, but He gives us a way to deal with it. He sent the Comforter Christ as a guide. He promises if we pray, do things His way, we will be just and blessed. We will be able to deal with evil.

Mother Red: We can't describe the Higher Being. Like it says in Genesis: The world and everything in it, He is the creator and the highest power.

Researcher: So what does that mean to you him being the highest power?

Mother Red: I think it is great.

Researcher: How does that effect your life, Him being the highest power?

Researcher: Describe the Holy Spirit?

Mother Red: It is something within you. It is given to us. It is given to us by God, It means, I can get to Him, through the outpouring of His Spirit.

Young female minister: He is my Spirit of power and the manifestation of power. All comes from the head. It is a gift of God's power.

Brother Anthony: I don't understand too well. I have to base it on the word and those who seem to have a connection between God and Jesus' power.

Minister Germs: There is a lot of controversy over the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the triune God. There are different aspects of the Holy Spirit. I viewed the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of God, of Christ that goes throughout the earth to those who are open to receive it. That dwells within the people. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit that is there to help us take in His action that is that reformation and final touch of an individual. Once it is embraced, it can change someone from one thing to another. It is powerful to fight the enemy. There is the spirit of the devil. There are two kinds of spirits. Let's be honest, the devil has a spirit that rules the earth and Jesus has His Spirit. You need that Spirit for protection. You need that Holy Spirit for direction. You need it for the right place to go. The Holy Spirit is definitely something that everyone has. It is in the earth and it is there for us to embrace, to compose ourselves that we may be able to walk in the way in this earth.

Researcher: Minister Germs, who is the Holy Spirit for you? Does it consist of the Father and the Son, the Father and not the Son, or the Son and not the Father?

Minister Germs: I always thought about that. To me I think it is whatever the situation you are in. It consists of both, the Father and the Son. I believe it has been this way from the beginning. There is Jesus and there is the Holy Spirit. It's just a Spirit of the Father and the Son. It's a Spirit that comes down from heaven. It's a Spirit that they send down. It's between the two of them. If God decides to send it, that's fine. It's a case of Them deciding which One will send down the Holy Spirit. They send it down whenever they feel it needs to be done. It just comes whenever we ask for it. I don't think that I want to get too involved because then, it becomes too complicated and you may take yourself out of the whole thing. I just think the Holy Spirit is a characteristic of the Father and the Son. The Lord decides to send it down within us. It has to dwell in us.

Minister Jean: To me, I never thought about the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. For me it is more of a spiritual consciousness. Once you have accepted Christ, you grow deeper into Christ. It is like something that is within you. The Holy Spirit is like a clamp that comes inside you and tells you which way to walk in your spiritual life. You are going in one direction, and the Holy Spirit tells you no, that is not correct. It is like your spiritual consciousness, right next to you. It's that little voice that is inside of you that guides and directs you. It is easy. It can go, if you decide you don't want to be with Christ. I think it is a gift once you have received it from Christ, Christ is with you. The Holy Spirit carries you through, once you are walking the walk. Once you have departed from the walk, you are confused because your gift is gone.

Minister Doolittle: I think everyone has it in them and the deeper your relationship with Christ and God, the more it comes out and the more He will lead you and help you and guide you to make good decisions and bad decisions. And I think the spirit that is in us leaves us when we die and goes for judgment, because the spirit is part of us.

Researcher: What unique experiences have you had with Yahweh?

Minister Doolittle: I had two dreams once. It may have been a hallucination. I'm not sure. The Father spoke to me and told me I was going to have a son and I have to name my son Daniel. In the second dream, I was sleeping in bed and then I woke up. I saw Jesus on the wall. There was a big bright light of Jesus. I know I saw Jesus. I then went back to sleep. I didn't get a message. No words came to me, only the image of Christ in the bright light. Jesus

was dressed in old-fashioned clothes. I guess it has a meaning that will come later in my life. (Note: his son's name is Daniel.)

Minister Jean: I keep asking God for the whole experience and I still have not gotten it yet. I even said in bed, "Jesus come to me, come to me." But it didn't happen. I guess for me, it didn't really happen. I guess I can say maybe shouting is a way I have a spiritual connection with some type of something, not much. I also had a dream. I was going to have a daughter and name this daughter Shiloh. I guess that is all I had. Other than that, I have no idea.

Note: the daughter named Shiloh was stillborn.

Minister Germs: As experience, I guess, are you talking about that Damascus experience like Paul or just an illuminating experience, in a dream or however the Lord reveals Himself to me? In many ways, I think the Lord has given me the ability to understand that by praying and tarrying, I can get closer. I have to say growing up in the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ, and being under the leadership of Mother Williams, was a great experience. There are many questions that go out now, how we can make changes in the church. But I can say, she was a very spirit-filled woman, and she manifested her gifts of the Spirit in herself often. I was very impressionable as a young child, and it is was part of my foundation watching her and watching people come to her for healing and prayer, and how we were once on one accord. The church worked together and people came off the street, drunk or whatever, or just sick and the pastor would go forth and pray for them. Those were illuminating experiences of tarrying and praying. You know those experiences people talk about; I could almost see the *Shekinah Glory* in the temple, like a cloud or something, standing over the rostrum. The lights looked different. It really was an accompanying presence. Growing up in that environment, I can tell when there is the presence of God in the room and when there is not, and when things go forward. I am glad He gave me the ability to be able to detect the presence of God. I have that ability to identify the presence of God. Being witness of God is another way of detecting His presence and Power. You may not be able to do the same thing, but to witness the Power is fascinating. This is the kind of thing that I have gotten through illumination and also being inspired by testimonies.

Brother Anthony: I don't have anything clear that I can really express. I just can add on what the previous talker was saying manifesting the Spirit. Prophecy is one of the greatest things in our lives. Things prophesied over the families and things to come that we saw come to pass. One day probably when I was in my early teens, I was tarrying and I vividly remember one time our former pastor and her husband, whom we called Poppa, took his hand and touched me. His hand had such power in it that I caught the Spirit and I rejoiced, jumping up and down. That was the only time that I can really say, I felt the power and was convicted. I vividly remember that. That was back in my early teens. Other than that, I just know that we had these different prophesies, we saw throughout our lives. We heard the prophesies and we saw the power of God being manifested that way.

The young female minister: I've had some experiences. One of them, I have spoken about. I almost died, and I believe I felt I was leaving my body. I prayed and I believe God brought me back. That is one of the experiences I had. Another thing is I am a dreamer. I don't talk about it, but I have been on both sides of the coin. I've had dreams about demons, and I also have had dreams where I believe God was giving me a message. Sometimes I really don't understand the dreams, but one of them I know for sure, that God was telling me I can't save my mother. But she has to go through the blood. That one I was able to decipher and I

understood that one very clearly. There are other dreams that I have had. There is a very weird dream that I am really not going into. But, as a teenager, I had a dream of something that didn't happen until years later in my adult life. I don't talk about it because if I said it, people might think that I'm crazy.

Researcher: Can you share something with us?

The young female minister: I can't.

Researcher: You can't? Why not?

Young female minister: Because it involves somebody here. I can't talk about it. It was like one of them self-troubling things that I experienced. It is a dream I forgot about, but when the thing happened it came back to me. It just brings issues just talking about it, so I don't want to share it. I am a dreamer. I have dreams.

Mother Red: To my knowledge, I haven't had any of those experiences. Mother Williams always said you ought to learn. The Lord is trying to talk to you. I think sometimes, God is trying to show me this, and show me that. But I haven't seen anything.

Researcher: How can you get closer to Yahweh?

Mother Red: Have an opened mind. Pray! Fast!

Researcher: How do you see your relationship with Him?

Mother Red: I am not where I want to be. Not even half of where I want to be. I believe. I am a firm believer. I'm still not where I want to be.

Researcher: How do you feel you can get where you want to be?

Mother Red: Read His Word more. That is my problem. I have to read. If you read, you get closer to Him.

Researcher: How can you get closer?

Young female minister: I believe I should read more and not just for the Bible study or Bible class, but more. Be more passionate about reading the Bible. I used to read my Bible a lot and I enjoyed it. I don't spend as much time reading the Bible. I could also say, I should pray more. I could dedicate more quality time to praying. I do pray. That's it, spend more quality time praying. Like they say, just go into the closet and sit there and pray. I guess that pretty much is it: praying, reading, giving up some things. I guess I could give up some things, like the TV. I do enjoy watching bad things. But I guess, at the time I am watching TV I could be reading my Bible. I could use that time for the Father, and also fasting more, fasting. I could encourage others. I could minister to others more. That's it. That is all I can think of right now.

Brother Anthony: I would say getting closer to God. I would say meditating more, and being more Godly minded. I think reading, fasting, communicating with those who are spiritual. Many times, our environment plays a large role. We need to be around positive people who

can encourage and give you that lift for your self-esteem. That is your spiritual self-esteem. A lot of times, in the church, I'm not calling on anyone in particular, but we are living in the day when people are not as strong or as Godly, as they used to be. There is something obvious and noticeable of strength, courage and long suffering that need to be reinforced within all of our bodies, including myself. I need to be around people who are strong. I mean spiritually strong. We need to be in a healthy relationship of feeling good about God. What we need to do is fast and feel good about what we do and know our purpose. I need to know what my purpose in God is or what my mission is. I notice that I have spiritualized and observed people who know what their mission is, and nothing stops them. And I know I might be slow getting there, but as far as my mission in the spiritual realm, and as far as being Godly, my energy and my spiritual energy will be much stronger when I get there.

Minister Germs: I think it fluctuates and goes up and down. Like the story in the Bible, where Elijah tried to curse the fig tree. He did it once and he tried to come back and do it again. And God told him, he was not in that place. Sometimes you're in that place and sometimes you're not in that place. Sometimes you're not. We are human and there is a lot of drifting going on. He had to come back and curse the fig tree the second time because he could not do it the first time. He spoke and it did not happen because he wasn't in that place. It doesn't mean that he wasn't anointed. It doesn't mean he wasn't called by God. It means when you are in that place the Lord can use you. I think when you can actually go forward and get closer, things happen. Things happen when you get support. If you don't get support, it's hard. The object of preaching is not just scolding. You need support. People are going through things. You have to encourage people. The message Mario Lewis gave last Sabbath was in the Word. Do you know how many people here felt fulfilled because they heard that Word? It was like they were hearing the Word for the first time. When you can build people and encourage people this is good. Iron sharpens iron. We are not here to pull each other down. We are here to uplift each other. The more support you have from the ministry, the stronger you will be. The devil gets together. They gather together and go to clubs. They support each other in what they do. People try to say there is no need for me to go to church. But why do you go to church? You go to church because you reinforce each other. You constantly do that. I don't know pastor. I want to give you something, pastor.

Note: At this point, Minister Germs handed in his minister's license to the researcher/bishop, resigning from the ministry. He had not given any prior notice. He never gave an explanation for his action.

I don't know. I feel that to actually fulfill certain things, you want support, and you want to be in a place where you can feel there is love. You know when you say things, and it falls on deaf ears, you can't sustain yourself. It is about you sustaining your spirituality. Iron sharpens iron. It is not always about throwing down your left hand. Sometimes, you got to sit down and figure out what is going on. You need to pray and get support to help sustain yourself where you are Minister Jean: What is the question again?

Researcher: How do you feel you can get closer to God?

Minister Jean: I have to of course read the Bible more. My husband and I get on board together with what we consider is important. I need to figure out who I am and the whole ministry. I need to understand why I am doing what I am doing. I know it seems very juvenile. Shouldn't you already know who you are? Shouldn't you know what you are doing? I feel sometimes it is better to be the person who comes into Christ from the street, rather

than a person who was brought up in Christ. I know it sounds crazy. The one brought up in Christ is kind of forced to do it. They do it because it is supposed to be done. Whereas, people who come from the street know what they really wanted to do, and they know they really wanted to do it. Someone told them about Christ, and they really wanted to change. Sometimes I have a hard time separating the two. But I know what my convictions are and what I feel in my heart. I need to study the Bible more and get my whole family on board. I need to get more out of church as well. I know I am trying to find out how I can get more out of church when I am here. Even some of the messages I hear all the time. I don't think I am being built up at all. There is a small confusion, and I think I am more confused when I go out of church than anything else.

Researcher: Minister Doolittle, how do you feel you can get closer to God?

Minister Doolittle: There are several ways. But I would say the first way is by reading and understanding His philosophy and seeing how He sees things, and try to see things the way he sees things. Then maybe you can live your life that way, and you can be on the same page when it comes to things that are for you, or not for you. You will know. I think if you open your heart, this becomes possible. You have got to open your heart up and let Him come in. That is the only way. He guides you to the way He wants you to go. Let Him make decision, even if they are good or bad decisions, you have to accept them. You have to accept them, even though some decisions He makes for you may not be the best ones. But He is in control. You must have faith and believe that He is in control of your life. That He can guide, lead and protect you in all of your life.

Researcher: Minister Doolittle, how did you get to this church?

Minister Doolittle: I came through my wife, who is a member of this church. She was the person as we talked who believed that we should have values, the same beliefs, the same faith and we should worship God in the same place. I was susceptible to a relationship with God. I didn't know where it was going to go, but I was susceptible to it. I knew the relationship with my wife was what I wanted. This was something she wanted and I was willing to try it out because, I knew it would make the relationship better.

Researcher: Well, Mother Red, how did you get to this church?

Mother Red: I guess my sister was going to this church. When we lived on Gates Avenue, I used to always take my daughter and leave her there and go do my own thing. One day, I decided, I need to go for myself. My husband, he went to church all the time. He read the Bible, through and through. He used to go to church all the time. I was not really going. I just dropped Donna off and left her. Every Sunday my husband would go to church. But I wasn't going. One day I said, I got to go for myself, and that was all. I just made up in my mind I would come, and I finally came.

Researcher: How did you get here?

Young female minister: I guess when I was little I started coming. But I really don't know how I was introduced to the church. I really don't remember not being here. But, as I got older, and my mother did not make me come, I stopped coming. With my Cousin Valerie, Poppa would pick us up and bring us to the church. He would drop us off at the church. I don't know how old I was when I started coming. When my mother stopped forcing me, I

stopped coming. But, as I got older, with my own family, I wanted the family to be in church. So we came back.

Researcher: Minister Germs, in your daily walk with Yahweh, what implications do you have that you are being set apart by Him?

Minister Germs: I have always been different since I was a kid, and I knew that I was set apart by Him and by the things that I went through and I am still going through now. I was not always accepted by people. I was always different from kids in my school. I never had the same desires and tastes that they had. When I see things that are wrong, and it disrupts my spirit, I am quick to speak out, no matter where I am, or who I'm talking to, even if it is on the job. I speak out to people about their ways. I believe it is something the Lord has given me. When I used to hang out with friends in high school, and in my first year of college, I hung out with them and I don't think any of them went to church. They called me Kurt Franklin because they knew I went to church. I went to a party or two with them, but they knew I didn't do the things they did, but they always wanted me around. I don't drink and I don't smoke. We used to go to restaurants. They asked me if I was coming. They always wanted me around. I would go with them, and they would have their little liquors, but I would never drink. They would all know it. If they see me do something wrong, they would say, you ain't supposed to do that. People always assumed or saw that I was different from them. If they saw me do something they would do, they would always remind me of it or always challenge me for something I did. I could not win everybody, and I always knew that I had this way about me. I always wanted to do the right thing, and I always looked to do the right thing. Yeah, I think that this was something that was always in me, and God has set me apart. Mother Williams used to tell me that I was set apart, and that I had a calling in my life and the Lord had a gift for me and work for me to do. I felt this was something, and I accepted it.

Minister Jean: What is the question again?

Researcher: How do you feel God has set you apart?

Minister Jean: I am set apart because I have always felt different, strange and weird. I felt no one understood you as a kid. The only people I had were my siblings who knew how I was feeling. It was different being Jewish sort of or something like that. It was confusing. You only had your siblings to share those pains with. I always felt different. But now as an adult I feel different and I don't care. I wear my skirts and everyone knows it in school. The kids know that I am different and my assistant principal knows that I am different, and she loves it. I am happy being different and now it makes me stronger. God has set me apart, and I am really happy not being like anyone else. I am working out my life with the Holy Spirit and I am fine.

CHAPTER 5 RELATED SPIRITUALITIES

In chapter five we take a closer look at various spiritualities such as, the Lemba, communities, African spirituality, African American spirituality, and Pentecostal & Charismatic spirituality and then there is a conclusion. We do this in order to determine a relationship of all of the spiritualities.

5.1 LEMBA COMMUNITIES

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how in the course of developing the research project on the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostal a new direction had to be taken. The original plan was to compare the Lemba tribe, particularly the Buba clan, of the Republic of South Africa with that of a Black Hebrew Pentecostal community in America. However, the researcher faced difficulties that were critical to the integrity of researching spirituality. Therefore, we shall discuss some of the problems encountered with the Lemba tribe.

For the researcher observing the communities of the Lemba tribe in the Republic of South Africa is critical to the study of its spirituality. The spirituality of the Lemba communities had originally underscored the basis of this thesis. However, the spirituality of these communities has become problematic to this research project. The researcher finds difficulty in observing and experiencing the Lemba communities' spirituality. The dilemma occurs in an effort to understand their culture that involves religious spiritual practices that are foreign to the researcher's religious cultural background. This is a critical issue in an attempt to study the spirituality of the Lemba communities. The Lemba tribe is part of the continent of Africa. The cultural background of the researcher is essentially Euro-centric or Westernized American. Because of the cultural differences between the Lemba tribe and the researcher critical problems ensued. The insurmountable cultural problems became a stumbling block in moving forward in the study of the spirituality of the Lemba communities. As a result of the insurmountable cultural issue of the Lemba communities, the researcher had to abandon the study of their spirituality and redirect his focus to the United States of America.

The abandonment of the study of the spirituality of the Lemba communities is the result of discovering some inconsistencies in the Lemba tribe being Black Hebrews. Problems were

encountered in trying to determine whether or not the Lemba tribe and particularly the Buba clan understood the reality of being Hebrews. One problem focused on the Lemba tribe's understanding of themselves to be Hebrews in relation to Christianity. The research project moved forward under the assumption that members of the Lemba tribe, particularly the Buba clan, were Black Hebrew Christians. This conclusion is the result of the work done by research scholars who viewed the Lemba tribe as descendants of ancient Israel. The Lemba tribe communities are Christians because they accept Yahshua as the Son of Yahweh who died and rose from the dead. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies met with the Lemba Cultural Association headed by Professor Matshaya to discuss the issue of the Lemba tribe being Jewish (Online Fein 1).

The dialogue partly resulted in "genetic tests in the United States, revealing Lemba males carry a DNA sequence distinctive to Cohen" (Online Fein 1). These genetic tests suggested a direct lineage to the priesthood of Aaron the ancient high priest of Israel and the brother of Moses (Online dangoor.com 2). Today some Jewish communities accept the Lemba tribe as having emigrated from San'a Yemen over 2,500 years ago to what is now South Africa. However, the majority of the Jewish community in the Republic of South Africa does not accept the Lemba tribe community as authentic Jews because many of their religious practices are not orthodox enough to be declared Hebrews (Online Wikipedia.org/wiki/History of the Jews in South Africa 2009:1).

Dr. Rudo Mathivha, (Online wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemba 2007:1) purported that many beliefs and practices are "linked to Judaism." The Lemba people are monotheistic and call their God *Nwali*. The Lemba tribe worship one day a week they consider to be holy. They don't eat pork and nor any foods forbidden by the Old Testament. They say grace before feasting and their form of slaughter resembles Jewish Shechita. Lemba practice male circumcision. They use tombstones with a Star of David on them. These Judaic practices lend support to the Lemba tribe being Black Hebrews. These Hebrew practices are synthesized with Christian forms of worship making them presumably Black Hebrew Christians.

Further examination of resources by the researcher disclosed that the Buba clan is the priestly amongst the Lemba tribe: The Y chromosome known as the Cohen modal haplotype suggested an ancestral link to the Jewish population (Online wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemba 2007:2). The Buba clan's spirituality became the researcher's original focus. An organized

plan to visit the Buba clan informally was the next step. To calculate such a visit required careful and discreet planning. The Buba would not be approached for a formal interview. This was part of the original plan. The first encounter was observational and less formal. After meeting the Lemba tribe there is a question as to whether or not they comprehend the practices of Judaism? In reality, in order to be a Hebrew-Christian there has to be an adherence to some of the religious practices of both Judaism and Christianity. Followers of the Hebrew-Christian faith should have a basic knowledge of Judaism and Christianity and understand the demarcation of both doctrines. Judaism does not support the belief in Yahshua as the Messiah. The researcher in a lengthy conversation with a high official of the Lemba Cultural Association (2008. Interview with Lemba official, Venda, RSA) discovered that the man was unaware of the teachings of Judaism that deny the divinity of the Messiah. The Lemba official was under the impression Judaism and Christianity shared similar beliefs. He identified as a Jew. The high official considered himself a Jew because of the DNA tests proving that the Lemba tribe possessed the Cohen gene.

The Lemba official knew about the British researcher Parfitt, ([Online wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemba](http://Online.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemba) Parfitt (2002:2) spent long months in *kraals* in Zimbabwe and Vendaland in the South African listening to the Lemba oral traditions that connected them with ancient Israel. The researcher discovered the high official and other Lemba members were familiar with Parfitt's work. The Lemba man recited some of the oral traditions that had their roots in ancient Israel. He identified with the oral tradition. Yet he lacked awareness of the connection between ancient Israel and Judaism in the responsibility practicing Jewish rituals.

In the absence of Judaic Talmud knowledge, the researcher questions is it possible to observe and practice certain Hebraic rituals. The high Lemba official was not an isolated case in his dearth of Judaic Talmud knowledge. This was indicative of the many people within the Lemba communities. The people had known for some time of their Black Jewish tradition. This revelation had been reinforced as a result of the writing of Parfitt (2002), Le Roux, (2003) and many other writers. One Lemba man reported that Jewish youths came from Israel to teach the young Lemba children religion.

With regard to the vital question relating to the Hebraic reality of the Lemba communities the answer conceivably lies in Judaism. There is a question of the Lemba tribe being Hebrew if

they do not follow some of the Judaic teachings: According to O'Collins and Farrugia: "The religious and cultural identity of Judaism has been maintained through the Jewish Bible, the Sabbath, circumcision, and faithful observance of the Mosaic Law and traditional teachings" (O'Collins & Farrugia 2000:128). In Judaism the Sabbath is referred to as the 7th Day of the week.

The foundation of Judaism is reflected in the heart and soul of Israel is the observance of the 7th Day Sabbath. *It is a holy day in Judaism* (McKim 1996:244). The 7th Day Sabbath is a sign between Israel and Yahweh. To break the 7th Day Sabbath is to eradicate the sign that Yahweh established between Him and His chosen people. Dr. Mathivha (Online wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemba 2007:1) said that the Lemba "worship one day per week in which this day is considered holy. On this day they praise Nwali and thank him for looking after the *Lemba*." Dr. Mathivha failed to name a specific day of the week on which special thanksgiving is given to the Creator. Yet she and other Lemba members argue there are beliefs and practices that link them to Judaism. Failure to give the special day an appellation and an acknowledgement.

The researcher visited various regions in the north of the Republic of South Africa, such as Polokwane, Jane Furse, Messina, Sekhukhune land, Venda and Monsterlus. People in the Lemba tribe did not observe the 7th Day Sabbath (Saturday). They shopped at supermarkets and cooked. They did not attend church on the 7th Day Sabbath, nor were they familiar with the Holy Days. One Lemba man belonged to the Zionist church which holds services on Saturday. The researcher did observe this church because many of their practices run contrary to traditional Christian beliefs. The Zionist church practices polygamy. The researcher became aware of this practice in an interview with one of the Elder's of the church. Some traditional Christian churches consider the Zionist churches to be non-Christian. On Sunday several members of the Lemba tribe attend Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, and Methodist churches following the religion of the foreign missionaries who taught them. The Lemba tribe does not have its own church.

In the two short visits the researcher made to the northern part of the Republic of South Africa he encountered some similar experiences as Le Roux (2003:24). She writes that the Lemba tribe has specific oral traditions that they came by boat to Africa. When the researcher visited Messina he met an official of the Lemba Cultural Association. The researcher listened

at length as an elder Lemba senior official (2008. Interview with senior official. Messina, RSA). In a conversation with an official of the Lemba Counsel Association Venda he recited the history of the Lemba tribe's travel by boat to Africa as the seed of Abraham. The author (Le Roux 2003:25) reports that the Lemba tribes live with people in southern Africa, Sekhukhuneland, Venda and the southern part of Zimbabwe. The researcher visited with a king in Sekhukhuneland who spoke about the Lemba history and religious practices. He also admitted in not being aware of the Hebrew Holy Days.

According to Le Roux, (2003:25) the Lemba tribe mingles with the people of the land and Lemba speak their languages. The researcher visited with a prince of the Lemba tribe in Monsterlus, Republic of South Africa who explained that the Lemba people speak Zulu, Sepedi, Ndebele and Pedi. Le Roux (2003:25) found that the people of Lemba tribe are willing to adapt to their surroundings but prefer to remain separate from other people. They consider themselves "an offshoot of the Yemenite Jews" that are from the seed of Abraham. Perhaps the Lemba tribe desires to remain separate because of their unique culture that connects them to ancient Israel.

In conclusion, the researcher acknowledges that the Lemba tribe persons he spoke with all believe and are aware of their Hebraic identity. This knowledge comes from their contact with such writers as Le Roux, Parfitt and others. They were unaware of it before the researchers told them. What is problematic for the researcher is that he found the Lemba tribe did not observe traditional Hebraic practices such as worshipping on the 7th Day Sabbath. Therefore, the researcher decided not use the tribe as a comparison in this project. Instead, the researcher opted to study the spirituality of two Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities in America were studied. However, the researcher would possibly like to study the spirituality of the Lemba tribe, particularly the priestly Buba clan, at some time in the future.

Fein (Online 1) encountered a similar problem in analyzing the Hebraic nature of the Lemba tribe, and particularly the Buba clan. She spoke with Mitavha who headed the pediatric care unit at one of Johannesburg's largest hospital, about acceptance of the Jewish heritage of the Lemba tribe. He, president of the Lemba Association, told Fein that the Board of Deputies in Johannesburg rejected the Lemba's story of being original Jews. The evidence of the Cohen model haplotype sequence of genes found in 53 percent of the Buba clan is disregarded. Fein says the Lemba tribe is not accepted by the larger, Jewish White community because the

Lemba tribe do not observe Hebrew practices according to Jewish orthodox practices. Thus they lack knowledge of how to be a Hebrew.

Little is said about the Lemba tribe's spirituality, and at times could appear judgmental. There is a reason for this. We did not undertake a study of the spirituality of the Lemba tribe. We only had brief encounters with their culture that reflected it being non Hebraic. We did not find any published scholarly work. Thus there is a dearth of scholarly information on the spirituality of the Lemba tribe. Their spirituality requires future research.

5.2 AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY

In an attempt to understand African spirituality one has to seriously first approach this undertaking by possessing a firm knowledge of the African religion. African religion has many facets. One of the most critical facets or the essence of the African religion is the concept of an *invisible world*, such as the ancestral community. This impacts the spirituality of the African people. The belief of the invisible in the African religion juxtaposes the religious belief of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal.

Kalilombe (1994:128) looks at the content of African spirituality. To do this Kalilombe recommends examining the prayers of the Africans. The author says that survival is a common thread throughout prayer. Daily prayer includes a request for more children so the community will grow. There are prayers for rain to protect against drought and famine, abundant food, success in hunting or gathering expeditions, protection or healing from sickness. And there are prayers for protection from evil (witchcraft, sorcery, adultery, breaking of taboos, curses) and its defeats.

The author argues there are complications for African spirituality, such as their preoccupation with a spirit world. Complications consist of their beliefs, attitudes and practices that "animate" their lives. The impact on the beliefs, attitudes and practices encourages the Africans to seek for the spiritual realities. Kalilombe argues that these spiritual realities formulate a belief in the community that living involves a dramatic struggle between life and death. This belief is a vital aspect of African spirituality because it presents a dilemma in their lives. The success or the failure in solving the problem will depend on how well the people in the community solicit the help of the invisible world. This is also central to the

African spirituality. The “invisible world” adds to the complexity of African spirituality. Kalilombe (1994:128) argues two elements at work in African spirituality. There is a belief that life is worth living, and awareness that evil is ever present. What makes life worth living is the awareness on the part of the people that evil is always present. Because evil is always present the people of the community realize how vital it is to rely on the invisible world.

The Africans do not perceive the struggle for life to be an individual endeavor; it is a community battle. In fact the author states African spirituality relies on the spirit of the community, and cooperation among people is very important. A competitive and hoarding of individual wealth is selfish and unacceptable. Sharing in the community is a virtue and helps to define African spirituality. The depiction of a family is community. There is a kinship motif. Members of the community expect unconditional duties from both adults and children. This type of kinship orients communities to build up a sense of security within the group. The sense of identity-building and belonging to a larger group affects African spirituality and builds a sense of identity and belonging. Predication of the good life finds sustenance in the successful operation of the community. The Africans believe if they do not maintain relationships in the community death will come to the group.

Kalilombe (129) talks about a spirituality of joy that is evidenced in singing, dancing and celebration. However, the author warns, do not take these phenomena to be the frivolities of child people. Be cautious in taking their dance or song to mean they are unfamiliar with the struggles and challenges of this world. The life of the African mirrors a tragic event. Despite the misery and strife, the African exhibits a spirituality of joy.

Kalilombe says an exhibition of a spirituality of joy is not the case for everyone. Some Africans do not have the ability for suffering patiently, without rebellion or desperation. Africans experience heart attacks. Africans have nervous breakdowns from the stressfulness of life. Some Africans even commit suicide. The same can be said of any community. The author adds (1994:128): “this kind of resignation is basically a weakness: it prevents people from organizing a real struggle for improvement.” These groups of Africans do not experience a spirituality of joy as part of their spirituality.

Kalilombe looks at the group of Africans who demonstrate the various weaknesses previously mentioned as part of their spirituality. He criticizes them highly in relation to their

spirituality. Kalilombe (1994:128) argues they have a “failure to be assertive; the too-ready acceptance of events as they are inevitable, the reluctance . . . of individualistic ambition, aggressiveness . . . all this adds up to a recipe for easy defeat in the face of determined aggression.” According to the author African spirituality with its weaknesses helped to explain how the Africans became slaves to foreign powers. Yet as Kalilombe points out African spirituality still retains a certain mystic power, beauty and realism of humanity.

Kalilombe (1994:132) looks at how modernity impacts traditional African spirituality. Neocolonialism has brought Africans in contact with the outside world, exposing them to alternative spiritualities that may reject the values and priorities of African spirituality, such as a community spirit to one of individuality. When this happens the African becomes aware of a new alternative spirituality. This alternative spirituality brings with it its own set of values and priorities contrary to African spirituality. The author says neocolonialism spirituality offers new ways to view the world, and is seen as more powerful and imposing. This can take on the form of becoming more materialistic.

According to Kalilombe one of the central tenets of the modern spirituality is the supremacy of the value of acquiring, possessing, multiplying, and enjoying material goods by individuals. This is a materialistic spirituality. The major problem with modern spirituality is its emphasis on the individual and not the community. In African spirituality, the community seeks to form a relationship with the invisible world, not the individual. Modernity with its new spirituality emphasizing the virtue of the individual precludes the African from forming a relationship with the invisible world.

Zahan (2000:20) offers some reflections on African spirituality that differ slightly from that of Kalilombe. Zahan blends African spirituality with the notion of African mysticism. The author says comprehension of African mysticism is impossible from the perspective of a Christian viewpoint because of the influence of the Christian cultural background that differs from an African cultural background. African mysticism concerns itself with the experience of the invisible world. From the perspective of the African spirituality the invisible world is distinct from the visible world. Traditional also has a visible world of the living and an invisible work of the deceased, God and the Holy Spirit. African religion has a visible world of the living and an invisible world of the deceased and god. However, African religion make oblation to their dead and communicate with them: Christians do not. But the author adds the

one is not more cognitive or emotional than the other. However, the mystical life of the African centers more on the cognitive experience. Zahan (2000:20) asserts an African “is not born a mystic.” This is critical to understanding the spirituality of the African. The African grows into mysticism. Zahan says this is made possible through initiatory methods, such as initiation schools for boys.

Zahan (2000:20-21) argues through the initiatory methods we can see the human body as the starting point of religious mystical feeling. Stating how this is the starting point is problematic because initiatory methods generally are secretive. The awareness of the influence of the initiatory methods on the human body in relation to a religious mystical feeling will give us a deeper understanding of the African spirituality. Zahan (2000:21) contends the human body “becomes, in a way, the authentic symbol of the elevation of the human being to the heights of spirituality.” This enhances the mysticism in the African religion that connects the human being with the earth, even after death. This is effectual by the unique and vital nature of agriculture.

The phenomena of connecting the African with the earth and living on it indefinitely focuses on pastoral or agricultural typology. Zahan says the practices of the agricultural rites show the deep tendencies of spiritual life. Agricultural rites transform the human being. The transformation of the human demonstrates symbolization in the image of a seed. Placing a seed in the earth, the seed dies for the purpose of being reborn into an infinite variety of forms. The symbolism of the human body becoming a seed is reflective of African spirituality. The symbolism of the seed is the heart of the agricultural rites.

Zahan asserts the permutation of human flesh and the seed (or the cultivated plant) is an example of an initiation process for an African. During the initiation ceremony the neophyte symbolically becomes a seed. This is one form of initiation rite. An initiation rite is within the context of the mystical life. Asceticism and immortality are the principal ideas of the African mystic. From this we develop more of an insight to African spirituality. An understanding of this is helpful when looking at initiation rites.

The author (2000:23-24) argues African spirituality consists of two types of initiations: epispanic and allotactic. He says: “when speaking of African spirituality and mysticism, the relationship between the believer and the Invisible . . . is seemingly very different for each of

the two initiatory processes.” In the epispanic initiation rite, the believer attracts the divinity to him or herself. In the allotactic rite the believer goes toward the divinity with the expectation of uniting with the Being. The author clarifies the believer never loses his or her own identity. Zahan (2000:25) concludes by saying in case of the allotactic rite, the believer cares for the values endowed by the Invisible. According to Zahan, the believer is “the object of spiritual mutations.” In the case of the epispanic rite, the believer is the “subject” of spiritual mutations.

Kalu, (2000:54) says that Africans’ preoccupation with ancestral spirits is pervasive in their religious environment. This belief leads to *ancestral covenants*. He cites a poem by Senegalese poet Birago Diop that demonstrates how the dead influence the living.

Those who are dead are never gone:
they are there in the darkening shadow.
The dead are not under the earth:
they are in the tree that rustles,
they are in the wood that groans;
Those who are dead are never gone
they are in the breast of a woman,
they are in the child who is wailing
and in the firebrand that flames.
The dead are not under the earth:
they are in the forest,
they are in the house.
The dead are not dead.

Kalu (2000:54) states that for Africans death is migration from the human world to the spirit world. Kalu says, “In many African societies the ancestor occupies more devotional attention than God/Supreme Being.” He (2000:55) says some African communities pay no cultic attention to divinities while other African communities pay great cultic attention to divinities.

Wicker (2000:198) looks at African religion and spirituality and compares them to Western religions. Wicker begins by asserting that there are distinguishing features and a uniqueness about the African cultures and their religions and spiritualities. Wicker declares what is unique about the African cultures, their religions and spiritual traditions, is the ability to be adaptable, flexible, tolerant and open. The author contrasts these characteristics to Western religions that require its followers to accept an articulated set of beliefs posited as absolute truths. Wicker says African religion, conversely, uphold no religious tenets, but co-exist with life.

Karecki, Kourie and Kretzschmar (2005:92) argue that there is no one African spirituality. This is the result of the many diverse religions practiced on the continent of Africa: African traditional religions, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. The African Initiated Churches (AICs) have over 6,000 denominations in the Republic of South Africa. The largest of this group is the Zion Christian Church. African spirituality can be more indigenous to the continent. African spirituality may not conform to Western norms. The authors contend that in the African traditional spirituality their prayers are grounded on the belief that the invisible world influences the visible world. Karecki, Kourie and Kretzschmar (2005:93) observed that in African spirituality there are debates about the role of ancestors. the authors (2005:92) conclude that African spirituality is alive and influential in the lives of the Black Africans today.

After having clearly looked at some of the aspects of the African religion and how it impacts on the spirituality of the African people, we can say that there is a distinct difference between the African religion and how it impacts their spirituality of the African people and the Pentecostal religion of the Black Hebrews and how it impacts there spirituality. Keep in mind the African religion and the Pentecostal religion are two distinct and diverse religions. Thus the impact both religions will have on its followers will juxtapose one another. Also, Pentecostalism is basically a Christian religion.

Jennings (1997:145) argues that Mbiti asserts that the African is basically a spiritual being. Individuals who are naturally gifted with African spirituality are more susceptible to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This inherent characteristic of the African spirituality enables him or her to extract from the European Christian spirituality and transform it into African Christian spirituality. The synthesis is of Western Christianity and African spirituality.

Kasambala (2005:300) is concerned with African spirituality and African cosmology as it relates to the “God-Image in Africa.” The context that comprises his interest in African spirituality and African cosmology centers on Practical Theology and Pastoral Ministry. Kasambala argues a serious study of these disciplines cannot take place until one has a clear grasp of African spirituality and African cosmology. African spirituality is the way Africans understand God, life, and human relationship. African cosmology looks at how Africans are

influenced by and understand the cosmic life-force, the living dead (ancestors, and ancestral spirits).

Kasambala asserts that African spirituality is continuously rooted in relationships. Kasambala says that Lartey (2003:1123) picks up this theme and contends that “spirituality can actually be defined by a characteristic style of relating.” Lartey defends his position by categorizing African spirituality into five dimensions: (1) Relationship with transcendence; (2) Intra-personal (relationship with self); (3) Interpersonal (relationship with another); Corporate (relationship among people); Special (relationship with place and things).

Du Toit (1998:37) is concerned with the waning liberal attitude toward African spirituality. He focuses his attention on the importance of Christian theologies encountering and interacting with African spirituality. Du Toit says this is critical in order to maintain an attitude of liberality to African spirituality. The problem is a willingness of mainline Christianity to interact with traditional African religion and African spirituality. The author argues it is impossible to study African spirituality without considering and sympathizing with traditional African religion: the two are intertwined.

Finding commonalities between African Spirituality and Black Hebrew Pentecostal spirituality is challenging, even though African Spirituality synthesizes African traditional religion with Christianity. Commonalities between the two religions pose a problem because of the ancestral worship nature of the African religion, along with other religious rites. Black Hebrew Pentecostal spirituality rejects African Spirituality that looks softly at traditional African religion that may include the spirit world

5.3 AFRICAN AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY

To begin to understand African American spirituality it is necessary to comprehend social oppression from the perspective of African Americans, particularly how they exist within a racial environment in America. One means of subsisting is with the non-verbal language of a smile or a gesture. But for Black Hebrew Pentecostals the best way of dealing with adversity is connecting with the love of Christ through the enactment of the Holy Spirit. We shall look

at how reliance on God through His Son Jesus impacts the spirituality of the African-American that has an influence on his or her smile and gesture.

The African American smile and gesture symbolize their personhood. The smile and the gesture relate to the African American's experience of deliverance. The African American's experience of deliverance comes through Yahweh. The African American experiences racism daily within his or her spirituality. Through the dynamic of Yahweh their deliverance reflects in the smile and in the gesture. Both the smile and the gesture are in relation to racism. Just as racism impacts the spirituality of the African American the smile with the gesture counteracts racism. The smile and gesture impact the spirituality of the African American.

The smile and gesture impact of the spirituality of the African American symbolize love, compassion and understanding. Love, compassion and understanding impact upon the spirituality of the African American; love, compassion and understanding are indicative of the nature of the African American's Creator who is Yahweh. Love, compassion and understanding define the African American's faith in the Son of Yahweh who is Yahshua. The Son of Yahweh is the maker of the smile. There are no written sources to confirm the symbolization of the smile as love, compassion and understanding. The source lies within the body language of the African American.

The smile symbolizes deliverance in the life of African Americans in their experience of racism. Here lies a paradox of the African American smile and racism. In the presence of the smile symbolizing deliverance there is racism, symbolizing enslavement. Deliverance and racism at times exist in the same space and time. The African American's smile of deliverance rejects racist oppression. The smile is oblivious to the racist. The smile of deliverance brings freedom to the African American from racism.

Racism has its spiritual nature. And as such racism is capable of impacting the spirituality of the human being. The spiritual nature of racism is hate, murder and more. Racism seeks to devastate the spirit of its victim. The history of slavery and oppression in the United States reveals how racism adversely affected the spirituality of African Americans. Racism, with its devious intents, sought the aid of the Holy Bible to subjugate Black people who came to the shores of America through the middle passage from the continent of Africa. Upon their arrival, racist Whites used the Holy Scripture to attack the spirituality of Black Africans.

These people were not given the status of American citizens. Some people used Calvin to justify slavery – saying that the evidence that slaves were damned is because they were slaves. Paris (1995:11) states: “the United States was not a sufficient cause for the admission of African peoples into full citizenship.” The attack on their spirituality stripped Black Africans through the attack on their spirituality stripped them of their personhood as a nation of people with a culture.

However, Paris (1995:33) adds: “deep structures of African spirituality survived throughout African diasporas even though they assumed many different expressive forms.” Some racist American religious leaders employed the use of the Bible in an attempt to denigrate the Black African to a state of inhumanity. Paris (1995:62) argues: “Christians espoused a universal doctrine that all humans were created by God . . . their refusal to acknowledge the full humanity of African peoples implied the absence of any moral issue with respect to slavery.” Racists in America wanted to demonstrate to the civilized world that Blacks from Africa possessed no soul so that slavery would be justifiable. Some Christian slave traders even named their ships and slave warehouses after *Jesus Chris*. (Paris, 1995:63). According to this racist mindset, Africans were devoid of spirituality. Spirituality was only for Whites. To defend their distorted reasoning, adherents of racism resorted to the Bible.

The Holy Scripture gave American racists their greatest justification for inhuman treatment of the Blacks taken from the shores of Africa. The people of Africa were to serve as chattel in America. The American racists found justification in the story gaffe of Ham the son of Noah:

And Noah began *to be* a farmer, and he planted a vineyard.
Then he drank of the wine and as drunk, and he became uncovered in his tent.
And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.
But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid *it* on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces *were* turned away,
and they did not see their father’s nakedness.
So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him.
Then he said:
Curse *be* Canaan;
A servant of servants.(Gen 9:20-25).
He shall be to his brethren (Gn 9:20-25 NKJV).

Adherents of racism in American identify the Blacks from Africa to be the descendants of Ham. American racists concluded African Americans received their consignment from God to be perpetual servants to non-Blacks.

Because African Americans experienced the racist attempts to rob them of their humanity, and ultimately deprive them of their spirituality they vigorously campaign against such effort. African Americans struggle to regain recognition and acceptance of their humanity. This is the foundation of Black consciousness which has produced notable Black intellectuals like James Cone (1970), the father of Black Theology. According to O'Collins and Farrugia, Cone was part of a North American theological school developed by black Christians in the aftermath of Martin Luther King's (1929-68) civil rights movement. "It has opposed racist and exclusively white interpretations of the Christian faith, supported further struggles for social rights," (O'Collins & Farrugia 2000:27)." Black theology addresses itself with the issue of the humanity of Black people.

Through black consciousness, the spirituality of many African Americans was reborn. Black consciousness impacts the spirituality of the African American. The new identity of the African American through the effort of Black consciousness is vital to his or her spirituality. For within this spirituality, the African American views him/herself as a human, regardless of the acceptance of White people. In this new identity of spirituality, they neither solicit nor desire the sanction of others. Yahweh created them. And it is He that makes the African Americans equal to all other human beings upon the earth. The understanding of being made equal to all others by the Creator impacts vitally upon the spirituality of the African American. Equality by virtue of the creator enhances the smile of the African American that leads to duality.

Duality in the daily life of the African American consists of two realities of existence: the smile in conjunction with the gesture, such as a nod of the head in recognition of being human, and the experience of racism. The duality of these two phenomena impacts the spirituality of African Americans.

According to Hayes, (2005:94) Africans came to America in diverse ways. Some came as slaves, indentured servants from the Caribbean islands of Santo Domingo, Cuba. A few came as free Africans. The one thing they share in common and is a spirituality that does not

distinguish between the sacred and secular worlds. Hayes goes on to say that African American spirituality is a result of a relationship with God. This relationship is not built on faith, but on the experience of having been sustained by God through more than 400 years of systematic oppression and dehumanization from 1545-1965.

Hayes (2005:94) adds the spirituality of African Americans rests in the belief that Yahweh sees them as human and that they are made in the image of Him. The African American spirituality goes even further as they see a closer correlation between ancient Israel who prayed for a deliverer to free them from the bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt. Today Jesus is the Liberator for African Americans in a racialized American society. The author remarks that African American spirituality is joyful, holistic, contemplative and communitarian. African American spirituality is “grounded in a devotion to the Holy Spirit and her ability to create possibility in the face of denial” said Hayes (2005:95). The Holy Spirit is the sustainer of the African American that impacts his or her spirituality.

Wulff (s.a. 2) in his article *Spirituality of African American Pastors* compares the spirituality of African American pastors to the spirituality of White pastors in the Presbyterian Church in America. The African American pastors comprise a small percentage of the pastors in the Presbyterian Church. The author was asked to conduct a survey of the spirituality of the African American pastors and compare the results with the White pastors. The pastors of both groups were asked when they pray whether they feel the presence of God. The results: 53% of African American pastors as compared to 33% White pastors pray and feel the presence of God. How many pastors receive a definitive answer to their prayers? Approximately 41% African American pastors compared to 19% White pastors. The results: 50% African American pastors as compared to 37% White pastors. How many of them felt divinely inspired or led by God to perform some specific action? The results: 43% African Americans as compared to 21% White pastors. Wulff concluded that African American pastors have a more active prayer life than White pastors, who are the majority of the clergy in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Thus there is a difference in the spirituality of the two groups of pastors.

Orlando (2006:1) discusses the African American spirituality in relation to the healing power of God through His Son Jesus. Orlando says African Americans perceive God as a Healer. Orlando argues African American Christian spirituality helps the believers to accept suffering

while continuing to believe Jesus can deliver them because of being oppressed. The author gives examples of how extensive the African American's spiritual belief is in the healing power of Christ. When a member of an African American community is ill he or she may keep a Bible by the bedside. A loved one can be in the hospital terminally ill and he or she will receive visitors praying for God to heal. For in the African American Christian spirituality, "God is the Healer."

Brown (Online 1995:1 in his article, *God's gonna trouble the water: the essence of African American spirituality*) states that African American spirituality can be detected in this hymn. This hymn is useful not only for African Americans but for any of group people in times of trouble. Joseph interprets the song as saying: whatever your problems, get in the middle of it because some of your troubles come from God. The author remarks that the originators of these verses are like sophisticated as theologians. He (Online 1995:1) argues you have the "water imagery of danger, liberation, healing, slaves, exiles and cripples." If all of these phenomena get in the water that God has touched and stirred up, then healing shall take place.

Cone (1986:481-482) argues when Black people get together for prayer and worship they are not contemplating the value of Luther's ninety-five theses or Calvin's *Institutes*. Cone emphatically says these issues are not important in the tradition of Black folks. Luther's ninety-five theses and Calvin's *Institutes* do not impact the spirituality of Africa-Americans. They are not part of the African American's religious experience.

Smith (1999:45) defines African American spirituality as a "wellsprings of hope" rooted in the belief of Jesus Christ and God. The Creator fights against the evil in the community and spirituality leads Black people to believe that everyone is a child of God. Smith says African American spirituality is founded on a shared experience of "suffering in song and word, the work of love, justice, freedom" The author states African American spirituality is communal in nature. There are similarities with Native Americans, Feminists, Jews, some Roman Catholics, Celtic and others.

The Bible plays a critical role in African American spirituality. Dash & Rasor (2002:120) argue that this began when Africans were enslaved in America. The Bible was often the only means of learning to read: sometimes to the detriment of the learned slave who risked bodily

harm if exposed. Still, slaves found solace in the Bible and continues to impact African American spirituality.

Porter (2006-2007:105) observes that Christian spiritual healing defines the African American spirituality. Christian spiritual healing is simply faith in God (106). This comes through the revelation of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ which heals physical and psychological diseases. Porter argues Christian spirituality in the life of African American spirituality is a gift from God. It is biblical faith for African American spirituality that is an “appropriation of spiritual resources.”

In summary, there are recurring themes in African American spirituality such as suffering from an oppressor. What is unique about the African American spirituality is that they respond to the oppressor with the love of Christ through a smile and a gesture. The African American spirituality is imbedded in the belief that God is their deliverer. He shall deliver them out of all their troubles. This is the most vital theme of the African American’s spirituality.

5.4 PENTECOSTAL & CHARISMATIC SPIRITUALITY

In this section we shall discuss the similarities and the differences between Pentecostal and Charismatic Spiritualities. Pentecostals rely on a copious amount of Scriptures because they are often defensive about their worshipping practices. They rely on the Bible to defend their beliefs. In discussing the similarities and the differences of Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality we shall view the works of Land, Kärkkäinen Paris, Van Schaijik and Anderson and comments by other writers.

Pentecostal Spirituality is founded on the baptism of the Holy Spirit that is evidenced by the speaking in tongues (Land 1989:482). Pentecostal Spirituality impacts heavily on the spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. The way Pentecostal Spirituality impacts the Black Hebrew Pentecostals brings about uniqueness in how they experience this phenomenon. This is a critical issue because it raises the question of how the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches experience Pentecostal Spirituality within the Pentecostal movement. In

essence there is little difference. However, to explore this matter would require some time and more extensive research than this paper.

Tongues as the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is divided between two vital entities: speaking and evidence. Speaking comes with a “bright light” (Ac 9:3,5 NKJV). Before words are spoken comes the “Bright Light” that shines around the receiver from heaven. Speech comes after the Damascus experience in the life of the seeker. The primordial Speaker of the “Bright Light” identifies Himself: *I am Jesus*.

The “Bright Light” fulfills a promise to the believer (Ac 1:4). The “Bright Light” impacts the spirituality of the Pentecostal believer. When the receiver experiences the “Bright Light” in Pentecostal Spirituality he or she speaks. The one who speaks is the *secundae* speaker. What is spoken is vital to Pentecostal Spirituality. The speaker and receiver of the Holy Spirit utter words inaudible to the human ear: only the “Bright Light” hears. There is communication between the speaker and the hearer (1 Cor 14:28 NKJV). Only the “Bright Light” can exegete the intent of the speaker (Ac 9:6 KJV). A question of *Lord what wilt thou have me to do* follows the conversation.

This question is critical in the spiritual life of the Pentecostals. One of the vital words in the query is “do.” Doing is vital to the ministry of Yahshua and crucial to Pentecostal spirituality (Ac 1:8; Mk 16:17-18 NKJV). Doing is important to the ministry of Pentecostal Spirituality because it results in action. It is the action of the “Bright Light” that wants the believer to “do” after he or she receives Holy Spirit.

In Pentecostal Spirituality the “Bright Light” participates in the giving of the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:4). In the process of receiving the Holy Spirit the recipient through the road to Damascus experience becomes a “little light.” The American Negro spiritual arranged by Blackman (SDA Hymnal 1985:580) in some ways depicts Pentecostal Spirituality experience: *This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine, (shine). Every where I go, I'm going to let it shine, (shine). All through the night, I'm, going to let it shine, Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.* The “Bright Light” completes its purpose in our lives by challenging us to go throughout the world shining our “little lights.” This helps to define Pentecostal Spirituality.

The other phenomenon that helps to define Pentecostal Spirituality is the evidence of tongues. Speaking in tongues is incomprehensible to the human ear. In the experience of the baptized believer of the Holy Spirit the evidence of tongues is audible. The evidence of tongues is a sign receiving the Holy spirit (Mk 16:17). Yahshua rejoins the believer shall speak in new tongues.

Paul is critical of tongues (1 Cor 14:27-28). He takes a formal approach to the evidence of tongues. Paul's approach to speaking in tongues is contrary to the belief of Pentecostal Spirituality. However, Paul's approach is more in tune with the beliefs of the Charismatic Spirituality.

With regard to Charismatic Spirituality and speaking in tongues Land (1989:483) writes that in the Charismatic Spirituality those who receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit remain members of their respective denominations or churches. They do not leave their faith and go to another church. These Charismatic Spirituality believers demonstrate the gifts of the Spirit, but see tongues as optional or not as significant as Pentecostals. Here lies a divide between Charismatic Spirituality and Pentecostal Spirituality, even though both faith traditions emphasize Spirit baptism and the gifts of the Spirit.

The spiritualities differ, however, with regard to the importance of speaking in tongues. Two critical issues are significant in an attempt to understand Charismatic Spirituality's view of speaking in tongues as optional: exegesis of speaking in tongues and the accompanying gifts of the Spirit.

Followers of Charismatic Spirituality acknowledge that that speaking in tongues is biblical. Many of the Charismatic Spirituality who remain faithful to their respective denominations or churches are for the most part Bible readers. Presumably not everyone within the Charismatic spirituality movement is an avid Bible reader. Regardless, reading the Holy Word retains great emphasis in the Charismatic movement. Believers of the Charismatic movement are aware of the importance that Pentecostal Spirituality followers place on speaking in speaking as evidence of the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, Charismatic Spirituality practitioners claim to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit without the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Scripture reading is prominent within the Charismatic Spirituality movement. It is conceivable examining Scriptures relating to speaking in tongues receive attention. One critical Scripture is I Corinthians 14:27-28. The Bible commentator (NKJV) writes, “The exercise of the gift of tongues was not to be forbidden in the early church (v. 39), but this exercise was strictly circumscribed by certain rules outlined in vv. 27-40.” The Scripture of verse referred to is (1 Cor 14:27-28) the contention of speaking in tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. For the adherents to Charismatic Spirituality this is a vital verse in the formulation of their belief.

The followers of Charismatic Spirituality can argue successfully they too receive the Holy Spirit by exhibiting the spiritual gifts (Rm 12:5-6 NKJV). If the members of the Charismatic Spirituality movement experience signs and wonders and healing power, it brings into question how valid is speaking in tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit because the results are the same?

Members of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Spirituality movements are aware of the arguments put forth by Charismatic Spirituality followers arguing that speaking in tongues is optional. Pentecostal Spirituality believers are generally familiar with the writing of Paul in I Corinthians 14:27-28. But more critical to the Pentecostal Spirituality movement are the words of Yahshua spoken in Mark 16:17. There are many signs the Son of Yahweh utters. The adherents of the Pentecostal Spirituality movement examine closely the first sentence of verse 17. Yahshua emphatically asserts *these signs*. Yahshua groups all of the signs together; namely, casting out demons, taking up serpents, drinking anything deadly, laying hands on the sick, and they will recover, and of course speaking in new tongues.

All the other signs are obvious. Speaking in new tongues remain the most mysterious and the controversial of the signs because it is at times inexplicable. There are several biblical references to tongues for Pentecostals. Land (1989:481) writes one reference is found in the tower of Babel where diversity of tongues comes into being (Gn 11:7). What was a new Babel to some was to others a new Pentecost – a healing of the divisions in the church and among the nations. But for Pentecostal Spirituality follower speaking in new tongues touches his or her spirituality because it is a sign. This sign is a sign of theophany.

The Pentecostal Spirituality believer views the sign of speaking in new tongues as a personal confirmation that the baptized believer has entered into a state of communication with the Master. The sign of speaking in new tongues is not a sign for others. The sign of speaking in new tongues places the speaker in contact with Yahweh. The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 14:28 conveys a sense of the speaker entering into a personal relationship with Yahweh.

When the followers of the Pentecostal Spirituality movement speak to Yahweh through the sign of new tongues, the Master speaks back. In the dialogue Yahweh sends a clear message that helps explain the value of speaking in new tongues as a sign. For example, one believer experienced being transformed while in conversation with Yahweh. The message Yahweh brings to the follower of the Pentecostal Spirituality is the assurance of being one with the Father and the Son (Jn 17:5,6,11 KJV).

Speaking in new tongues, as one of the signs Yahshua makes reference to, is a mystery to some believers. The words of Yahshua, speaking in new tongues, may be an interpretative mystery to the Charismatic movement. The exegesis of the sign of speaking in new tongues might intentionally be a mystery for some Christians, even those with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the evidence of speaking in new tongues as a sign plays a double role of oneness with the Father and Son and a sign of spiritual growth.

In contrast to the importance of speaking in tongues Land (1989:489) writes: “The earliest Pentecostals spoke of being saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit and in this way signaled their subjectively entering into justification, sanctification, and Spirit baptism.” Being saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit is indicative of the essence of Pentecostal Spirituality.

A more defining term for “being saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit” is steps to the “quickenning Power.” For traditional churches in the Pentecostal Spirituality movement the quickening power embodies the Holy Spirit. The quickening power symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The quickening power quickens the human body, changing it from mortal to immortal. This prepares the believer for the *parousia*. At that time, the believer will be carried away with the Messiah when He returns for His bride: the church. For the Pentecostal Spirituality movement speaking in tongues is evidence of receiving the quickening power, and assurance of immortal life.

Members of the Pentecostal movement are adamant that the Holy Spirit is evident by the speaking in tongues because there is a three step process in the life of a sinner: “being saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit” (quickening power). The first step for the sinner in the Pentecostal Spirituality church requires the sinner to go to the altar. At the altar the sinner kneels. An older, head Mother in the church will generally instruct the newcomer to close his or her eyes and clap his or her hands. While doing this, the sinner must recite repeatedly, “save me Lord” or “glory, glory, glory.” As Land (1989:484) argues, “There is a high degree of psychomotor activity visible, bodily evidence of the Spirit’s presence in Pentecostal liturgy.” All eyes in the congregation are focused on the altar, where the tarrying person is studied. The members observe every motion of the person tarrying to receive salvation. This is vital to Pentecostal Spirituality. If there are no tears of repentance, gyration of the body, regurgitating, or physical rolling on the floor as a human barrel, the congregation will interpret this to mean that the sinner has not allowed the Messiah to come into his or her heart. Often, this first step is repeated many times before success is achieved.

Step two follows the entering of the Messiah into the heart of a repentant sinner. The brother or sister returns to the altar and kneels, generally at the next service. The Mothers instruct him or her to close his or her eyes, clap hands and chant “sanctify me Lord, sanctify me Lord.” The reason for seeking sanctification is after the Messiah comes into the heart of sinners, they must pray to Yahweh to take away their wicked habits. Self sanctification is a critical process. This is a spiritual cleansing that must happen before seeking the Holy Spirit that completes the process of salvation with Christ coming fully into the heart of the sinner: *And say unto the people Sanctify yourselves* (Nm 11:18 KJV). *Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you holy* (1 Th 5:22-23). The same visibility of the first step must take place in the second step.

The third and final step is an arduous mission: seeking to receive the Holy Spirit. The finalization of this process normally requires tarrying at the altar. However, unlike the previous steps the saint tarrying does not necessarily have to demonstrate bodily motions because the congregation listens for the speaking of tongues, a sign of the quickening power. Tarrying for the Holy Spirit may happen the first time, but can require many repetitions. Some people may tarry several times at the altar for weeks, months, a year or more. Some people grow impatient, suspicious or skeptical with repeated tarrying. Those with the Holy

Spirit may question the sincerity of the one tarrying. The tarrying person may become frustrated or desperate. Hopefully the person tarrying will not fake it and struggle to grow in the Lord by fasting. In Pentecostal Spirituality churches there are members who are still waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This makes those members with the Holy Spirit wonder if the tarrying person has surrendered completely to Christ.

Several years ago, in the researcher's determination to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues, he fasted three days a week without water or food in order to grow closer to Yahweh. He continued to work as a firefighter. The researcher tarried week after week at the church seeking the Holy Spirit.. He prayed and read the Bible for nearly a month. The researcher received the baptism of the Holy Spirit having seen a *bright light* with the accompaniment of the evidence of speaking in tongues after making Yahweh a promise. The researcher did this in order for Christ to send the Holy Spirit sooner. He promised Yahweh upon receiving the Holy Spirit he would follow the Messiah's example of fasting forty days and forty nights without water or food (Mt 4:2). In addition, the researcher promised he would continue to work at the fire house. The researcher fasted the first three days and nights without water or food. He fasted the following 30 days with one glass of water a day. He worked the first 28 days fighting fires before contracting a cold. On the thirty-third day Mother Williams, the prophetess and pastor of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ, telephoned the researcher. She gave him a message that Yahweh wanted the researcher to break the fast.

When the researcher experienced *glossolalia* it impacted his spirituality. In this new identity the researcher spoke in an unknown tongue only briefly. Chanting in various languages followed. Today, at times the researcher sits and moves his hands under the unction of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes through the experience of the Holy Spirit working within the researcher, he transcends to the land of Israel where he experiences a warm and comfortable feeling. There he sees the chanter; the researcher experiences theophany

Parris (2005:484) argues Pentecostal spirituality focuses on "divine imminence" that has its essence in the Acts of the Apostles. Parris says: "Classical Pentecostalism spirituality emphasizes the receiving of the gifts of the Spirit when a believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit . . . serve as the benchmark of its overall spirituality" (2005:

485). This makes the Pentecostal movement unique and different from other Christian liturgies.

Parris (2005:485) notes that like the parousia which emphasizes the second coming of Christ, Spirit baptism also emphasizes coming – the coming of the Holy Spirit. This, Parris argues, is an ongoing event in the Pentecostal spirituality. He (2005:485) adds that Spirit baptism is an empowering experience in the spirituality of the Pentecostal because it brings forth the gifts of the Spirit. In addition for the Pentecostal the Spirit baptism generally is accompanied by speaking in tongues. However, Parris makes a critical statement: “Although many Pentecostals may expect the sign of tongues to accompany this experience, they do not reduce Spirit baptism to glossalalia.”

In considering definitively the sign of speaking in tongues as evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the emphasis is not *glossolalia*. Speaking in tongues can provide the possessor of the Holy Spirit with an extra spiritual experience (2 Cor 2-4). The speaker of new tongues may encounter an “outer body experience.” This is the sum total of the Spirit baptism.

Kärkkäinen (2002:68) begins his discussion of the Pentecostalism Spirituality and the Charismatic Spirituality by taking note of the historical differences and similarities of the two movements: Pentecostalism and Charismatic Renewal. Pentecostalism began by Parham, at his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas on January 1, 1901. Later an African American, Seymour, popularized the Pentecostal movement at the meetings of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California. News of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from these meetings spread throughout the world.

Kärkkäinen (2002:69) contends that some 50 years later the renewal of the experience of the Holy Spirit came into the older churches with a new axiom called the “Charismatic renewal/movement” that rejects the notion of speaking in tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. This movement began in the United States and spread throughout America. This was due largely to the efforts of Bennett, an Episcopal rector in Van Nuys, California. Bennett. In 1967, A Charismatic prayer group consisting of faculty members and students at Duquesne University (Pittsburgh) began the Charismatic renewal in the Roman Catholic Church?

The author (2002:76) examines the distinctive features of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. They share basic commonalities. However, he takes note of the differences. He determines that the Charismatic theologies always had a closer tie to their church tradition whereas Pentecostals do not. The author gives an example that the Catholic Charismatic has a stronger attachment to the Catholic Church than it does to any type of spiritual experience because of its close association. Conversely, Pentecostalism maintains a low view of history and tradition because of its independent nature. Kärkkäinen (2002:72) argues Pentecostalism has more of an attitude of “prophethood of all believers” that can be transposed into the “priesthood of all believers.” The author adds that Pentecostalism emphasizes a lived Holy Spirit spirituality “rather than a discursive theology.”

Tate suggests that Charismatic spirituality should be eliminated from the liturgies at the Franciscan University. Van Schaijik (Online 1997:1) responds to Tate’s statement. Van Schaijik argues that the Charismatic renewal is not a private spirituality whose purpose is to demonstrate one’s faith. On the contrary, it is an experience God has given the church in order to renew it. And with this renewal, spiritual gifts often accompany it as on the Day of Pentecost in the book of Acts. Therefore, Van Schaijik (Online 1997:2) concludes that Charismatic spirituality should be retained in the Mass at Franciscan University. She says “gifts from God should be carefully cherished.”

Anderson (2004:1) discusses the controversy over the contextualization of Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality in a European environment. The author argues that a liberal and pluralistic theology in Europe is at odds with Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality that is more conservative. Anderson cites Thomas who argues that Pentecostal theology in the 21st century needs to be contextualized because of a more pluralistic world. Thomas diverse Pentecostal voices in the world should speak in their “own theological languages,” no matter how difficult this may appear. This enhances diversification. Anderson (2004:1) contends that contextualization tends to lead to “indigenization” that opts for tailoring the Christian message to traditional cultures and this is more liberally acceptable.

Anderson refers to South African Reformed musicologist Bosch who says all theologies are contextual theologies. Yet, Anderson cautions that we should not neglect to understand the essential and universal aspect of the Christian message irrespective of “local, contextual ones” (Anderson 2004:2). Therefore, Anderson concludes that Pentecostal and Charismatic

spirituality should totally depend on the Spirit of God and not influenced by contextualization. In addition the Pentecostal/Charismatic experience in any part of the world should carry the same message of Christ regardless of contextualization.

Pentecostal spirituality preceded Charismatic spirituality by a few years. Yet, both spiritualities share a commonality of Holy Spirit renewal for the Christian religion. Still, Pentecostal spirituality teaches the receiving of the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be accompanied by the speaking in tongues and possibly the receiving of the spiritual gifts. Charismatic spirituality teaches the baptism of the Holy Spirit without the evidence of speaking in tongues or the receiving of the spiritual gifts. Pentecostal spirituality has less in common with Christian history and traditions that are more structured. Thus, it has less appeal to traditional Christianity. Because Charismatic Spirituality has more in common with Christian history and traditions, it appeals more to traditional Christian churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and others.

Pentecostal & Charismatic Spirituality share much in common, the main difference between them is the interpretation of speaking in tongues. as evidence of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, what brings them in close assimilation with each other is that upon receiving of the Holy Spirit, *spiritual gifts* accompanies it (1 Cor 12:4-11 NRJV).

5.5 CONCLUSION

In examining Lemba Communities, African Spirituality, African American Spirituality and Pentecostal & Charismatic Spirituality we shall try to determine the essence and the uniqueness of their spirituality. After doing this, we shall see if there are any similarities or differences amongst their spiritualities.

The Lemba tribe community is spread out in various northern parts of the Republic of South Africa, such as Polokwane, Jane Furse, Messina, Sekhukhune land, Venda and Monsterlus. With close examination of the Lemba community's spirituality appear to be ambiguous as it relates to their religious practices. For the most part Christianity frames their religious practices. However, coupled with their belief in Christianity the Lemba tribe consider themselves to be Black Israelites, descendants from Abraham. Though researchers have

identified the “Cohen gene” in members of the Lemba tribe, culturally the Lemba do not prescribe to Hebrew practices. Many Lemba people do not recognize or practice Judaic religious rituals or dietary laws. Nor do they observe the Seventh Day Sabbath and the Hebrew Holy Days. Many attend church on Sunday, and many belong to traditional Christian churches such as Pentecostal, Baptist, Methodist and Catholic religions. The disconnect between the Lemba’s Judaic identity and the absence of Judaic religious practice- as fascinating. But it made comparative research project problematic.

The essence of African Spirituality is the invisible world, which seems to follow Africans who join other religions like Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism or other religions. The reality of the invisible world impacts on their faith. None of these major world religions were completely successful in influencing the indigenous Africans to turn away from the traditional African religion of the spirit world. The African retains a strong identity to this world because of a preoccupation with the living dead. According to the spirituality of many Africans the living dead is not dead. They are part of a highly-regarded community of ancestors, who influence the lives of those on earth. In this regard there is no connection with Black Hebrew Pentecostalism.

African American Spirituality can be seen in the joy and the emotional jubilation in celebrating Jesus symbolically primarily as healer, deliverer and a sustainer through the living Power of the Holy Spirit. As a healer, Jesus is seen as the anchor of their faith and is revered as such weekly in worship services of African American Spirituality. As a deliverer, Jesus emancipated their forefathers from slavery. He delivers them from animosity toward racial oppressors in America. As a sustainer, Jesus empowers African spirituality with the Holy Spirit to face the daily challenges.

At the heart of Pentecostal Spirituality and Charismatic Spirituality, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Black Hebrew Pentecostalism grew out of Pentecostal Spirituality because of the emotionalism and mysticism associated with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

In conclusion each of these communities shed light on spiritual aspects of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. In looking at the Lemba community, African Spirituality, African American Spirituality and the Pentecostal & Charismatic Spirituality we need to examine how their spiritualities compare and differ from that of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals’

spirituality in an attempt to better understand the spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION – THE UNIQUE IDENTITY OF BLACK HEBREW PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY

6. 1 COMPARISON OF THE TWO COMMUNITIES: COMMONALITIES

In comparing the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and the Temple El Shaddai we shall examine the uniqueness of their contextual background, distinctive forms of spirituality, normativity & authority, distinctive theological identity, notions of transcendence, distinctive morality, divine-human relational dynamics and impact of spirituality. After performing this function we shall determine the commonalities and differences of the distinctive features of these two Hebrew Pentecostal communities.

Temple El Shaddai is under the administration of the *House of God The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth*, a Black Hebrew Pentecostal religion. The Apostle board of this organization commissioned the elder Bishop Pyant to establish a church in South Ozone Park, NY. This section is located in the borough of Queens where there are well kept private homes and a working middle class neighborhood. Mostly African Americans and residents from the Caribbean islands live in the surrounding area. The founder sold the building and gave the church to his son, who is a bishop and a pastor. The son and wife reside a few blocks from the church. As members of the neighborhood both the pastor and his wife have a vested interest in the continued upkeep of the community. This consciousness and friendliness toward their neighbors have helped the residents to feel grateful for the presence of the Hebrew Pentecostals.

One possible explanation why the members of the community so readily accept Temple El Shaddai is because the people in the area are familiar with other Black Hebrew churches. Some of the Black Hebrew churches do not accept Yahshua (Jesus) as the Messiah. Some of the Black Hebrew churches in the community accept Yahshua as the Messiah but are not Pentecostals. There are mixtures of Black Hebrews churches in the borough of Queens.

The Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ is in the borough Brooklyn. Unlike Temple El Shaddai the Gideon Knights Church was founded by a woman: Prophetess, Bishop, Pastor, Mother, Williams. In addition to her ecclesiastical titles, Mother Williams

had a divine unique gift of healing. She started her church as a prayer band in her home. As a female pastor, Mother experienced several incidents of condemnation from male ministers in the Gospel. The church was moved from her home to two locations before relocating to its present place in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn.

Brownsville consists mostly of African Americans but there are people from the Caribbean islands, Latinos from various Latin American countries, a few Asians and Nigerians from Africa. In Brownsville, like the area of Temple El Shaddai, there are well kept-priced homes. This presents a contradictory situation. The area is classified as depressed with many recipients receiving social assistance but the houses and vacant lots, if any can be found, sell for a handsome price. The realty property often sells for higher prices than some non depressed areas.

While the Gideon Knights Freedom Church was located at all three churches Mother Williams established the church with her Yahweh-given prophesies and gifts of healing. Members from other religious Christian denominations were sent to Mother Williams by their pastors to receive prophecy and healing. Mother put her hands on people and they became healed. More often she gave out prescriptions for healing that became known as “holy prescriptions.” The prescriptions were not traditional medicines. They were natural and unnatural foods and herbs, ice cream, cabbage, mustard seed, canned milk and others for healing. She gave out prescriptions for casting devils out of our houses, such as flushing the toilet ten times that would flush the devil down the drain. She would prophesy get out of the bed on the left side and put your left foot first on the floor in order to receive a blessing for the day. The researcher does this continuously every morning. She had unique gifts of healing.

A young man joined this Black Hebrew Pentecostal church in the 1960s. He studied under the later pastor and bishop Mother Williams. She appointed him a deacon, a local minister and then ordained him as Elder. When Mother Williams became incapacitated to administer the church he became the pastor. He served in this position for five years before being elevated to the position of bishop, which he retains now. While interim bishop he appointed his wife as the pastor of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ.

In one of the *distinctive forms* of spirituality of Temple El Shaddai will find a mezuzah on the right doorpost of the temple as you enter the sanctuary. The mezuzah is a vital symbol of Judaism. The mezuzah is a small piece of parchment inscribed with the biblical passages of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. The first lady habitually kisses the mezuzah as she enters the temple. The Gideon Knights Freedom Church is aware of the significance of the mezuzah but they choose not to use one because it is too orthodox.

Inside the temple of El Shaddai and the Gideon Knights Church there are the Ten Commandments displayed on the wall. Temple El Shaddai has Hebrew alphabets also plated on the white wall. There are no such alphabets pasted on the walls of the Gideon Knights Church. What is also notable at both Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights is that men and women sit together.

Temple El Shaddai has a young lad blowing the Shofar at the start of their services. The Shofar is a curvature animal horn of many shapes. At the 89th Convocation of the *Church of God* two young men with prayer shawls draped around their shoulders and yarmulkes on their heads blew the Shofar. At the Gideon Knights Church the Shofar is not blown. At Temple El Shaddai a young teenager chants the She'ma wearing a yarmulke and dangling fringes around his waist. At Gideon Knights Church no males young or old wear yarmulkes except the bishop and no male wears dangling fringes around his waist. Gideon does not chant the She'ma because of the use of the word Adonai that they claim originates from paganism. Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church stand face the East when reciting the Ten Commandments.

Women in Temple El Shaddai are not permitted to wear pants inside the temple or outside of the temple. Women must keep their hair covered during all services. Women cannot wear low cut blouses revealing their breasts. Gideon Knights Church has the same restrictions on women's dress as Temple El Shaddai that the women should not wear pants inside or outside the temple. However, most young women wear pants outside of the temple. At Gideon Knights Church those who come to church with pants but they are quickly covered with a choir robes. At Gideon women are asked to cover their heads. But most of the time, unlike Temple El Shaddai, the women disobey and do not cover their heads during the services. Occasionally a woman or two will wear a low cut blouse revealing the cleavage of her breasts.

Women at Gideon are instructed to be modest in their appearance. This excludes the wearing of lipstick, nail polish, designer nails, rouge, and eye shadow. Enforcement proves problematic. At Temple El Shaddai the researcher did not hear such prohibitions for women.

Both Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church have loud music accompanied with shouting and shaking and anointing. Both churches use praise and worship songs as part of their liturgies. Temple El Shaddai allows praise dancing in the church. Gideon Knights Church does not permit praise dancing to take place in the church. Rap music – not even Gospel rap – is not permitted in both temples. Secular music is preached against by both pastors.

Race does not appear to be a major issue with either church. Temple El Shaddai has one adopted Italian teenager by the pastor and his wife. This teenager has received a Bar Mitzvah. Both churches give their their young lads Bar Mitzvahs and young ladies Bat Mitzvahs. Temple El Shaddai also has one American Indian family in the temple. Race is not a major issue in the temple for Gideon Knights Church, although they have no White members.

Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ reads and recites the church's doctrine four times a year during the taking of communion. This was not observed at Temple El Shaddai. Besides, Temple El Shaddai partakes of the Lord's Supper but once a year during the Passover season.

All the seven Feasts of the Lord (Holy Days) are observed by both Temple El Shaddai and the Gideon Knights Church. During the 7th Day Sabbath and all the Holy Day Sabbath members are forbidden to go to their place of business, shop at stores, cook, wash clothes or perform housework at home. In addition both churches teach the Jewish dietary laws that prohibits include no pork or fish without scales.

Temple El Shaddai and other churches within the House of God have the Twenty-four Principles to assist them in their normativity. Principle number two is the keeping of the Ten Commandments. This is systemic to both the faith and belief of Temple El Shaddai and the Gideon Knights Church doctrine.

The Bible plays a vital role in the normativity of both Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. Second Corinthians verse six is universal to the entire Pentecostal movement. Another unique normativity for both Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church is the use of water for Holy Communion.

The pastor retains ecclesiastical authority over Temple El Shaddai. This is given to him by the House of God. The pastor has control over the financial matters of Temple El Shaddai and pays all of the bills. The pastor has to make a financial report once a year to the House of God. The first lady of Temple El Shaddai is very influential in administrative matters of the church. She holds a PhD and is a principal of a city school. This is unlike Gideon Knights Church that has an active trustee board that takes care of all the church expenses and upkeep of the building. The pastor does not have to become involved in financial matters. She discusses ecclesiastical matters with the overseer who is the bishop. The pastor of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ makes no financial reports to bishopric *The Order of the Gideon Knights of Yahshua Messiah*.

The pastor of the Gideon Knights Church appoints new local ministers, but the bishop retains the authority to ordain local ministers. The bishop evaluates the rituals of the church. The bishop declared a normativity that youth who have been given a Bar Mitzvah or Bar Mitzvah, may partake of the Lord's Supper. A norm for Gideon is feet washing on the communion during the Passover. The bishop changed a norm of men and women washing one another's feet: men wash men's feet and women wash women's feet. One critical normative in Gideon is the use of both the Greek names Jesus and God and the Hebrew names Yahweh and Yahshua. Another present norm is the use of various Bible versions in the temple. The researcher observed in Temple El Shaddai an emphasis on the use of the Kings James version of the Bible.

In *notions of transcendence* the pastor of Temple El Shaddai remarked that metaphorically Yahweh is beyond measure. He said Yahweh communicates with us through the Word and through people. The pastor also believes that Yahshua and Yahweh are One. This belief juxtaposes the belief of Gideon Knights Church who contends that Yahweh and Yahshua are separate. The pastor of Temple El Shaddai comments Yahshua metaphorically is his second chance to get it right. Yahshua forgives him of all his sins. To the members of Temple El Shaddai the Holy Spirit symbolizes life because it gives life. The Scripture helps to describe

the critical role of the Holy Spirit for the entire Pentecostal movement. To the members of Temple El Shaddai the Holy Spirit is a doctor who heals. This is true also for the Gideon Knights Church. Symbolic as a doctor the Holy Spirit is a Healer when called on. For both Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church the Holy Spirit anoints the olive oil transforming it into a healing agent for the sick. The Holy Spirit is a baptizer. Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church believe when the Holy Spirit baptizes, the believer will speak in tongues *as the Spirit gave them utterance* (Ac 2:4 KJV).

One member describes Yahshua as having the upper hand because He knew His purpose on earth. The Gideon Knights Church has several images of Yahweh: He is confusing and unknowing, He is a violent temper and He is a Creator. There are other remarks such as He is indiscernible.

A unique feature about both the Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai is that they both use the Greek names God and Jesus as well as the Hebrew names Yahweh and Yahshua. The Gideon Knights Church views the Holy Spirit as a gift from Yahweh that resides within you. To one the Holy Spirit is a given image of a spiritual consciousness.

In *distinctive morality* Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church have more in common because they are connected to the general Pentecostal movement. Both teach that eternal peace and everlasting life are achieved through righteousness. The pastor at El Shaddai teaches his congregation the virtue of honesty. With this virtue goes the importance of obeying the Ten Commandments. The church members are taught the virtue of integrity, and with this they are required to follow the Twenty-four Principles of their religious body.

Gideon Knights Church do not have the Twenty-Four Principles but they do have a creed that all members are instructed to obey. Both Black Hebrew communities strongly teach against the practice of homosexuality. Pre-marital sex is an immoral act for which justification is found in Scripture. Both churches teach that saints receive blessings by paying tithes and offerings.

Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai, forbids the drinking of wine, liquor or beer. Gideon Knights teaches against chewing tobacco, smoking or indulging in controlled substances. The church does not look kindly on divorce but it is tolerated such as accepting

divorcees as full members and in the ministry. Gideon Knights Church stresses more the abstinence from vices than the rewards of virtues. As a result, some members feel since there is too much emphasis on the vices and not enough effort expended in developing ways to encourage members to do better. For example, in addition to applying the Scripture theologically against women wearing pants, the issue should be discussed openly and solicit their view point.

The *divine-human relational dynamics* operates with life-changing force in the lives of members of Temple El Shaddai first. A divine-human relationship is a very private with the Creator and unique to a person's needs. For example, Michael was the son of the pastor and his wife who miraculously rose up from his confined wheel chair and shouted and danced the holy dance hours before he died. Another member was a crack addict. After hearing the voice of God the member was saved and has been clean and sober for several years. Another asked for sign while grieving the killing of a teenage friend. God showed her a sign of bright lights in the heavens at night. She interpreted to mean that god had given her a sign,

One member of the Gideon Knights Church had a prophetic dream of a plane crashing into a building days before terrorists flew planes in the Twin Towers. This was prior to the destruction of the Twin Towers by two planes flown by terrorists. This same member dreamt of a couple sitting in the front row of a funeral. Weeks later the mother experienced a stillbirth of a daughter. A male minister had an experience with the divine telling him he would have a son and he would be named Daniel. Later the member was awakened in the middle of the night and he saw an image of Jesus on the wall. No words were exchanged but the member felt a deep sense of completion. A female minister reported a near-death experience. She had when dying but saw Jesus and asked Him to send her back to this world. Jesus answered her prayer.

The adage *in the world but not of the world* impacts the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai, Gideon Knights Church and the entire Pentecostal movement. For Pentecostals this adage infers that the world has a physical and a spiritual nature. The world also denotes sinners. For the Pentecostals living a double reality of a physical and spiritual world creates a psychological trauma that impacts their spirituality in trying to be in the world but not of the world. This leads to a fear of spiritual contamination from the world. To defend against contamination Pentecostals, as well as other Christian denominations, may separate

themselves from others. Basically, functioning within the society also involves such matters as economics and politics. This conflict enters into Pentecostal relationship with money and politics. Concerns about money drives the overwhelming majority of religions in America, and Black Hebrew Pentecostals are no exception. A critical verse for Pentecostals defending the virtue of money is Luke 10:7: “. . . for the laborer is worthy of his wages” (NKJV). This verse leads to a temptation of hoarding money by use of the Bible. It should be noted that a distinctive spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals is not being active in politics, although they are not prohibited from such involvement.

The lives Gideon Knights Church members impact their spirituality in different ways. One member said spirituality to him is to be one with the Father. He said this because symbolically spirituality brings him on the same page with the Creator; a mystical union, or living in step with Jesus. A female minister explained spirituality is a connection to Jesus. One male minister argued there are all types of spirituality. He further states there is a difference between spirituality and salvation. There are similarities between Temple El Shaddai and the Gideon Knights Church rereading economics and politics.

When we consider all of the differences and the commonalities between Temple El Shaddai and the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ, the commonalities between the two Black Hebrew communities strongly outweigh the differences. Therefore, the spirituality of the two communities seems to reflect that of the Black Hebrew Pentecostals.

6.2 USE OF TYPOLOGIES IN SPIRITUALITY

We started this thesis by studying the unique spirituality of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and Temple El Shaddai. After having done so we have come to a place in the research project where the typology of their distinct spirituality needs to be explored. Categorizing the spirituality of the two Black Hebrew communities helps to have a clearer understanding of their spirituality as the research project progresses. In looking at typologies in spirituality we shall examine the work of several authors in order to determine whether or not the Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai *fit into any of the spirituality typologies*.

Wainwright discusses spiritual typologies that entail Christ Against Culture, The Christ of Culture, Christ Above Culture, Christ and Culture in Paradox and Christ the Transformer of Culture. Wilson writes about A Typology of Sects in relation to spirituality. Watson and Morris's interest in typology in spirituality leads them to explore Spiritual Experience and Identity: Relationships with Religious Orientation, Religious Interest, and Intolerance of Ambiguity. These areas are researched by Watson and Morris through the use of a Spiritual Experience Index and looking at the spiritual typology of a religious majority. The Ware-Homes model is another tool for determining a typology in spirituality. Ware develops her model by use of focus groups. Focus groups were utilized with the Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai to assess spirituality. Since we are looking at various typologies in spirituality, Waaijman's article on Basic Waaijman's article Forms of Spirituality an Overview shows a close relationship between forms and types.

(a) Wainwright

Wainwright (1992:592) establishes a thematic typology in the relation between Christ and culture. He bases his developmental thesis based on H. Richard Niebuhr's five types of spirituality. Wainwright argues that Niebuhr is that he has a central *theocratic* belief that all history and movements of men are under the governance of an absolute God. Therefore, as a result of this we have five types of spirituality between Christ and culture.

In the *Christ Against Culture* spirituality type Wainwright (593) adds that Niebuhr refers to this spirituality as relationship to a naughty world. As such it is conceivable a church placed in this category finds its Christian spirituality in opposition to its cultural surroundings. This leads to a feeling of wanting to escape culture. In the Christ Against Culture mode Wainwright includes some historically significant information. The author contends that with Constantine's supposedly accepting Christianity blood martyrdom gave way to white martyrdom. This is equal to monasticism: cultural escapism.

In Christ Against Culture Wainwright (595) rejoins Pentecostalism is another non-monastic example of a world-renouncing spiritual movement. Wainwright determines Pentecostalism to be a world-renouncing spiritual movement because of glossolalia. He interprets glossolalia by Pentecostals as a counter-cultural protest against the rationalistic and materialistic language of Western Christendom.

Since Wainwright considers the Pentecostal form of worship a world-renouncing movement because of glossolalia, we need to look at both Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. The Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and Temple El Shaddai are Pentecostal practitioners who emphasize the importance of speaking in tongues. In addition, generally the Pentecostal movement teaches its followers, we are in the world but not of the world. Psychologically this medium of consciousness would conceivably *place both Black Hebrew communities into a typology in spirituality of Christ Against Culture.*

Wainwright (596) sees *The Christ of Culture* as an affirmation of the world. The author asserts that Niebuhr looks on this spirituality type as the least favorable of all of them. Wainwright looks back to religious history and argues that Emperor Constantine's institutionalization of Christianity produces a negative effect on the faith. Constantine brought to Christianity political and social realities. In the process he reduces Christ to a cultural hero. Wainwright (597) warns of an inherent danger: a civil religion detracts from Christianity. A civil religion precipitates a fatal flaw of the Christ-of-culture. Resulting from this Wainwright contends there can be a secularization of eschatology. However, he concludes both the Christ of culture and the Christian against culture lack a clear eschatological awareness. The Christ of culture typology in spirituality does not reflect that of the two Black Hebrew communities.

The type of spirituality Christ Above Culture (598) is the synthetic view. It looks at the positivity of human nature and culture in need of being purified. As such grace plays a vital role in purifying human nature and culture. Grace is critical to the Pentecostal movement. And Pentecostals exist for the eschatological events. Therefore, the spirituality type of *Christ above culture could typify the spiritual typology of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and Temple El Shaddai.*

Christ and Culture in Paradox is a dualistic type of spirituality (599). Wainwright remarks it stands on the world-negating side of center but it not as extreme as Christ against culture. Wainwright (599-600) intellectualizes that Niebuhr interprets Lutheranism resonating to be polarities of law, the Gospel, and wrath. The Lutherans are an example of Christ and Culture in paradox. The paradox refers to conflicting kingdoms of God. One kingdom is the rule of God's left hand. Here God judges and protects humanity from the effects of sin. The other

kingdom is the rule of God's right hand where God redeems and saves. Wainwright points out that corresponding to the Christ and Culture paradox is conflicted spirituality. He is adamant that Lutheranism best represents Christ and Culture in Paradox. The author illustrates this succinctly by discussing Bonhoeffer's participation in the conspiracy to execute Hitler. Wainwright is perhaps correct in asserting Lutheranism best reflects the spirituality type of Christ and culture in paradox. This typology in spirituality would not depict the spirituality type of the two Black Hebrew communities.

In *Christ the Transformer of Culture* Wainwright (603) states Niebuhr leans extensively on Augustine: "He who made us without ourselves will not save us without ourselves." The author adds this transforming view rests on a positive doctrine of creation and incarnation. However, Wainwright rejoins corruption of humanity is always present. Corruption for the author is the perversion of the good, not intrinsic evil. In Christ the transformer of culture there are conversion and rebirth in which we become dead to sin and alive in Christ. In Christ transformation begins because our religious faith is part of culture. When we experience transformation culture Christ becomes the benefactor. Christ transforms culture through His believers. The spirituality type of *Christ the transformer of culture can accurately describe the spiritual typology of Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai*. This becomes clearer if we look at the words of Augustine: "He who made us without ourselves will not save us without ourselves." In this there is a sense of God working with the spirituality of humans.

(b) Wilson

Wilson (1969:362) discusses typology of sects that offers categories of spirituality types. He begins by asserting that sociology of religion must study comparatively the social functions and development of religious movements. However, the author adds, we cannot always distinguish between social and religious thinking. However, he analyzes, *Sects*; these are ideological movements that defend their position. The way to apply typology to religious movements is to examine the sect's response to the world (363). Wilson (364) contends that change can take place in the sect without specific changes taking place to the doctrine. Wilson intimates certain relationships between different sects at different stages of cultural development. He offers seven-fold classification of sects in response to the world. These are

typical theological positions in Christian sects. Wilson views how the sects interpret the Bible.

The *Conversionist* is a typical sect of evangelical, fundamentalist Christianity that sees the world as corrupt because people are corrupt. To change the world one must change people. Individuals are responsible for their actions (365). This sect rejects the notion that environment influence behavior. The Conversionist sect does not go from door to door but prefers mass preaching. They want to convert people. This group has a dominant emotional nature. Doctrine is less important than a personal relationship with the Savior. Scripture interpreted literally. In some ways Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai would fit into this sect, but not entirely. At Gideon members believe that changing people will improve the world. They use preaching as a tool for conversion. The issue of being responsible for his or her action is in some ways ambiguous. They understand that behavior can be directed by spirits who are in control. The actions of a man or a woman might depend on what spirit is in control over his or her life.

With regard to the literal interpretation of the Bible Temple El Shaddai believes the Scripture is errorless. This juxtaposes the Gideon Knights Church's teaching that the Bible contains errors. Therefore, the spirituality type of the conversionist generally does not apply to Pentecostal groups such as Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai. However, there are some qualities such as corrupted man, converting people, mass preaching and others that do apply.

The *Revolutionary Type* of spirituality is found in the eschatological movements of the Christian tradition (365). The type reacts to the outside world with a desire to get rid of the present social order when the time avails itself by force and violence. This group is awaiting a new order under God's direction. On one end of the spectrum this group is hostile to the world; on the other, it is a bastion of social reform. They want instantaneous conversion. The revolutionary sect sees the fate of individuals as pre-determined. They are more Calvinist than Armenian (365). This sect holds unemotional meetings and they see God as a divine autocratic leader a dictator. The revolutionary type sect does not emphasize direct relation to God. *Both Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai can be excluded.*

The *Introversionist type* of spirituality is the pietist sect. Instead of wanting to convert or overturn the outside world, they choose to retire from the world to enjoy the security of personal holiness (366). This sect is indifferent to social reforms, individual conversion, and social revolutions. They have a disdain for those lacking holiness and they have no desire to introduce others to their faith. This sect places great emphasis on the Bible. They prefer to live apart from the world. (367). Neither the Gideon Knights Church nor Temple El Shaddai fit into the Introversionist type of spirituality.

The *Manipulationist type* of spirituality sect Wilson previously called Gnostic because of its emphasis on knowledge. People react to the outside world by accepting its goals. They do not reject society but are interested in its spiritualization and culture. This sect is sometimes called a cult. They generally do not involve themselves in conversion. The divinity is understood. This sect lacks emotion, and has no interest in eschatology. Their concern is with the results of this world. We will not find Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai in the Manipulationist type of spirituality.

The *Thaumaturgical type* of spirituality sects argues that it is possible for men to experience the extraordinary effect of the supernatural in our lives ((368). Wilson says the main representatives of this group are the “Spiritualists.” They receive messages from spirits; perform cures, transformation and miracles. These believers reject the ageing process and death (369). In the end their compensation for personal losses is their quest for cultural goals. Wilson contends their religion is not far removed from magic. The thaumaturgical sect has séances where they connect with lost relatives more often than with God. *No true Pentecostal believer would be found connected with the thaumaturgical type of spirituality sects* because of one of their vital practices.

Wilson (369) makes a comment that clearly explains why no Pentecostal believer can be a member of this spiritual group: “Their most characteristic activity is the séance or public demonstration.” Mckim (1996:251) adds: “Séance is a meeting at which a medium or spiritualist attempts to communicate with the dead. This form of activity has been rejected by the Christian church (see 1 Sam. 28:7ff.)”

Wilson (369) states the *reformist sects* seem to constitute a separate case. He offers an explanation. Transformation was this group’s early reaction to the outside world. Originally

the reformist sect had a revolutionary attitude. Later it changed to an introversionist attitude and then to a reformist position. This group has a strong sense of identity. They study the world in order to involve themselves in the world through their good deeds. Social consciousness is the core of this group. Their place is in the world but they do not partake of the world's sins. The reformist sect's favorite text is faith without deeds is vain. They have a humanitarian orientation reformist attitude toward the world. Researchers take an interest in the reformist sects because of their concern with humanity. The reformist sect's type of spirituality may not depict all of the members of the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ or Temple El Shaddai but it does represent the attitude of some of the congregants. Many members see themselves as reformist type of spirituality because they do not believe in the partaking of the sin in the world.

Wilson classifies the *Utopia* sect as the most complex type. The reaction to the outside world is a partial withdrawal, and a partial wish that it could be better (370). This sect is more radical than reformist. They are potentially less violent than the revolutionary sect and more constructive on a social level than the conversionist. They view the world along community lines and enjoy proposing measures for social change. Their favorite text is Acts, but they may not have a clear conception of divinity. This group may be suspicious of candidates for conversion. The utopia sect does completely describe the spirituality for either Gideon Knights Church or Temple El Shaddai. However, both Black Hebrew communities do have a clear conception of the divinity. Their members have a clear concept of the divinity.

(c) Watson & Morris

Watson & Morris (2005:371) deal with the effort to comprehend the spiritual typology of opened minded religious maturity. They argue that attempting to understand opened minded religious maturity is challenging to the researcher who works with believers. The authors differentiated between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for being religiously opened minded. Examining the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for being religiously opened minded will assist in evaluating religious maturity. Watson & Morris contend that intrinsic orientation religiously helps to motivate the believer who earnestly desires to live and practice his or her faith. This is juxtaposed to extrinsic orientation where religious commitments are used for more selfish ends.

The authors (2005:371) use Quest Scales to defend their position for intrinsic orientation leading to a more opened minded religious maturity. The authors (372) discovered the Spiritual Experience Index is more accurate than Quest Scales for measuring intrinsic motivation and opened minded religious maturity. Watson and Morris argue that the Spiritual Experience Index's Spiritual Openness subscale corresponds with Quest but it opposes The Intolerance of Ambiguity Scale. The authors argue that this scale was also used to measure opened minded religious maturity. What these scales demonstrate in relation to an opened minded religious maturity is an intrinsic religious motivation. The Spiritual Openness illustrates a belief that "ideas from faiths different from my own may increase my understanding of spiritual truth" (372). This statement alone exemplifies typology in spirituality of religious maturity.

Religious maturity with regard to spiritual openness and tolerance of others differ within the two Black Hebrew communities. The spiritual openness and tolerance of others impact the spirituality of both Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and Temple El Shaddai. The critical issue: is how does spiritual openness and tolerance impact the spirituality of Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church? In addition, how do all of these impact on their religious maturity?

Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ appears to be spiritually divided on the question of openness and tolerance of others. This seems to be true particularly with three major issues: the 7th Day Sabbath, the using name Jesus or Yahshua and God or Yahweh. There are members of Gideon Knights Church who believe that First Day (Sunday) observers are not true worshippers of the Messiah. Some members of Gideon Knights Church believe that in order to be saved we must call directly on the name of either Yahshua or Jesus and that calling on the name of Yahweh or God alone will not bring salvation. Other members will argue that using the Greek names of God and Jesus is calling on pagan gods. Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ does not appear to fit into Watson and Morris' spiritual categorization of openness and tolerance of others. Therefore, *Gideon Knights Church seems to be outside the spiritual typology of religious maturity.*

The Notions of Transcendence expressed by members of Temple El Shaddai reflect an openness and tolerance of others. Temple El Shaddai is not particularly judgmental about the First Day worshippers observing Sunday as their special day of worship, even though they

prefer the First Day churches to come into the 7th Day Sabbath. Temple El Shaddai believes that Yahweh and Yahshua are One. As a result of this, Temple El Shaddai will argue that when you call on the name of Yahweh you are simultaneously calling on Yahshua. They accept using Greek or Hebrew to refer to the Father because they are His. In this way Temple El Shaddai can fit into spiritual typology of religious maturity.

(d) Waaijman

In order to identify what type of spirituality Gideon and El Shaddai fit into we look to who identifies different forms. Waaijman (2006:5) identifies forms of spirituality that he claims are distinguishable: schools of spirituality; primordial spiritualities that includes lay spirituality, indigenous spirituality, and spirituality in secular contexts; counter-movements. We shall briefly examine some of these spirituality types to determine circumstances. These historical events are foundational to the goals and values of the school. Schools do mission work, provide for education and tend to the needs of the sick. The Gideon Knights Church maintains a college scholarship fund for any youth desiring to go to college. The student must maintain a "B" average. The church does monthly missionary work at the Covenant House that is run by the Catholic Church. Members visit the sick. Gideon has some spiritual typologies of the schools. Even though Temple El Shaddai does not have an educational fund for its youth, it does have some spiritual typologies of the school by caring for the infirmed.

Primordial spirituality, says Waaijman (7), does not belong to a school of well-established traditions. It is independent with a close affinity to life and its markers such as birth death, education, work and others. Waaijman (8) lists various sub-forms of the primordial spirituality. Lay spirituality is one of them. This is everyday spirituality closely tied to the family. Indigenous spiritualities have not been influenced by mainline religious traditions. Secular spirituality is diametrically opposed to religion. Conclusively neither Gideon Knights nor Temple El Shaddai fit into one of these sub-forms of spirituality.

The Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai do fit into the Waaijman's counter-movement spirituality (Wainwright 1992:595). Waaijman refers to Turner's three forms of antistructure: liminality, inferiority, and marginality. Waaijman (11) says liminal spirituality has three phases: separation from the social structure, outside the social structure, and

reintegration into society. This seems to describe the adage of both Hebrew communities “in the word but not of the world.”

Inferior spirituality relates to those persons who find themselves on the underside of the social pyramid or even in the cellar of humankind. This does not describe either Hebrew community. Marginal spirituality would apply to Temple El Shaddai and Gideon Knights Church. Waaijman (12) says marginal spirituality entails a double loyalty. In this position both Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities can “offer radical criticism of the structures from the inside.”

(e) Ware

Ware says studying spirituality types is seeing ourselves the way we are spiritually To assess this Ware adapts Holmes model, and designs a Holmes-Ware model. (1995:7). Here a wheel, called the circle of sensibility, is divided into four quadrants (6). The wheel is called the circle of sensibility. Each quadrant represents four distinct spirituality types. They are as follows: in the first quadrant there is the Speculative/Kataphatic (Holmes’ designation) - A Head Spirituality/Intellectual (Ware’s designation); in quadrant two Affective/kataphatic (Holmes’ designation) - A Heart Spirituality/Imaging/God as Revealed/Emotionalism (Ware’s designation); in quadrant three Affective/Apophatic (Holmes’ designation) - A Mystic Spirituality/Reclusivity (Ware’s designation); in quadrant four Speculative/Appohatic/ (Holmes’ designation) - A Kingdom Spirituality/Mystery/God as Spirit/Moralism (Ware’s designation) (8, 37-43).

Ware (6) says the purpose of the Spirituality Wheel gives people a spiritual portrait of themselves and their churches. Ware administers a selector test utilizing two Spirituality wheels. One wheel is labeled congregation style and the other one is labeled personal style (48). Quadrants are numbered one to four representing four distinct spirituality types. Participants taking the Spirituality Wheel select test must answer questions from twelve categories consisting of four questions for each category.

As per Ware’s suggestion, the Spirituality Wheel was used in focus groups at both Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities. At Temple El Shaddai the members taking the test seemed anxious because it was about 20h00 on a Saturday evening and the members wanted to go

home after spending the entire afternoon in the temple. The results for the Spirituality Wheel selector test for Congregational Style places Temple El Shaddai in spirituality type-1: *Intellectual* (Mind). In Personal Style the majority of members fell into type-1: Intellectual (Mind).

In the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ, members were more patient and excited. This test was given at the same time to members who had been in service since the early afternoon. The Spirituality Wheel selector test for Congregational Style places the Gideon Knights Church in type-2: Imaging/God is revealed. The Spirituality Wheel selector test for Personal Style places the Gideon Knights Church in type-2: Imaging/God is revealed.

Both Temple El Shaddai and the Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ fit into similar categories. They both fit into the Christ Against Culture Spirituality topology; the Christ Above Culture Spirituality topology and Christ the Transformer of Culture.

6.3 CONCLUSION: UNIQUE IDENTITY

Research Question

The research examined distinct features of the spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal.

Hypothesis

Hypothetically, the distinctive features in the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community are the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath and seven Jewish Holy Days. The Black Hebrews follow the Jewish dietary laws. They believe they are the original Israelite descendants from Abraham, and that White Jews are Edomites, descendants of Esau.

After researching the spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community at length, my hypothesis has been confirmed of the unique spirituality of this community.

Research Process

The research process was conducted based on the empirical research method, specifically the qualitative method. Chapter One lays out the approach to studying spirituality of religious communities.

The problems that I encountered centered upon a resistance on the part of subjects. Often questions were met with suspicion and distrust. A member of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal Community, I was sometimes viewed as a defector betraying the confidentiality of the Black Hebrew community. These accusations, spoken and unspoken, caused me duress during the project.

Distinct Identity

A clear distinct identity of the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals emerges when comparing their spirituality to mainline Christianity.

Major Elements

Because the Black Hebrew Pentecostals perceive themselves as Black people to be the original Israelites, they interpret believe that Jesus is Black. In addition, they understand that all 12 apostles were Black including Simon the Canaanite (Mt 10:4). In the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community the boys are given a Bar Mitzvah at age thirteen and the girls a Bat Mitzvah at age twelve. This community believe that because they keep all of the Ten Commandments, particularly the fourth Commandment that is the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath, they shall be called *great in the Kingdom heaven* (Mt 5:10). This juxtaposes those Christian denominations that only keep nine of the Ten Commandments.

The Black Hebrew Pentecostals argue that since the Christian religion was established in Jerusalem in the East it is an Eastern religion. In fact, some Black Hebrew Pentecostals do not classify themselves as Christians because of the violent history of Christianity. What is vital to the Black Hebrew Pentecostals is the practice of religion within the confines of the Holy Spirit and with the Bible in its shadow.

Sabbath

The Sabbath is very important to the Black Hebrew community because it has to do with Yahweh (God) establishing it and sanctifying it. He then “rested” (Gn 2:3). The Black Hebrew Pentecostal community does no *servile work* (Ex 20:8) on the Seventh Day Sabbath. Black Hebrew Pentecostals defend the establishment of the Seventh Day Sabbath against attackers who claim observance of the Sabbath is within keeping of the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law codifies the Sabbath but does not establish it. This took place at the time that Yahweh created the world. Black Hebrew Pentecostal community’s spirituality can be categorized as *a Sabbath spirituality*.

Names

The names *Yahweh* (Hebrew) for God (Greek) and *Yahshua* (Hebrew) for Jesus (Greek) is a highly contestable issue within the Black Hebrew community. One minister surrendered his license, and a member walked out of the church because of its hot contention. And it remains until today an unresolved issue. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches use the names God and Jesus only. Others, who believe it’s an abomination to use Greek names, only use Yahweh and Yahshua. Some Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches use the Hebrew and Greek names.

God

Black Hebrew Pentecostals understand Yahweh to be Power. He calls on a dominant God to deliver him from his enemies. Black Hebrew Pentecostals dwell in a racialized American society. Sometimes they interpret White Americans as the enemy. Therefore, they call on Yahweh to use His delivering power just as He did with ancient Israel against Pharaoh.

Jesus

Yahshua has two distinct natures: divine and human. Black Hebrew Pentecostals worship the divine nature of Yahshua, and attempt to mimic His human nature. In this way, He is no longer on the cross but in their hearts. This fosters a personal and emotional relationship with Yahshua who by virtue of His humanity truly feels the infirmities of the Black Hebrew

Pentecostal community. Yahshua's humanity enabled Him to experience the pain and suffering of Black Hebrew Pentecostals. And so this community looks to the Savior when they experience pain and suffering: mental and physical. Therefore, Jesus is symbolic of a *healer* of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community. Jesus in His double nature is nearer to them than God.

The Bible

Each Black Hebrew Pentecostal community decides which version of the Bible to use. Differences of opinion exist amongst churches and within congregations. A major point of contention is whether there are errors in the King James Version. The pastor of Temple El Shaddai says no. The bishop of the Gideon Knights Church informed the members that the New York Theological Seminary claims there are over two hundred errors in the King James Bible. The seminary will not permit its students to reference the Kings James Bible. Within the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community the Holy Spirit takes precedence over the Bible. Reading of different versions of the Bible can not equal the emotional experience of feeling the Holy Spirit. Black Hebrew Pentecostal community is uniquely a spiritual feeling religion.

Trinity

The issue of the Trinity is a highly controversial issue that centers around the name of the divine called on in prayer. For example, if God and Jesus are one, when one calls on God is he or she calling on Jesus? One Black Hebrew Pentecostal religious official, who believes God and Jesus are one, argues that when a Buddhist or Muslim prays to God he or she prays to Jesus because they are one. Another Black Hebrew Pentecostal pastor who believes God and Jesus are separate, argues that one must pray to God in the name of His Son Jesus for the prayer to be acceptable by the Creator. Jesus is the intercessor who carries prayers to His Father.

Typologies

Black Hebrew Pentecostal communities draw much of their spirituality from *both Christian and Hebraic rituals*. They observe the Seventh Day Sabbath, as does the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which is a Christian group that does not consider themselves Hebrew.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals adhere to many of the practices of the Pentecostal movement, such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as well as Hebraic practices.

The Gideon Knights Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and Temple El Shaddai fit into several typologies.

Christian

Are Black Hebrew Pentecostals Christians? Absolutely, according to the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community they are followers of the Messiah. Every Black Hebrew Pentecostal draws inspiration from the second chapter of Acts: the day the Holy Spirit fell. It fell on a group of people from the seed of Abraham and proselytes. These people, including the Apostle Paul, were classified as Jews who were followers of Christ. They observed the Seventh Day Sabbath, the seven Holy Days. Black Hebrew Pentecostals continue in the tradition of these Jewish followers of Christ, who were later classified as Christians. Therefore, in terms of the broad religious tradition Black Hebrew Pentecostals are more followers of Christ than mainline Christians because they continue to keep all of Yahweh's Commandments, Statues and Laws. Furthermore, Black Hebrew Pentecostals argue that Christianity is a Jewish religion.

The tradition of Black Hebrew Pentecostals' spirituality differs from many other religions with Hebrew-Christian identifications, particularly the Lemba tribe in the Republic of South Africa. This tribe is recognized as having the Cohen modal haplotype gene that makes them blood Hebrews from the seed of Abraham. Genetically the Lemba consider themselves to be Hebrew. However, their religious traditional practices are diametrically opposed to the Black Hebrew Pentecostals' traditional religious practices. Lemba tribe members do not observe the Seventh Day Sabbath. They do not observe or even know about the Jewish Holy Days. They worship in mainline First Day (Sunday) Christian churches such as Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal and other religions.

Mixture

The Black Hebrew Pentecostal community considers its religious faith to be a unique blend of Jewish, Christian and Pentecostal faiths. Through those varied religious practices, Black

Hebrew Pentecostal community experience their tradition and spirituality as coherent and integrated. What adds to this experience is the awareness of being unique and not subject to the acceptance or approval of others. This distinction impacts the spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal.

Reaction tradition: Race and Politics?

Black Hebrew Pentecostal spirituality is partly a reaction tradition to racial marginalization. Mainline churches find common ground with the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches through the belief in the life, death and resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah. Marginalization plays a vital role in Black Hebrew Pentecostal spirituality. They are aware that the underlying factor of racism in America is the dehumanization of Black people. The struggle for equality is fueled by the struggle for Blacks to regain their humanity. Black Hebrew Pentecostalism returns to them their humanity through Christ.

Politics is not very important to Black Hebrew Pentecostals community because it can distract from their religious faith. Like other Blacks in their neighborhood, their lack of interest in politics shows up in their poor voting records. Race takes on another issue because of its oppressive nature, particularly in the American society. The scars of racism in America are too deep and wounds are still in the process of healing. The only healing balm is Black Hebrew Pentecostal spirituality with its roots in the Messiah, who symbolically is the Balm of Gilead (Jr 8:22). Therefore, I contend that the spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostals is, in part, a reaction to social oppression and economic deprivation.

Impact/affect/transform

Whether members of a Black Hebrew Pentecostal church become involved in the community is dependent on the direction set forth by the leader of the church. If a pastor decides to commit his or her church in combating the ills of society it shall be done. Pastors in the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community have ultimate authority and make final decisions as to the direction of the church even matters outside the walls of their churches. However, several of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches are actively involved in transforming the lives of other people by hosting community projects.

Spiritual maturity

Spiritual maturity can be defined by the power of the Holy Spirit as it impacts individuals. Maturity is judged by how well one possesses the power of the Holy Spirit to sing and make the congregation jump and shout. How much power does a man or a woman have when preaching the Gospel? Are the preachers able to make the congregation react by loud amens, hand clapping and feet stomping? The absence of this reaction shows that there was no power in the sermon and it was void of the Holy Spirit. As the preacher matures he or she will gain more power in his or her sermon to move the emotions of the parishioners. A preacher that fails to move the congregation is considered to be in of the power of maturity through the Holy Spirit. Last but certainly not least in spiritual maturity for the Black Hebrew Pentecostal believer is having the power of the Holy Spirit to lay hands on the sick so that they shall recover. All members should have access to this power.

Education/theological study

Today as more pastors have formal theological training and hold various undergraduate and post-graduate degrees, education has become more valued. Education is not only warmly embraced but is reinforced as a necessity in the American society for economic survival. There is a realization that the more economically secure members are, the more the church can flourish through tithes and offerings. This is not necessarily true of the theological studies. Theological studies do not seem to be of any significant material or practical value because they question too much about God. One Black Hebrew Pentecostal pastor succinctly remarked the books in theological studies are the opinions of men and of a questionable nature. Therefore, theological studies have very little value to the spirituality of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community.

Social issues

Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches establish community programs to combat social ills. The spirituality of Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches causes people to care about the poor and the destitute. Churches run food programs to feed the hungry, deliver food to homeless shelters in New York City, donate clothing to people in need. One church makes monthly

visits to a covenant house for runaway teenagers. They invite teenagers to services and counsel them.

Future changes/areas of growth

Black Hebrew Pentecostals have grown over the years toward an emphasis on formal education. Thirty years ago few members had a formal education and little interest. Later generations obtained more education with a greater interest. Areas of growth in formal education changed attitudes in a relationship with Yahweh. Members began to question their relationship with Yahweh and see Him as less threatening and more loving.

Ecumenical

Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches retain an ecumenical spirituality. They relate well to other denominations such as the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and other Christian denominations. These churches exchange pulpits with Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches with invitations for both men and women to preach. However, this cannot be said of Jehovah's Witnesses who do not visit a church outside of their belief. Ministers from the Seventh Day Adventist church speak at Black Hebrew Pentecostal churches. Generally, the Seventh Day Adventist ministers do not reciprocate with an invitation to Black Hebrew preachers to speak at their church. It is a common belief amongst the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community that the Seventh Day Adventist churches only permit ministers of their faith to speak on their pulpits.

Membership

Becoming a member of the Black Hebrew Pentecostal faith is two-tiered process. A person who joins a temple is placed on the membership role. The new member is traditionally given what is known as the "right hand of fellowship." Then the member begins the arduous task of qualifying for full membership in the spirituality membership group. This takes place when receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. In some Black Pentecostal churches to get the Holy Spirit the member must first tarry to be saved, sanctified and then filled with the Holy Spirit. This phenomenon can take days, months or

years. Thus some worshippers in the Black Pentecostal churches only have partial membership lacking the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit/energizing power

The Holy Spirit has a distinct energizing power for the believer who receives it. This power is vital to the salvation of the saint. A member might be saved but he or she may not have received the energizing power that the Holy Spirit dispenses to all who qualify by tarring and speaking in tongues. This energizing power of the Holy Spirit is called *the quickening power*. It quickens the mortal body of the redeemed and gives him or her power to go back with Yahshua when He returns for the church.

Tongues

Speaking in tongues is vital to the entire Pentecostal movement as both a message to the church and a personal transformation. One bishop experiences two types of transformation when tongues descend upon him. This is unusual. He sings and chants in various recognizable foreign languages. He is transformed from America to Israel where he hears and sees a chanter perched on a high tower. People are dancing in a circle.

In the world but not of the world

This adage speaks metaphorically of the spirituality of the entire Pentecostal movement. This maxim is both spoken and unconsciously understood. And because the aphorism in the world but not of the world resides in the unconscious it sometimes induces trauma on the psychology of the Pentecostal believers in trying to live “in the world but not of the world.” Black Hebrew Pentecostals endure a dualist type of spirituality, struggling to balance two distinct worlds: physical and spiritual. This poses a problem because these are two different worlds. What is also psychological traumatic for the Black Hebrew Pentecostal community is feelings of alienation combined with desire to fit into the physical world. The Black Hebrew Pentecostal is physically in this world but spiritually in the kingdom of God on earth (Lk 11:2). Black Hebrew Pentecostals struggle with questions relating to the adage “in the world but not of the world.”

“In the life of prayer”

As Black people “in the life of payer” (Arraj1989:252) depicts the unique spirituality of the Gideon Knights Church Freedom Church of Jesus Christ and Temple El Shaddai. Black children are taught at an early the value of a prayer life. The Black individual in the life of prayer experiences a distinct spirituality. Prayer sustains a Black race of people by giving them hope. The life blood of prayer is intertwined with the oppression of a Black people acquainted with grief in a racialized American society. The life of prayer delivered Black people out of formal slavery by getting Yahweh to listen to their cries of agony. Prayer continues to deliver them from oppression by asking for Yahweh’s protection. Thus, the life of prayer greatly impacts the spirituality of both the Gideon Knights Church and Temple El Shaddai.

Further research

Aspects of Black Hebrew Pentecostalism offer fertile ground for future research. This surprisingly became a pressing issue at the final days of the field work with Temple El Shaddai during a gathering on a Holy Day. A female pastor who calls herself a prophetess interrupted the lecturer to ask the members in the congregation who was a real Jew. No one stood up to declare themselves a true Hebrew from the seed of Abraham. Only the researcher stood before the congregation and admitted to being a real Hebrew. He gave an account of how he discovered his true identity as a Hebrew. This identification and practice warrants further study. Why do Black Hebrew Pentecostal members who keep the Seventh Day Sabbath and observe all seven Jewish Holy Days doubt their ties to the original Israelites from the seed of Abraham? How do they reconcile the rejection of their Jewish root to belonging to a Black Hebrew Pentecostal religion?

Contributions

This contribution to the discipline of spirituality made by this thesis is the examination of a unique Christian organization. This is the first study of Black Hebrew Pentecostals of its kind. Therefore, this work breaks new ground and poses questions for further exploration.

Black Hebrew Pentecostals were skeptical about how this study would benefit its religious community. One pastor asked, “Will this cause someone to get saved?” Others wanted to know why this work was being done. In light of these concerns, this thesis will be received with mixed feeling in the faith community.

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