

3. SURVEY RESEARCH: INDIVIDUAL CHURCH MEMBERS

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter the first phase of research is described. During this phase a survey research was conducted among individual members of the three denominations identified as target groups. The aim was to obtain preliminary results to serve as a basis for the second phase of the research when emphasis would shift to a more qualitative type of research.

Survey research is a well-known technique for collecting data. Neuman (1997:31) describes this technique as follows: "A survey researcher asks people questions in a written questionnaire (mailed or handed to people) or during an interview, then records answers. The researcher manipulates no situation or condition; people simply answer questions. In survey research, the researcher asks many people numerous questions in a short time period. He or she typically summarizes answers to questions in percentages, tables, or graphs. (...) A survey researcher often uses a sample, or a smaller group of selected people (e.g., 150 students), but generalizes results to a larger group (e.g., 5000 students) from which the smaller group was chosen."

With regard to survey research the three main methods are: self-administered questionnaires, telephone surveys, and face-to-face interviews (Neuman 1997:251-254).

The first type, self-administered questionnaires, was used by Kgatla (1992) in doing research among members of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Zion Christian Church in the Northern Transvaal. This type of survey has serious disadvantages. It is impossible, for example, to control the conditions under which a mail questionnaire is completed. Another disadvantage is that it excludes illiterate and semi-literate people.

The second type, the telephone interview, is worth considering when a large majority of the population can be reached by telephone. In Soshanguve this is not the case.

The third method, face-to-face interviews, has many advantages, including a high response rate, flexibility, and the possibility of lengthy questionnaires. Further, "well-trained interviewers can ask all types of questions, can ask complex questions, and can

use extensive probes” (Neuman 1997:253). The greatest danger of face-to-face interviews is interviewer bias. Interviewers can easily affect the respondents by their wording of questions, tone of voice, etcetera.

Considering the above, we decided in favour of face-to-face interviews. Interviewers with standardised questionnaires posed questions and recorded the respondents’ answers.

This survey was carried out as follows:

Pilot study

A pilot study, conducted in 1995, comprised 65 members of different churches. Various question types were tested. It was established that it would be possible to ‘get people to talk’.

Construction of a questionnaire

It is not easy to compose a good questionnaire. “Question writing is more of an art than a science. It takes skill, practice, patience, and creativity” (Neuman 1997:233). In devising a questionnaire we tried to avoid common errors, such as the use of leading questions, vagueness, jargon, and questions that are beyond respondents’ capabilities. The questions were set in English and Northern Sotho¹⁰.

The questionnaire started with enquiry into the personal background of the respondents. This was followed by questions aimed at ascertaining the significance of the Lordship of Christ in their lives. Direct questions such as ‘do you believe Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life?’ were avoided and an indirect approach opted for. People were asked what Jesus meant to them, what they believed about Him, what they knew about Him, what they believed about his relationship with the Father, with the Holy Spirit, with the church. Some ethical questions were asked to discover whether respondents would commend their everyday decisions to the Lordship of Christ.

Many ‘open questions’ were used. Although this makes the interpretation of the answers more subjective, the advantages are that respondents can answer in detail and may divulge otherwise unanticipated opinions. Neuman maintains that open questions permit

¹⁰ See Appendix for the text of the questionnaire.

self-expression and they may reveal a respondent's logic and frame of reference (1997:241).

The interviewers were instructed to record the respondents' answers as extensively as possible. On occasions respondents asked permission to write down the answers themselves. This was allowed, provided it took place under the supervision of the interviewer.

Training of interviewers

Three young men aged between 20 and 25 were chosen to do the interviews. At the time all three were members of the Free Reformed Church in Soshanguve, where I was doing pastoral and missionary work.

They were made familiar with the contents of the questionnaire and instructed on how to conduct them. They were warned against the different forms of 'interviewer bias', such as sloppiness in recording answers, and influencing the respondents' answers by explaining the questions in a biased way. Practice under my supervision preceded their entry into the community.

Interviewers and I perused completed questionnaires in order to ensure clarity and to gain an impression of the specific respondent (e.g. did they consider him/her to be honest?).

Sampling

It was practically impossible to use standard probability sampling methods. We would have needed member lists of the various churches. These lists were either not available or not up to date. Sometimes local church leaders were prepared to provide us with a selected list of church members. These were probably considered to be the 'star members'.

It was considered appropriate to use a method that Babbie terms 'purposive or judgmental sampling' (:225). Based on our knowledge of the population and the denominations of Soshanguve, we devised a method that would guarantee an acceptable level of representation.

Firstly, we tried via local church leaders to receive their permission to interview church members. In some cases this produced a short list of five to ten addresses. In the case of

the Lutheran church it produced twenty addresses. My estimation is that one third of the addresses were reached in this way.

Secondly, the interviewers sought respondents by using informal networks. This included personal acquaintances furnishing other addresses, attending a church service, or whilst accompanying people home requesting their cooperation in a interview. They also entered parts of Soshanguve where they knew nobody and asked to be directed to homes of ELCSA-, ZCC- or Pentecostal church members.

Thirdly, the interviewers were instructed to conduct interviews in different sections ('blocks') of Soshanguve, to do one interview only at each address, and to take 18 years as a minimum age for respondents. Another prerequisite was that respondents be active members of their respective churches.

These methods and instructions produced a sample of church members that seems to be fairly representative. Given the circumstances, it was the best we could do.

Data processing

The completed questionnaires were processed with regard to quantity and quality.

To begin with answers were coded and entered into the computer using a spread sheet program. This made it easier to analyse, compare results and to obtain percentages.

Secondly, the answers were studied individually. As the questionnaire had many 'open questions' the answers were sometimes quite elaborate. This added much to the value and the quality of the survey research.

3.2 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The survey included questions focusing on the *person* of Jesus Christ. Who is He and what is his relationship to the Father and the Spirit?

Jesus: God, man or angel?

One of the questions here was: “Jesus Christ, what is He: an angel, a human being, God, God and man?” The inclusion of ‘angel’ as a possibility arose from my experience as a missionary. I have heard people say that Jesus Christ is an angel.

Table 1

Jesus Christ, what is He (choose from given options): an angel, a human being, God, God and man?

	<i>ELC¹¹</i>	<i>ZCC¹²</i>	<i>PCs¹³</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
angel	30	38	6	25 %
human being	1	4	3	3 %
God	14	23	42	25%
God and man	53	34	47	45 %
other answers	2	1	2	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

The survey shows that a high percentage believed Jesus to be an angel: 30 % of the Lutherans and 38 % of the ZCC-respondents. The fact that the term ‘angel’ appeared first on the list of possible answers, may have had a positive influence on this percentage. However, it does not explain why the percentage among Pentecostal respondents is so low: only 6 %.

That Jesus is thought to be an angel, does not necessarily mean that He is not thought of as being divine. Respondents had to choose from the given options, but it may well be that the same people who responded by saying that Jesus is an angel, would not object to calling him God or Son of God. Perhaps some respondents interpreted the word ‘angel’ in the literal sense as ‘the one being sent’ (*morongwa* in Sotho). If that is the case, they applied the term to Jesus as the one being sent by the Father. It seems more likely, however, that notions of the person of Jesus are ill-defined.

I would hesitate to state that there is a widespread belief in Jesus as an angel, but I remember a speech by a pastor of an African independent church at a funeral meeting. He

¹¹ ELC = Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa

¹² ZCC = Zion Christian Church

¹³ PCs = Pentecostal churches

related the story of how Jesus was sent to the earth, using the terminology of Isaiah 6. It went like this:

God the Father wanted to send somebody to the earth to help the people there.

So God asked: "Whom shall I send?"

Nobody answered. Of course: who would like to leave heaven?

So God asked again: "Whom shall I send?" Nobody answered.

A third time God asked: "Whom shall I send?"

Then a small little angel, standing in the back row, came forward and said: "Here am I. Send me!"

God was so happy that He said: "You are my son." Then he sent him to earth.

We all know who He is: His name is Jesus Christ.

The divinity of Jesus Christ is attested to in all three denominations albeit in varying degrees. Among the bazalwane 89 % believed that Jesus is divine, among the Lutherans it was 67 % (a low percentage for a church that has a clear doctrine on the matter), and among the ZCC-members it was only 57 %.

Jesus: father, brother, uncle?

How do these Christians see the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Father and the Spirit? Some researchers have stated that Jesus Christ and the Father are sometimes seen as one entity, many people don't see a difference between them. To probe this the following question was asked: "If you had to compare Jesus Christ with a type of relative (e.g. a father, an older brother, or a maternal uncle (malome), what name would you choose?"

The aim was to discover sentiments regarding Jesus Christ. Is He an authoratitive figure (father), is He on the same level (brother), or is He a nice uncle kept at a certain distance (malome)?

The results were as follows:

Table 2

If you had to compare Jesus Christ with a relative (e.g. a father, an older brother, or a maternal uncle (malome), what name would you choose?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
A father	88	82	63	78 %
An older brother	4	3	12	6 %
He is incomparable	3	13	22	13 %
Other answers	5	2	3	3 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

It is clear that many respondents see Jesus Christ as a sort of father-figure. Among Lutheran and ZCC-respondents it is a large majority (88 and 82 % respectively). Among Pentecostal respondents there is more variety: 63 % see Jesus as a father-figure, 12 % see him as a sort of older brother, and 22 % are reluctant to apply a single name to Jesus: they say He is incomparable.

Our findings here do not prove that respondents are unable to differentiate between the Father and the Son. But if other evidence should point in that direction, these results would not be contradictory.

Jesus and the Father

With regard to Jesus' relationship to God the Father two questions were asked.

The first question was: "What is the relationship between Jesus Christ and God the Father?", but this question did not produce unexpected or meaningful results. In all three churches about two thirds of the respondents said: they are father and son. Most of the others said: they are one.

Among the ZCC-respondents a small group (10 %) said: Jesus is the messenger of God. This corresponds with those who said they believe Jesus is an angel.

The second question was: "How does the work of Jesus Christ differ from the work of God the Father?" For most respondents, who were reluctant to separate the Father and the Son, this was a poser. The following table shows the results:

Table 3

How does the work of Jesus Christ differ from the work of God the Father?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
There is no difference	64	73	55	64 %
Father is Creator, Jesus Saviour	20	5	17	14 %
Jesus intercedes, Father forgives	6	5	20	10 %
Jesus is messenger, Father sender	10	14	8	11 %
Don't know	0	3	0	1 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

It is difficult to draw reliable conclusions from these answers. For example, with regard to those who said there is no difference between the work of the Father and the Son, one cannot conclude that they are unable to distinguish between the work of the Father and the Son. Perhaps a strong impression that both the Father and the Son are actively involved in the same work, e.g. the work of salvation, prompted their reply.

Pentecostal respondents are shown to differentiate more between the work of the Father and the Son than others. The least distinction made between the work of the Father and that of the Son occurred among ZCC-respondents, where 73% said they see no difference. This reminds one of Lukhaimane's statement that ZCC-members do not know how to differentiate between the Father and the Son (1980:42).

Jesus and the Holy Spirit

With regard to Jesus' relationship to the Holy Spirit the same questions were asked.

The first question was: "What is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?" Across the board more than 75 % of the respondents said: "They are one."

Keeping in mind the importance of baptism in the ZCC, it is interesting to note that 10 % of the ZCC-respondents replied: "Jesus was baptized by the Holy Spirit".

The second question was: "How does the work of Jesus Christ differ from the work of the Holy Spirit?" Here even more respondents said they do not see any difference.

Table 4

How does the work of Jesus Christ differ from the work of the Holy Spirit?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
There is no difference	76	70	62	69 %
Christ is Saviour/Interceder, the Spirit guides/washes/renews us	15	8	33	19 %
Other answers	3	14	4	7 %
Don't know	6	8	1	5 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

This question elicited more 'don't knows' and unintelligible answers than previous ones. Many respondents were happy to say there is no difference between the work of the Son and the Spirit. Again we see that the bazalwane-respondents show more variety in their answers than others. Among ZCC-members there was an interesting answer that recurred, which one lady put like this: "Jesus is the son of God and the Holy Spirit is just the spirit of our ancestors."

Interim-conclusions (1): The person of Jesus Christ

The majority of respondents affirmed the divinity of Jesus Christ, but there were notable differences between the various church groups.

- 1) Among the Lutheran respondents only two thirds (67 %) affirmed the divinity of Jesus Christ. As noted previously, this is a low figure for a church that has clear doctrine on the matter. Furthermore, many Lutheran respondents did not have much to say when asked to differentiate between the work of the Son and the Father, and the Son and the Spirit.
- 2) Among the ZCC-respondents the percentage attesting to the divinity of Christ was even lower: only 57 %. Vague ideas about Jesus Christ, who He is and what He does, are more prevalent than in the Lutheran church.

- 3) A large majority (89 %) of Pentecostal respondents professed the divinity of Jesus Christ. They also seem to have a much clearer view on the Trinity, and the (working) relationship between the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

“What does Jesus Christ mean to you?”

It was mentioned earlier that no direct questions were asked about the Lordship of Christ, while questions about the person and work of Christ were put in broad terms. It would expose to what degree the Lordship of Christ is a reality. One such broad question was: “What does Jesus Christ mean to you?”

The majority of respondents used the word ‘Saviour’ or, in Sotho: *Mophološi*. Some said: He is “my Saviour”, while others generalized saying He is “the Saviour”. Of course this can mean many things. It does not specify what it is that Jesus saves us from (sins, disease, bad luck?) nor does it say how He accomplishes this salvation. Some respondents used the word ‘King’ or, in Sotho: *Kgoši* (among Lutherans 6 %, ZCC-members 7 %, Pentecostals 14 %). Interestingly 5 % of the ZCC-respondents did not know what to say. One long time ZCC-member explained: “I only believe in my church. I don’t emphasize Jesus too much.”

Jesus and the individual believer

The same question was put in a more specific way and applied to the personal relationship respondents had with Jesus Christ: “What is the most important role Jesus Christ plays in your life?” Many different answers were given, many of them Biblical. Which aspect of Jesus’ work do respondents emphasize? The following table demonstrates an interesting response.

Table 5

What is the most important role Jesus Christ plays in your life?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Sustainer of my life (gives many things)	50	32	20	34 %

Protector against dangers and misfortune	15	32	10	19 %
Protector against spiritual enemies	5	3	12	7 %
Guider through life's problems	5	0	0	3 %
Guider who strengthens spiritually	5	0	17	6 %
Saviour from sins	10	12	6	9 %
Lord who controls my life	0	0	12	4 %
Comforter in hard times	0	0	8	3 %
Don't know	0	6	0	2 %
Other answers	10	15	15	13 %
	100	100	100	100 %

A closer look at the different categories and the expressions used, will prove worthwhile.

Sustainer of my life:

- Among Lutheran respondents particularly (50 %), Jesus was seen as a Giver of many good and desired things. A popular answer in this category was: "He gives me everything I need" (25 %). Some mentioned items such as: food, clothes, money. Others (15 %) put it more vaguely: "He gives me many things", without specifying. Others (10 %) said: "He gives me life." These answers reflect the vague concepts of the work which distinguish the Father and the Son.
- A significant number of ZCC-respondents also found that this category fulfilled their perceptions (32 %). The same phrases appeared on the answer sheets: "He gives me everything I want" (15 %), "He gives me many things" (12 %), and "He gives me life" (13 %).
- Pentecostal respondents showed less enthusiasm here, claiming only 20 % of the respondents. Examples mentioned here were: life, "many things", happiness, job, good health.

Protector against dangers and misfortune

- Among the Lutheran respondents 15 % mentioned protection as a work of primary importance. Respondents cited dangers like: accidents, diseases, and bad people such as sorcerers.
- For the ZCC-respondents protection was a very important issue: 32 % of the respondents mentioned it as the primary work of Christ. Examples of dangers given were: day to day problems (accidents, diseases) and dangerous people (thieves, sorcerers). These answers

reflect the pre-Christian worldview of African people, in which fear of witchcraft was a dominant feature.

- Pentecostal respondents also mentioned protection as an important work of Christ, but they tended to think more in the direction of spiritual dangers. Only 10 % opted for the category of 'earthly' dangers.

Protection against spiritual enemies

- For Lutheran and ZCC-respondents this was not an important aspect of the work of Christ (5 and 3 % respectively). Apparently the demonic spiritual powers are not as real for these groups as for the bazalwane.
- For Pentecostal respondents protection against spiritual enemies was important (12 %). Examples given here were: the devil, evil spirits, unbelieving people who might have a bad influence on you.

Guider through life's problems

- 5 % of the Lutheran respondents saw Jesus as a helper or guide who escorts them through the problems of everyday life.
- Among ZCC- and bazalwane-respondents this aspect did not surface.

Guider who strengthens spiritually

- 5 % of the Lutheran respondents saw Jesus as a guide to help them overcome spiritual problems.
- Among ZCC-members this answer didn't feature.
- Among bazalwane-respondents it was more important (10 %). Some examples of answers given are: "He prevents me from falling spiritually", "He helps me to fight against my enemies", "He prevents me from doing evil".

Saviour from sins

- 10% of Lutheran respondents mentioned this as the primary work of Christ. Most of them referred to the fact that He has died on the cross for our sins.
- Among ZCC-respondents 12 % fell into this category. They too referred mostly to the work of Christ on the cross.

- Among bazalwane-respondents 6 % mentioned Jesus in connection with forgiveness of sins. The difference was that they concentrated more on the present work of Christ by calling Him Mediator, or by referring to his interceding work in heaven.

Lord who controls my life

- Response here came from among bazalwane-respondents only (12 %). Some of them used the phrase 'controlling my life', some said "He is Lord over my life". The term 'Lord' was actually used by 5 % of the respondents.

Comforter in hard times

- This answer too was given by bazalwane-respondents only (8 %). The hardships mentioned were both 'earthly' and spiritual.

Don't know

- This category was found among ZCC-members only (6 %). The answers varied from a simple "nothing" to: "I believe in my church, not in Christ."

Other answers

- 10 % of the Lutheran respondents gave answers that were difficult to classify. For instance: Someone said, "Jesus is my partner", and another said "He gives me life when I pray to Him and my ancestors".
- 15 % of the ZCC-respondents also gave answers that were difficult to categorize. Further examples are: Someone said: "He mediates between me, my ancestors and God", while another person said: "He showed me that there is nothing for nothing in the world; if you don't pray, you don't get anything".
- 15 % of the bazalwane-respondents gave answers that were difficult to classify, mainly because they were so elaborate. A few examples: Someone said: "He is my Redeemer, Counsellor, Saviour, Mediator and Healer, also Shepherd, and last but not least the Starter and Finisher of my faith." Another one answered: "Jesus Christ is my Lord who protects me against any harm and guides me in his way." A third respondent wrote: "Jesus is my Redeemer, my Lord, my Saviour, my God; He is conforming me into his likeness; He is interceding for us as our High Priest." Such a wealth of Biblical understanding was only found among Bazalwane-respondents.

Interim-conclusions (2): The work of Jesus Christ

- 1) Among Lutheran respondents no reference was made to the Lordship of Christ. The majority of respondents saw Jesus as the benevolent provider of various things, or they saw Him as a protector against a host of misfortunes. One wonders whether the same question asked with regard to God the Father would have elicited a similar response.
- 2) The same applies to the ZCC-respondents, but the emphasis shifted a little from 'provider' to 'protector'. Christ was never seen as the one who rules or controls the lives of Christians. Again one wonders whether the same answers would not have been given with regard to God the Father. It is disturbing that some ZCC-members are unable to say anything about Jesus Christ and that a few even say: I believe in my church, I don't know what to say about Christ.
- 3) A clear testimony to the Lordship of Christ occurred among Pentecostal respondents. Not only did 12 % actually experience Him as the one controlling their lives (and some even called Him 'my Lord'), but other answers also reflected His Lordship. The 17 % that see Jesus as guide and spiritual preserver, who prevents their fall, and those who see Him as a protector against spiritual enemies, can be placed in one group. The 15 % of 'other answers' included many where the Lordship of Christ arose in one way or another. In summary we can say that in their answers approximately 40 % of the Pentecostal respondents revealed the importance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This does not mean, of course, that the other 60 % do not see Jesus as the Lord, but they did not mention it as one of the more important aspects of his work.
- 4) As a general observation it can be added that there seems to be a correlation between the rejection of paganism and the recognition of the Lordship of Christ. Among Pentecostal respondents, where paganism has been rejected more radically than in other groups (as will be shown below), the Lordship of Christ is better established.

Being born again

It was considered important to gain perceptions about rebirth and to compare these to the answers given with regard to the personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Two questions were asked: 1) “Are you born again?”, 2) “What does it mean to be born again?”

Table 6

Are you born again?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Yes	85	84	99	89 %
No	11	14	1	9 %
Not sure	4	2	0	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

It is clear that among Pentecostal respondents almost everybody considers themselves to be born again. Among Lutheran and ZCC-respondents a clear majority believed they were born again, but some did not.

According to my interviewers there was an uneasiness among Lutheran and ZCC-respondents on the issue of being born again, even among those who professed to be born again Christians. It seems that being born again is seen as a ‘bazalwane’ characteristic because they always stress repentance and a lifestyle that is different from the old. This uneasiness of Lutheran and ZCC-respondents may be interpreted as follows: They also feel they are real Christians, and so concur when asked whether they are born again. At the same time, however, they are not sure about where they stand with regard to the Pentecostal teachings on being ‘saved’. In some cases this may even lead to a denial of being born again. Among the respondents who stated that they were not born again, there was one telling comment from a committed member of the Lutheran church. She said: “We don’t know these things of the Holy Spirit and being born again. We are a church of the law.”

Table 7*What does it mean to be born again?*

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
It means:				
- to be baptized	31	50	8	30 %
- to be baptized and receive the Spirit	7	10	22	13 %
- to accept Jesus as Saviour	24	0	25	16 %
- to believe in Christ	0	12	0	4 %
- to repent from sins and start a new life	11	0	21	11 %
- to become a new creation	0	0	8	3 %
- to change and do the right things	0	13	0	4 %
- to be a child of God and do his will	19	5	0	8 %
- you don't do sins anymore	0	0	5	2 %
- other answers	8	3	11	7 %
- don't know	0	7	0	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

The responses are interesting.

- Answers given by ZCC-respondents suggest that they hold the view that being born again coincides with baptism. No less than 50 % of ZCC-respondents stated: To be born again "is to be baptized". This illustrates the importance of baptism as a ritual and it raises questions about ritualism in the ZCC. It is worth noting that the phrase "to accept Jesus as Saviour" was not given by ZCC-respondents at all, whereas it was a popular answer among both Lutherans and Bazalwane (about 25 %). In fact, among ZCC-respondents only 12 % mentioned the name of Christ in connection with baptism in saying: to be born again means to believe in Christ. Noteworthy also is the fact that only 10 % mentioned the Holy Spirit in connection with being born again. For a church that has been termed 'Pentecostal-type' one would have expected the percentage to be higher. It appears that 'to be born again' among ZCC-members is mostly interpreted in a legalistic sense, namely 'to do the right things'. Even repentance was not mentioned in connection with being born again. The phrase used here was: 'go fetoga' (to change), which is more shallow than 'go sokologa' (to

repent). It also uncovered much uncertainty or even lack of knowledge with regard to the whole issue of being born again: 7 % of the respondents gave a 'don't know' and one respondent, a teacher, even said: "Man is born once, the question is wrong."

- Among Pentecostal respondents there was a greater consciousness of rebirth involving a personal relationship with God. The acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour was mentioned by 25 % of the respondents, receiving the Spirit was mentioned by 22 %, and the term 'repentance' was used by 21 %. Regeneration is clearly seen by many bazalwane as a personal decision to 'accept' or to 'receive' Jesus Christ as one's Saviour (many added: and Lord). Some of the respondents explained that after being born again, Christ rules them as Lord or King.
- Among Lutheran respondents the picture was more diffuse. On the one hand no less than 31 % said that to be born again is to be baptized. This may indicate 'ex opere operato'-beliefs (baptism producing faith immediately). Whether this is indeed the case will be investigated during a later stage of our research. On the other hand a fair percentage (24 %) of respondents said that to be born again is to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and 11 % said it means to receive the Holy Spirit. These answers resemble answers given by bazalwane.

Law and salvation

Following and liaising with the question on rebirth, we investigated whether there are many Christians who hold a legalistic view of salvation. More light was shed on this matter by the answers to the next question "What is the main message of the Bible?"

Table 8

What is the main message of the Bible?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
To show us the way to God	40	24	28	31 %
'The ten commandments'	18	16	8	14 %
To teach us what God wants	2	19	3	8 %
To guide us in our lives	15	14	6	12 %
To teach us the way of salvation	0	0	18	6 %

'Love God, love your neighbour'	14	17	15	15 %
That we should repent	2	4	17	8 %
'God is love'	6	2	5	4 %
Other answers	3	4	0	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

Some of the answers given cannot be said to point in one direction or another. For example, the answer 'to guide us in our lives' could function in a legalistic setting just as well as in the view that salvation is received through the atoning work of Christ. There were, however, some answers that indicate a legalistic setting. Those respondents who simply stated that the main message of the Bible is 'the ten commandments' and those who answered 'to teach us what God wants', may be expected to have a legalistic view on salvation. These answers were prominent among Lutheran (20 %) and ZCC-respondents (35 %). An answer that can be interpreted as non-legalistic was given by 18 % of the Pentecostal respondents. They said: The main message of the Bible is to teach us the way of salvation. This answer did not surface at all among Lutheran and ZCC-respondents.

Interim-conclusions (3): Salvation

- With regard to the views on salvation, Lutheran and ZCC-respondents tend to have a more legalistic attitude than bazalwane-respondents.
- Answers given by ZCC-respondents suggest that there is also a ritualistic view on salvation in this particular church.

Jesus: Lord of everyday life?

Whether Jesus is the Lord and Master of their lives was tested by questions which raised a practical and ethical problem. Respondents' action or reaction to the situation was required.

Although the answers were not expected to refer to Jesus Christ directly as a reason for acting in a certain way, it would however give some information about the Christian lifestyle of believers from the different groups. An attempt was made at establishing how pragmatic or normative respondents were in their personal everyday decisions.

Table 9

Suppose your neighbour sells clothes which he has stolen somewhere. They are beautiful and cheap. Will you buy them? Motivate your answer.

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
No, stealing is against the law of God	78	91	99	89 %
No, I might be arrested by the police	6	2	0	3 %
Yes, because I'm poor	13	6	0	6 %
Other answers	3	1	1	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

On a scale ranging between being pragmatic and being normative in approach, it appeared that Lutherans would be the most pragmatic and Pentecostals would be the most normative thinking and living people. This is illustrated by the answers given to the question of buying the stolen clothes. The second and third answer may be interpreted as pragmatic answers. It is clear that among Lutherans (and to a lesser extent ZCC-members) there is a tendency to be ruled by advantage rather than by principles and norms.

Traditional beliefs and practices

Another important issue in black churches is the role of traditional beliefs. The perceptions of respondents with regard to traditional beliefs and practices were tested by various questions. There was a question that touched on the popular belief that ancestor spirits can trouble a baby at night, and that the solution is that one should give the child another name.

Table 10

You have a little baby that cries a lot during the night. Other people tell you this problem has something to do with the ancestor spirits. You should probably change the child's name. What are you going to do?

	ELC	ZCC	PCs	TOTAL
I will change the name	37	16	2	18 %
I'll take the child to the traditional healer and find out what is the problem	0	4	0	1 %
I won't change the name	33	17	24	25 %
I'll pray to God	19	37	51	36 %
I'll call the pastors/take the child to church	3	17	9	10 %
I'll take the child to a medical doctor	7	6	3	5 %
I'll pray and cast out the demons	1	0	11	4 %
Other answers	0	3	0	1 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

A wide variety of responses emerged from among Lutheran respondents. Some stated categorically that they would never change the name (33 %) and many of them added: "because I do not believe in ancestor spirits" (10 %). Others said they would definitely change the name (37 %) and some of them added: "*Ke kotsi, badimo ba ka bolaya ngwana*" (it is dangerous, the ancestor spirits can kill the child) (7 %). One man said he would "buy a goat and kill it for my ancestors so that they can give my child a new name". A woman said she would pray and ask the ancestors to reveal the new name in a dream. Others said they would change the name "just to see what happens".

Among the ZCC-respondents the picture was also diffuse. Some of those who said "I will not change the name" (17 %), gave as their reason: "I do not believe in ancestor spirits." Some of those who said they would indeed change the name (16 %), apparently did believe in ancestor spirits. One respondent said: "*Ga go na choice. Badimo ba tla pele. Kereke e tla morago*" (There is no option: ancestors come first, the church afterwards). Some others saw no problem in combining the two. One man, a school teacher, answered: "*A ye ngakeng ya sotho, gape, a rapele Modimo. Dilo tšeo di a tsamaisana mo tumelong ya rena.*" (She should consult the traditional healer and at the same time pray to God. These things go together in our faith).

It is interesting and probably typical for the ZCC as a so-called ‘healing’ church, that a high percentage of respondents would take their child to the pastors of the church or ask church leaders to come and pray at the home. Some respondents said that if the child was seriously ill, they would ask for a *mpogo* (an all night prayer with singing and dancing) to be held at home.

Among Pentecostal respondents the picture was unambiguous. The influence of ancestor spirits was never mentioned as something to be reckoned with. Many respondents said that there is no such thing as ancestor spirits. A significant number said that it is perfectly normal for a child to cry and nothing to worry about. Others, however, felt that it might be a case of evil spirits (11 %) and that these spirits should be rebuked and cast out in the name of Jesus. Most of the respondents said one should just pray to God (51 %), and some added that prayer should be combined with fasting or the laying on of hands.

The call to become a traditional healer

Another question that touched on traditional beliefs was the one about a woman being plagued by diseases. Often this is interpreted as a call to become a traditional healer, especially when she has dreams and hears voices and when ‘it is in the family’ (e.g., when a grandmother or grandfather is also a traditional healer).

Table 11

A christian woman is plagued by diseases all the time. Her grandmother (who is a traditional healer, a ngaka) tells her she should be trained to become a ngaka herself. What should she do? Motivate your answer.

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
She should go in order to get well	26	18	0	15 %
She should not go but pray / be prayed for	74	76	100	83 %
She should not go but become a prophet in the church	0	6	0	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

The results are similar to the previous case. Pentecostal respondents were unanimous in saying that the woman should not go for *ngaka*-training. Some of the respondents said that there is no such thing as an ancestral spirit which calls her. Many respondents (50 %) were explicit in the opinion that this was a case of demons troubling the woman, and it can be expected that many more respondents would agree with this.

Among Lutheran respondents the picture was once again widespread. Most of the respondents (74 %) said the woman should not go but pray (or be prayed for). Out of this group 11 % expressly stated that this problem had to do with demons. There was another group, however (26 %), that would advise the woman to go and become a traditional healer. One respondent put it like this: "*A ka ya go thwasa, fela, a kgopele green light mo kerekeng. Ge a feditše go thwasa, a ka boa a boele kerekeng. Ke bolwetsi fela.*" (She can go and be trained but first she must ask the church for the green light; after that she can come back and inform the church. It is only a disease). The words '*ke bolwetsi fela*' (it is only a disease) are important. It implies: to go for () *ngaka*-training is not a sin. Another respondent said: "*Ge e le pitšo, o swanetše go ya.*" (If it's a call, she should go).

Among the ZCC-respondents the tendencies were similar. A group of 18 % said the woman should go and train to be a traditional healer. One woman said: "She must go because we must remember our ancestors as they were known before God was known by people." The majority, however (75 %), said that the woman should not go but pray (or be prayed for). Among them some (7 %) added that it was a case of demons troubling the woman. Another group of respondents (6 %) said that the woman should go to church and that her 'gift' should be used by helping her to become a prophet or *lebone* (light) within the church. One man who spoke from experience explained: "*Batho ba mpoditše gore ke swanetše go ya go thwasa. Ka gana, ka ya kerekeng. Kua kerekeng ba dirile gore moya wa ka e be wa go porofeta batho.*" (People told me I should go and be trained to become a diviner. I refused and went to the church instead. In the church they made my spirit to be a spirit of prophesying to people.)

Ancestor spirits

The perceptions of church members with respect to traditional beliefs and practices were examined by other questions as well. The answers to two of these questions will be particularly helpful in further clarifying the situation. The first question asked specifically after people's perceptions of ancestor spirits. The second question tried to find out more about existing perceptions of traditional healers.

Table 12

Should the church allow church members to reverence ancestors? (Explain)

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
No, it is wrong/against the Bible	70	64	100	78 %
Yes, it's our culture/ my church allows it	13	22	0	12 %
Yes, they take our prayers to God	11	11	0	7 %
Yes, they give us many things	6	3	0	3 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

Lutheran respondents were divided: 70 % of them said it is wrong to venerate ancestors, 30 % did not have a problem with it. Of those who were opposed the reasons given were:

- it is useless because ancestor spirits do not exist,
- it is a sin because you cannot serve two gods

Among those who did not have a problem with it, reasons given were:

- ancestor spirits have power and give us many things
- ancestor spirits are on the same level as God and, as some respondents said, "they work together"; one man added: "Jesus himself is an ancestor".
- it is a matter of culture; as one respondent said: "People believed in God before the white man came here; they prayed to God through their ancestors."

Among ZCC-respondents it was much the same picture. A two-thirds majority of ZCC-respondents (64 %) said that it is wrong to venerate ancestors because “you cannot serve two gods”. Many, on the other hand, said there is no error in doing that, and many of them plainly stated: “My church allows that.” Among the explanations given by ZCC-respondents, there were different and conflicting statements. One respondent expressed the opinion that: “Tradition should be left behind as soon as you become a Christian.”, while another said: “The church won’t change your tradition.” The next respondent asserted: “*Modimo le badimo ga ba kopane*” (God and ancestors do not go together) while the subsequent respondent gave the converse opinion: “There is no problem, Jesus is also an ancestor and we pray to him.”

Pentecostal respondents were unanimous in saying that a true Christian doesn’t venerate ancestor spirits. This answer got a full 100 %. The explanations given varied from “It is an abomination” to “one cannot serve two masters”, and “even the Jews did not venerate their ancestors because they knew God.” Quite a few respondents added Bible verses to support their answer: for example Deut. 18,10-12 (“Let no one be found among you who consults the dead”).

Visiting a traditional healer

The next question aimed at finding out whether visiting a traditional healer was seen as a sin or, in certain circumstances, an acceptable method of solving a problem. The question asked was in fact a double one: “If a church member consults a diviner because of some serious problem, should he or she be disciplined?” This question asks firstly whether it is wrong to visit a traditional healer, and if so, secondly, whether such a person should be disciplined.

Table 13

If a church member consults a diviner because of some serious problem, should he or she be disciplined? (Explain)

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Yes, because Christianity and diviners/ bones (<i>ditaola</i>) don't go together	61	80	90	77 %
No, it may be wrong, but the church should not interfere/discipline	22	8	8	13 %
No, the diviner can help so there is no mistake	16	8	0	8 %
Other answers	1	4	2	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

Of the three groups, the Lutherans had the largest percentage of those who saw no problem in visiting a diviner: 16 %. Many of these respondents felt that diviners help people, therefore their help should be welcomed. They did not see a contradiction in being a Christian and seeking help from a traditional healer. Some argued that even diviners pray to God. Another group of Lutheran respondents (22 %) held the view that the church should not interfere in these things. Some said: "The church may advise, but should not discipline." Others said: "This is a personal matter. The church should not interfere." In this group there seemed to be uncertainty about the whole issue of visiting a diviner. A few respondents said the solution lay in allowing both Christianity and traditional healing methods, provided one does not mix them. As one respondent said: "*Motho a se ke a tsentsha dihlare mo kerekeng*" (One should not take the traditional medicine into the church).

A majority of Lutheran respondents (61 %) said that a church member should be disciplined for going to a traditional healer. Some argued that it is wrong according to the Bible, some said it shows that the person does not have faith in God. Others gave more pragmatic reasons: "It does not help to go to a diviner", or: "You will loose a lot of money".

A word of caution may be necessary here. Some respondents may have sensed the negative view held by interviewers on the visiting of traditional healers, and consequently gave the answer 'that a Christian should give'. The practice may be different from the preaching, but this is hard to establish.

ZCC-members were also divided on the matter. However, an amazingly large majority of them (80 %) stated that it is wrong to go to a traditional healer and that such a person should be disciplined. The main reason for this seems to be that the ZCC wants its members to come to the church for healing. In a way the traditional healers are competitors of the ZCC-church leadership! One answer illustrating this was: *“Motho a se ke a ya ngakeng. A ye kerekeng. Kereke ya rena e na le thušo.”* (A person should not go to the traditional healer. He/she should go to church. Our church is able to help). A few respondents stated: *“Mo kerekeng ya rena re ka no rapela badimo, fela, go ya ngakeng ke phošo”* (In our church we can venerate ancestors, but to go to a diviner is wrong).

With regard to the ZCC-respondents a similar remark may be necessary to the one made with regard to the Lutheran respondents. It must be considered that of the 80% deeming the visit of a diviner untenable, the practice may be different from the preaching. One of the interviewers told the story of a respondent instructing him: “Write down: Yes, the person should be disciplined, because if he consults the diviners he does not believe in God.” Afterwards, however, when the interviewer asked: Do you really think so?, he said: *“Ga ke tsebe, ge go na le problem e serious, a ka ya ngakeng.”* (I don’t know, if there is a serious problem, he can go to the diviner).

The Pentecostal respondents were unanimous in the opinion that a true Christian does not go to a traditional healer. “Nobody who knows the truth, will go to a diviner”, one lady said. “God is a jealous God”, said another. “It will make you associate with evil spirits”, a third one argued. The answers showed that there is no uncertainty about this. One cannot seek help from God and the diviners at the same time. A true Christian doesn’t go to a traditional healer.

The only point where to some extent opinions were divided, was whether someone who did consult a diviner should be disciplined or not. One respondent said that it was useless to discipline such a person as he had shown that he was already out of the kingdom. Many respondents said that such a person should not be disciplined but evangelized. Even among the large majority of those who answered ‘Yes, the person should be disciplined’ the emphasis was more on the fact that it is wrong to go to a diviner, than on

the discipline itself. Those who felt strongly that a Christian who consults a diviner should be disciplined, sometimes quoted a Bible verse to prove the point, e.g. 2 Thess 3,14-15 ("warn him as a brother").

Interim-conclusions (4): Traditional beliefs and practices

To summarize the point about traditional beliefs and practices:

- The Pentecostal respondents unanimously reject traditional beliefs and practices, whether that be to venerate ancestor spirits or to visit traditional healers.
- The ZCC-respondents show more tolerance towards some traditional practices. Visiting a traditional healer is generally seen as wrong (people should seek help in the church instead). Listening to the call of ancestor spirits is judged less severely however. Whereas the majority of respondents object to this practice, quite a large minority do not see anything wrong with it.
- Among Lutheran respondents a large minority does not have a problem with combining Christianity and traditional practices.

Jesus Head of the church

Although the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His position as Head of the church are not synonymous, it seemed worthwhile to establish what views respondents hold on it. Do they see Jesus as the one governing the church by his Word and Spirit? Two questions were asked about this. The first one was: What is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church?

Table 14

What is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Jesus is the Head of the church	73	55	83	70 %
In the church people pray to Him	18	36	11	22 %
Other answers	7	7	5	8 %
I don't know	2	2	1	2 %
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

The differences between the three groups are interesting. The group of Pentecostal respondents had the highest percentage confirming Jesus as the Head of the church (83 %). Among ZCC-respondents the percentage was much lower: only 55 %. One is inclined to suspect that bishop Lekganyane is seen as the head of the ZCC, thus leaving no room for experience of Jesus Christ as head of the church. Furthermore, the fact that 36 % of ZCC-respondents portray the relationship between Jesus and the church as that in the church people pray to him, supports the findings that ZCC-respondents do not differentiate much between the Father and the Son.

The second question asked was: "How does Jesus strengthen the church?" The idea was that this question would give respondents the opportunity to say something about the Lordship of Christ, for example by referring to Him as the One governing or preserving the church. The following table has the results.

Table 15

How does Jesus strengthen the church?

	<i>ELC</i>	<i>ZCC</i>	<i>PCs</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
By praying for the church	37	43	36	39 %
Through the Holy Spirit	30	22	41	31 %
By his Word	3	5	5	4 %
Through our prayers	9	5	4	6 %
By blessing the church	8	4	1	4 %
Other answers	10	15	13	13 %
Don't know	3	6	0	3%
TOTAL	100	100	100	100 %

The Lordship of Christ is not mentioned in as many words here, but some answers may imply it. Especially when it is said 'through the Holy Spirit', it can mean that the respondents see Christ as the Head of the church, governing the church through his Spirit. The same applies to the answers 'by his Word' and 'by blessing the church'. A striking feature here is the low score for the answer 'by his Word'. Seen Biblically the Lord Jesus strengthens his church through his Word and Spirit. The answers given reflect only the Spirit, not the Word. Apparently respondents in all three denominations do not see a strong link between Jesus and the Bible. There may be a tendency to separate the Spirit and the Word of God.

Interim-conclusions (5): Jesus and the church

- A definite belief that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church emerged from among Pentecostal respondents. This could also be established from the Lutheran respondents.
- Among ZCC-respondents only a small majority think in terms of Jesus being the head of the church. This may have to do with the position of the bishop in this particular church.

3.3 CONCLUSIONS

Lutheran respondents

The survey research done among individual members of the Lutheran Church leads to the following conclusions:

1. The beliefs with regard to the person of Jesus Christ are rather vague. Only two thirds of the respondents affirmed the divinity of Jesus. The majority of respondents found it

difficult to differentiate between the work of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Jesus seems to be a rather remote figure for many respondents.

2. Jesus Christ is viewed primarily as a provider of things that are needed and desired for everyday life (health, prosperity, etc.). He is not primarily seen as an authoritative figure in people's lives and faith.
3. The answers given suggest that there is a legalistic trend among Lutheran church members. It seems that 'doing what is right (according to the rules of the church)' would better describe the attitude of Lutherans generally than 'being led by Christ (through his Word and Spirit)'.
4. Confusion was found among Lutheran church members regarding the attitude towards traditional beliefs and practices. Some reject these beliefs and practices totally, some accept them without reservation, and many seem to be unsure.

ZCC-respondents

The survey research done among individual members of the ZCC leads to the following conclusions:

1. The beliefs with regard to the person of Jesus Christ are vague. Only 57 % affirm the divinity of Jesus. ZCC-respondents find it difficult to differentiate between the three persons of the Trinity, especially between the Father and the Son.
2. Jesus Christ is primarily seen as a provider of needs for everyday life (health, prosperity, etc.), as well as a protector against certain dangers in daily life (witchcraft, accidents, etc.). There is no clear dividing line between the work of the Father and the Son.
3. Jesus Christ is not seen as an authoritative figure in a Christian's life and faith. In the view of ZCC-respondents the ZCC has taken this authority upon itself (through its head, the bishop, and through its laws and instructions). It seems that 'to live according to the rules of the church' would better describe the general attitude of ZCC-members than 'being led by Christ (through his Word and Spirit)'. There seems to be a legalistic trend in the ZCC.
4. When it comes to aspects of salvation such as forgiveness of sins and repentance, there seems to be a tendency towards ritualism (e.g., through baptism).

Pentecostal respondents

The survey research done among individual members of Bazalwane-churches leads to the following conclusions:

1. The divinity of Jesus Christ is affirmed by a large majority of the bazalwane-respondents. Many of the respondents were able to differentiate between the work of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
2. Jesus Christ is generally seen as a powerful and victorious saviour who is able to protect his followers against all sorts of dangers: natural (e.g. accidents), spiritual (e.g. falling into sin), supernatural (e.g. demonic influence).
3. The Lordship of Jesus Christ is recognized. It may be, however, that the Lordship of Christ is understood primarily in terms of his power to protect and to deliver from negative forces, and only secondarily in terms of his authority to rule the lives of believers through his Word and Spirit.