

Does the traditional healer have a religious distinctiveness in Modern-day South Africa?

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Abstract

Research alludes that the South African traditional healer is not a medical identity, but origin from the old Traditional African Religious Culture as a traditional religious-healer; a spiritual remnant from a previous, pre-modern time of living. Hereto had the New South Africa not only undergo dramatic religious, social, economical and political changes after 1994, but had already moved into new religious and cultural domains centuries ago, leaving many of its pre-modern religious and cultural beliefs, such as the traditional healer and his religious activities, totally behind. Present-day political and cultural moulding by politicians and cultural leaders with outdated thoughts and intentions, as the enforcing of Act No 22 (2007) and the re-starting of the traditional healer as a spiritual practitioner, are met more and more with resistance, aggression and even disrespect. It is thus important to research and to determine changes in South Africans religious values and styles to can see if the traditional healer has a religious distinctiveness in modern-day South Africa. The aim of the study was thus to determine if the South African traditional healer has a South African religious distinctiveness to make him unique and significant as a religious practitioner in Modern-day South Africa.

Keywords: African religion, indigenous, homo Africanus, homo Europeanist, priest, religious distinctiveness, spiritual, traditional healer.

1. Introduction and background

Some research on the status of the South African traditional healer and traditional healing, that includes research on Act No 22 (2007) and its various definitions, identify a so called exclusive religious distinctiveness to be associated with the traditional healer in the modern-day South African Society. These opinions reflect that the traditional healer is an essential and a prominent part of the religious life of Black South Africans, especially those in the poorer rural areas. This alleged religious distinctiveness stands specific in relation to their believing in the supernatural and the evil-doings of the witch; elements which are built into Act No 22 (2007) and are seen as an exclusive part of the traditional healer's spiritual practice

(Boon, 1996; Essien, 2013; Gumede, 1990; Mbiti, 1991).

Hereto see various other researchers above assumptions, views and opinions of the role of the traditional healer in the South African society as a religious practitioner as insignificant or even as untrue. Evidence shows in total only between 1,2% and 1,5% of the population makes use of the traditional healer, while as a diviner/spiritualist his usage is only between 1% and 1,3% by the total population (Holland, 2005; Nxumalo et al, 2011; Petersen, 2013; Wilkinson, 2013).

The view that the South Africa traditional healer has a religious distinctiveness seems to be doubted and needs further evaluation.

2. The identification of the traditional healer as a religious practitioner

Comprehensive research by writers with deep roots in the African Culture and its religion customs and traditions clearly define the traditional healer as a religious practitioner, a person with a strong religious-social leadership-standing in the African Society. Essien (2013) describes the traditional healer as an inextricable component of the Traditional (old) African Religions, that the act of healing by the traditional healer is divinely and that the traditional healer's healing acts are aimed at aiding humans to adjust to superstition, magic and religious actions and threats. Gumede (1990) sees the traditional healer and his healing process as an internal part of the African Religion-setup and as a "gifted man of God": a parallel to the modern-day religious minister and evangelist. The idiom of approach of the traditional healer for Gumede (1990) is, besides his social, political, economical and moral transformations and guidance, mainly a religious one. Boon (1996) defines particularly the work-role of the traditional healer as that of a priest-healer (meaning to heal spiritual or to restore health solely through spiritual actions).

Above classifications and identifications of the traditional healer as a priest, spiritualist, a seer and religious leader and practitioner, are supported by the descriptions and definitions of many other researchers (Cheethams & Griffiths, 1982; Griffiths & Cheethams, 1982; Gqaleni et al., 2007; Hund, 2000; Nxumalo et al, 2011; Peltzer, 2009; Rautenbach, 2014; "Religion in Africa", 2014; "Studying Africa", 2014; "Traditional healers of", 2014).

Shortcomings of most of these classifications and identifications are how the traditional healer as a community religious figure/practitioner/leader represents a certain group of believers' religious views and what his own religious learning, opinions and standpoints are. Further are there the absence of a written documentation on his doctrine and the way he is administrating his religious beliefs, besides the overall acceptance that his religious healing/practice is founded in the supernatural, the ancestors and afterlife and the fighting off of the so called evil-witch. The impression is left that so many traditional religious healers/practitioners there are so many traditional religious ideologies/dogmas are there: a grouping of unrelated and un-ordained individuals without any uniform religious practice- and belief-cohesion, customs and traditions, religious-practice buildings like churches, mosques and synagogues, congregations, a Holy Book, the Bible or Koran for religious teaching or religious training schools as commonly existing in the Islam, Christian and Hindu Religions. Act No 22 (2007) as well as its Traditional Health Practitioners Regulations No 1052 (2015) only indicate a minimum-entrance qualification to study traditional healing of Grade 3, while the training and scope of practice in the category Divination in Traditional Healing of the entity Diviner of the traditional healer is left totally undefined (Boon, 1996; Essien, 2013; Gumede, 1990; Holland, 2005; Pretorius, 1999; "Religion in Africa", 2014; Richter, 2003; SA, 2007, 2015; Truter, 2007).

The word divination can mean foreboding, forecast, fortune-telling, prediction and soothsaying, while diviner can mean augur, bone-thrower, forecaster, predictor, soothsayer, witch-doctor and wizard. It is only the words divine and divinity (that form clearly nowhere part of the definitions and descriptions of Act No 22 of 2007) that can mean religion, spiritual and theology. These negative outcomes indeed put the above classification and identification of the traditional healer as a "true" or "real" religious practitioner in

3. Does the traditional healer really have a religious distinctiveness in Modern-day South Africa?

In light of above exclusive pointing out of the traditional healer as a religious practitioner, the question is thus: does he really have, as assumed by many researchers, a religious distinctiveness in Modern-day South Africa? The fact that only between 1% to 1.3% persons in South Africa visit the traditional healer as a religious practitioner or for spiritual rituals, together with the lack of a comprehensive written doctrine on traditional religion practices, custom and traditions, make answers on this question a priority (Boon, 1996; Gumede, 1990; Petersen, 2013; Richter, 2003; Truter, 2007).

Religion, culture, politics, economics and ethnicity are interwoven and are influencing each other daily. In undermentioned discussions the focus will be on the interaction of these cultural, ethnic and political components on African life, specific their capture of the African Religions of pre-1900 up to today, to reflect on the presence, position and status of the traditional healer as a religious practitioner in modern-day South Africa. Only through this path of discovery it will be possible to determine if the traditional healer is a distinctive or indistinctive religious role-player in Modern-day South Africa.

The outdated Old Traditional Africa culture-religion-mould

In over viewing the role of the traditional healer in the South African religious milieu by researchers, there is the tendency to put him in relation to the Old Traditional African Cultures that are assumed still to be active today and thus is upholding the traditional healer's religious distinctiveness. But to block-in Africa solely as ancient, isolated and captive in a Dark Age, as the Old Traditional African Religions do, is wrong and misleading. Modern-day South Africa Africa is very modern in lifestyle, thinking and also in religious inclinations. It encompasses a wide variety of religions and although some of religious beliefs, customs and practices are seen as unique to certain areas/regions, it is in truth also shared by many Africans all over the continent. The fact that Africans were always dynamic and very adaptable to new circumstances, had contact through global economics, politics, ethnicity, modern education and communication and specific religion, brought immense chances the last 100 or more years to them. It was specific Christianity in South Africa (and Islam in the northern Africa) that became interwoven with Traditional African Religions and had changes its religious beliefs, rituals and customs (and of course, brought a vice versa change also to Christianity and Islam). Especially the similar way the monotheistic religions Christianity and Traditional African Religions had been characterized God, had made this interweaving easy (Awolalu, 1976; Boon, 1996; Gathogo, 2009; Gumede, 1990; Mbiti, 1991, "Studying Africa", 2014; "Religion in Africa", 2014; Van Zyl, 2014).

To argue thus today that there still are thousands types/entities of religions in Africa with their own, unique, isolated and undisturbed systems and foundations of hundred years back and that they are very active in the up keep of the traditional healer's religious status as a priest, is false. Resistance over the years to religious changes in Modern Africa seems to be minimal. Awolalu's (1976, p. 1) argument of 40 years ago, which is still underwrote by some African policy-makers and leaders today, is outdated and is misleading to use today when he alleged that: "The declared adherents of the indigenous religion are very conservative, resisting the influence of modernism heralded by the colonial era, including the introduction of Islam, Christianity, Western education and improved medical facilities. They cherish their tradition; they worship with sincerity because their worship is quite meaningful to them; they hold tenaciously to their covenant that binds them together".

But above Awolalu-thinking of 40 years ago is not phased-out and had found a strong position in present-day religious-political inclinations, and thus the promotion of specific uses of religious customs and habits. Present-day political and social interference and intervention by these outdated groups in the Society is

plentiful; even by fundamental, small minorities with strong empowerments and influences. Indeed, this is a worldwide phenomenon and is daily reflected for instance in India, Indonesia, Israel, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan and Syria where the religion is overstretched and captured in interaction with the politics. Regression to old, outdated cultural thinking and doing became well-established in New Socio-political Orders. Religious recognition of a specific dogma and the upliftment as well as the up keep and promotion of its main-executive role-player, the religious practitioner, becomes prominent, notwithstanding its minority and insignificant position in Society (Harris, 2003; Miller, 2008; Naipaul, 1998; Palkhaivala, 1994).

The same, it seems, can be said about South Africa. In the 1960s, in time of Grand Apartheid, certain aims were identified by the then leadership of the ANC to promote African Culture when they should come to power. The regulation and statutory recognition of the traditional healer with all his practice-doings like religious actions, was executed, as promised in 2007, with Act No 22 (2007); notwithstanding that he and his practice had become outdated and unacceptable for most Africans in new South Africa. As Awolalu, the present-day view and guideline of the old-time political veteran, Mr Jacob Zuma, as a prominent political opinion-maker and –executive, is also prominent, namely that the African mind, his religion and lifestyle, are (and must) functioning inside a predetermined African mould, fixed permanently many hundreds of years ago. This cementation to an outdated mindset that cannot (and may not) be changed (or had not ever changed) by the modern environment, is thus to be expected and not a surprise. An overall free religious thinking, doing and lifestyle for the African, in terms of this fixed, outdated African view, are thus not possible. It seems, in terms of the viewpoint of Awolalu and Zuma, to be specific the African person, seated and fixed in the old (pure) cultural components, when moving out of his old African mould into the modern world society, who is losing immediately his rights to be an African or a Black (ANC, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1997; “JZ’s own words”, 2014; “Revolusie-meesterplan”, 2014; “Traditional healers to be”, 2016; Van Onselen, 2014a).

This in-forcing of the so called excellent qualities of traditional healing and the traditional healer as a religious practitioner, is, as already said, a priority on the mind of the ANC since the 1960s. An unquestionable must, to be accepted as true and existing. A myth became a truth for a certain group of leaders and their followers; a misleading viewpoint, also been reflected with time in the literature on the South African traditional healer’s religious distinctiveness (Boon, 1996; Essien, 2013; Gumede, 1990; Mbiti, 1991; “Revolusie-meesterplan”, 2014).

It is thus no surprise that these Modern Africans, moving out of this outdated and inappropriate cultural and thought mould, are negative labelled and out-casted by so called “neo-African” politicians and other old-class Africans as “Black Europeans who have swallowed the White man’s saliva” (Gumede, 1990, p. 57). A situation that forced Gumede (1990, p. 197) disheartened, to say: “I was a Native; my children were Bantu or Bantoe; my first granddaughter was a Plural; my second granddaughter was a Black. She was nearly an African but just in case she thought she was an Afrikaner, she was made a Black”.

The truth is that Europe stopped long ago to be only home to Whites; Africa is not anymore only populated by Blacks. The change is good that even the indigenous African languages (and thus culture) are only up kept at present by the unmanageable aggravating life-circumstances of South African Blacks and that it will be replaced in 50 years by a global language(s), like English (Croucamp, 2014). The same can surely be said of present-day South African religious cultures, habits and customs.

The sole fact that Gumede (1990) himself acknowledged that racial, cultural and social borders diminished long ago and that the composition of some South African families or units consist already of a Black, African, White, Afrikaners or Creole member or members, showing the outdateness of an “unique” Africa or Black religious culture that is housing religious practitioners via traditional healers.

But, still the Old African mould of Awolalu and Zuma exists in the mindsets of small but strong opinion-

forming groups, whom are trying constant to incarcerate even the modern African/Black to a limited, dependent cultural role in Africa. This so called “African Nationalism” clearly tries to re-enforce racism and concepts like the traditional healer’s spiritual status, while pure culture classifications (like African, Black and White) hereto are increasingly neutralized in the new South African Social Order. The line between body enhancement and genetic enhancement (that Zuma alludes is “lost” when an African developed into the Modern World) and religious beliefs, is more and more blurred (Gumede, 1990; “South Africa’s President”, 2016; “Jesus must come”, 2016; “JZ’s own words”, 2014; Mbembe, 2014; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014; Van Onselen, 2014a; “Zuma calls for”, 2016).

Outdated racism and belittling views of races that seeks to divide and that are denying independent thinking – and thus also new, modern religious beliefs and the right to Western and other modern-day religion adherents – are insults to the indigenous African/Black of the post-1994 South Africa. Above outdated utterances by Awolalu, Zuma and “pure” African academics and politicians, are clearly remnants of thinking of the old, phased-out Traditional African Religions what people still today wrongly experience as traditions instead as religion (what they see as tradition is indeed faith, although without formal creed or sacred texts). This old, outdated religion and cultural belief-system, that seems still to function in Zuma’s thinking, is well-echoed by his remark: “As Africans, long before the arrival of religion and [the] gospel, we had our own ways of doing things (“JZ’s own words,” 2014, p. 19). Its is in this context that the traditional healer’s so called religious distinctiveness is falsely portrayed as true, especially by Act No 22 (2007).

Here, as said, is clearly an excellent example of how fixed and false cultural, political and religious exclusiveness can be used to serve the selfish political aims of leaders, to the detriment of innocent and less fortunate people in their belief-systems on religion leadership like the traditional healer (Alonge, 2014; “Jesus must come”, 2016; “South Africa’s President”, 2016; Tlhabi, 2014a; “Zuma calls for”, 2016).

African leaders, like Awolalu, Zuma and Gumede and various other leaders, lost clearly contact with the enormous religious, cultural and political changes that had taken place since the 1900s, but mostly after 1994. The same can be said about the incorrect role of the more and more phased-out positions of the traditional healer as a religious practitioner in the Modern African Society of South Africa, as well as the inappropriate Act No 22 (2007) to promote the South African traditional healer’s religious role and thus his so called religious distinctiveness (Alonge, 2014; Awolalu, 1976; “JZ’s own words”, 2014; “Jesus must come”, 2016; Ndebele, 2014; “Religion in Africa”, 2014; “Traditional healers of”, 2014; Van Onselen, 2014b).

Religion is always dynamic and growing

Religion, as culture and lifestyles, is not a permanent or an isolated phenomenon; it is dynamic and constantly influenced by other groups’ thoughts, philosophies, know-hows and behaviours. For South Africa it is far more: It is about Black Africans and White Africans, African Religions and European Religions as well as White Westerners and Black Westerners and the essence of African-ness which is no longer exclusively a thing of blackness or whiteness, but of humanity and holism. It is not anymore old, pure African thinking, believing and living incarcerated in terms of the Awolalu-Zuma-Gumede-African-mould (Boon, 1996; “JZ’s own words”, 2014; Malala, 2013; Mbiti, 1991; Swanepoel, 2014; Tlhabi, 2014a; Van Onselen, 2014a; “Zuma calls for”, 2016).

This stable, advancing movement, away from “old” African traditions, lifestyle and religion like the traditional healer and outdated religious beliefs, to new African (not necessary European) ones, is well described by Ndebele (2014, p. 18): “For the ‘black’ is a fabrication, a figment of history, wherein the human that he once was vanished in sacked villages and broken families that still break; swallowed up by mines and factories and farms that still swallow; disappeared in books and films that were never about him. The South Africa ‘black’ as a figment of history became a distracter and a detractor from his human value. It is time for South African ‘blacks’ to no longer put store in ‘blackness’. To continue to do so is to

insist on living in a luminal space in which dreams and effort have become disentangled almost permanently. It is time that the South African 'black' began to appreciate the value of aspiring towards the universal and then to live in it, to become a part of it, to add to it the cumulative value of the experience of being free in the specificity of their historical circumstances, where dream and effort are inseparable. So, am I a 'black'? I once was, but no more, am I an 'African'? Yes, but with qualifications. Beyond the typifying singularity of the colonized 'African', there is no place any more for that 'African'. Am I a 'comrade'? Definitely not. That kind of struggle, that described 'comrades' is long over. Am I a 'citizen'? Yes, although my voice and my actions have yet to be strong enough to assert their formative constitutionality. Am I a 'human being'? Resoundingly, yes! ”

To speak thus of a pristine or a pure African and South African religion, all with “pure” African adherents (like the traditional healer and the pre-modern religious thinking and doings that accompanying him), is today impossible. As said, Christianity spread dynamically into South Africa the last 100 years and has influenced the practices of the Traditional African Religions (old ones) and contributed much too today's Indigenous African Religions (new ones). On the other hand the African Religions rituals, beliefs and practices have also influenced the Christian Religions rituals, beliefs and practices immensely; the outcome was that indigenous Africans start to practice more and more a New African Religion, the so-called Indigenous African Religion (an in-between), in combination with Christianity. It must further be noted that Christianity came to African long before it reached Europe. The influences of the Christian colonists and missionaries were thus only an extension of an already established Christian religion of 1,500 years in Africa. The end-result today is a synthesis or combination of indigenous and non-indigenous rituals, beliefs and practices. Therefore the present-day indigenous African Religions can thus be described righteously as alloys of traditional value systems, imbibed by foreign religious beliefs, rituals and practices. This interaction on the South African religious spheres was of such an extent that it is imprecise even to talk today of a sole indigenous or traditional African Religion dogma per se, seeing that Christianity not also becomes a dominant African Religion (80%), but can be described as Christian African Religions, leaving behind remnants like the traditional healer and his religious inclinations (Awolalu, 1976; Gathogo, 2009; Mbiti, 1991; “Religion in Africa”, 2014; “South Africa-History”, 2014; “Studying Africa”, 2014).

Religion changes, activated by cultural, economical and political changes, did take place all over South Africa; it includes all races and not only the Blacks. Not even Whites, notwithstanding their efforts since 1652 (especially between 1948 and 1994 with legalized Apartheid), could stop their racial, religious and cultural interaction and intermixing with Blacks. This interweaving was so intense, especially after the 1950's, that the New Christianity (the White/European Christian Religion re-instated by the colonists and missionaries the last 100 years) forms today 80% (79.9%) of the total South African population religious inclination. The so-called belief of a separate White Christianity versus a separate Black Christianity, fails to survive. African Christianity spreads into the total South African lifestyle, phasing-out outdated and pre-modern religious beliefs in which the traditional healer previously seems to function as a religious figure (Gumede, 1990; Ndebele, 2014; “South Africa – History”, 2014).

Pobee (2001) is thus more than justified when he alludes that the homo Africanus of today is a multi-headed hydra. For him the Caucasians of South Africa is as much African as the Blacks south of the equator. The multi-headed homo Africanus and multi-headed homo Europeanist have changed South Africa and were them selve been changed. These changes go much deeper; the indigenous African is not only today a homo Africanus, but also a homo Modernist. He is in some cases much more homo Europeanist than his White counterpart and lives it fully out in his daily life, especially modern religion-beliefs and -adherence that exclude the supernatural and thus the traditional healer as a needed spiritualist (Boon, 1996; Ndebele, 2014; Pobee, 2001). Today the White yuppie of the city indeed has more in common with the Black yuppie of the city than that the White yuppie does have with his White counterpart in the rural areas (Louw, 1984).

The role of religious changes in the out casting of the traditional healer in Modern-day South Africa

In terms of enormous changes in religious orientations in South Africa which have also a direct influence on the traditional role of the traditional healer as a religious practitioner, the question is also here again, namely what is the traditional healer's role or capacity in the present-day religious setup? Obvious, it seems that his activities are located at most in the African Religions that can be divided in two groups, namely the Traditional African Religions (the old group, with little religious standing in today's society and reflects remnants like the traditional healer as a religious practitioner) and the Indigenous African Religions (the new group, but also with a diminutive role in South Africa) that adapted parts of foreign and modern religions, cultural and cognitive thinking and behaviour in which the traditional healer as religious practitioner does not play a prominent role (Gathogo, 2009; Mbiti, 1991; Pobee, 2001; "Religion in Africa", 2014; "Studying Africa", 2014).

From above two main groups, it seems especially the Traditional African Religions that have become delegitimized by African governments because of their negative behaviour, linked to witchcraft, ritual sacrifices and other illegal characteristics and which, as a group, is in a process to be forced out of the religious systems. The continuous position of the traditional healer as a religious practitioner is clearly in difficulty in this setup. To evaluate the traditional healer's position in this context, it is necessary first to determine today's total adherents to African Religions (traditional and indigenous).

In-depth data of African Religious adherents is limited. The Pewforum (2012) research shows that in 2012 Traditional Religions represented 6% of the total World Religion Population. This group of 6% includes African Religions, Chinese Folk Religions, Native American Religions and Australian Aboriginal Religions. Regarding Africa Mbiti (1991, p.3) reflects the following in Table 1:

Table 1: Estimated main religions of Africa (in percentage): 1900 to 2000

Religion	1900	1984	2000
Christianity	9,2	45	48,4
Islam	32	41	41,4
Indigenous African*	58	12	8,9
Other	1	2	1

Derived: Mbiti, 1991, p. 3 (* Term: "Indigenous African" refers to pure followers).

From Table 1 it is clear that the followers of Indigenous African Religions (including the old Traditional African Religions) show a dramatic decline the last 100 years (a total decline of 49,9% in adherents). This

decline seems to be in line with the phasing-out of the old, Traditional African Religions [the one's Awolalu (1976) and Mbiti (1991) seem to support and which are refer in literature too as old, rigid or fossil religions with overwhelming unacceptable rituals, like witchcraft, bad magic beliefs, etc.].

Regarding a South African perspective, it is reported that at the turn of the millennium that there was in South Africa in terms of the total population an estimated 28.5% adherents to Indigenous African Religions (and animist-believers), against 68% Christians, 2% Islam and 1.5% Hinduism ("South Africa – History", 2014).

Hereto, Pewforum (2012) reports that in 2010 the adherents of Traditional African Religions were 210,000 in South Africa, against a total population of more or less 50 million. This represents only a 0.42% of the total population. This finding shows that Traditional African Religions become more and more phased-out. This declined adherence is in line with Mbiti's (1991) finding.

Furthermore, the 2012 South African Census (SA, 2012) reveals that in 2001, out of a 44 819 778 total population that indicated their religious adherence, 35 416 616 citizens were Blacks. With reference to their specific religion-affiliations, only so little as 124 947 Blacks registered as adherents to indigenous African Religions (A total of 801 Coloureds, 132 Whites and 22 Indians/Asians also reflect adherents to indigenous types of African religions). This means that only as little as 124 947, out of 35 416 616 Blacks, are still today adherents of the African Religions (including the Modern Indigenous African Religions). This represents only 0.35% of Blacks of the total Black population. This percentage is totally insignificant, especially the fact that more or less 80% of the country's Blacks (as well as the total population), identify themselves with Christianity. The enormous decline in adherents to the African Religions that Mbiti (1991) identifies, also reflects very well in South Africa with above 0.35% of the 2001 census statistics as well as the Pewforum's (2012) finding of 0.42%.

A dislodged traditional healer in the Modern-day South Africa

It can be assumed that very few of the 124 947 adherents are still pure believers of the Traditional African Religions (old) and of pre-modern beliefs, customs and rituals (including traditional healers as religious practitioners), which researchers use so often to profile the standing on true African Religions (Awolalu, 1976; Du Toit, 2014; Gathogo 2009; Gumede, 1990; Mbiti, 1991; Probee, 2001; SA, 2012).

Further is it clear that the traditional healer and his spiritual healing are not parts of the Modern-day African Christian Religion, but belongs exclusively to a limited role-playing in Traditional African Religions, as illustrated by a said Khoabane (2014, p. 6) when she, herself a 'called' one to traditional healing, confesses: "I do not like to call myself a Christian, even though I was raised as one, because my understanding of Christianity is people who believe in – and put their faith in – Jesus Christ", and: "religion is based on the socio-psychic behavioural patterns of the group following it. My gift has taught me that how we end up following cultural religions is not by choice, but by spiritual connections", and "one thing my gift has taught me is to connect with my God without trying to please other people or holding the Bible in public and announcing that I also pray".

It is further clear that the traditional healer of South Africa became even dislodged from his above role as a religious practitioner or spiritualist over the years. Clearly, the New Indigenous African Religions do not have a place for him. Where he still manifested, as said, seems to be in the remnants of the Old Traditional African Religions that plays an insignificant role in Modern-day South Africa, but seems still to exist strongly in the minds of certain politicians with masked agendas. The traditional healer's impact, even in the modern-day Indigenous African Religions, is minimal, seeing that even this group only represents between 0.35% and 0.42% of the religious believers of the total Black population (35 416 616). The traditional healer's total input as a religious practitioner of only between a 1% and 1.3% consulting rate is also insignificant and correlates further with the low 0.35% to 0.42% of adherents to Indigenous

African Religions in 2001. It reaffirms his “outcast” position as a present-day religion practitioner; His input to the religion-life of Modern-day South Africans seems more obstructive than constructive (Petersen, 2013; SA, 2012).

From above it is clear the roles that pure African Religions (including both the traditional and indigenous groups), with the traditional healer specific as a religious practitioner, play in present-day South Africa, are minimal. Rituals, customs, practices and muthi, that can be associated with witchcraft, demons, bad magic, witches and other negative or problematic behaviours and doings by the traditional healer, seem thus more and more to become rare in global South Africa. It is specific limited to the Limpopo Province where it seems to be problematic and where the traditional healer is still very active (Mazibila, 2014a, 2014b; Roelofse, 2012; Vincent, 2008).

4. Conclusions

The South African traditional healer’s treatment can be in line with that of a religious practitioner or spiritualist, but is most probable that of a pre-modern indigenous welfare-caregiver. But the true status of a trained and an ordained priest, monk, religious minister or reverend are totally absent. The indistinctive role of the traditional healer as a religious practitioner, in terms of his status as a diviner in modern-day life of South Africans, is confirmed by the finding that his usage as a diviner is only between 1.2% and 1.5% by the total population of South Africa (50 586 757). At maximum, this usage represents only between 607 041 and 758 801 persons and is, in terms of the established religion Christianity, insignificant. Further is there also no evidence of a documented religious doctrine underwritten by the traditional healer, in the past or present (Petersen, 2013; SA, 2012).

The up keeping of the traditional healer and his so-called religious distinctiveness in South Africa, as done by Act No 22 (2007) and especially by the literature on traditional healing, seems to be political-orientated in the post-1994 setup where political leaders and opportunistic politicians, with masked agendas, misuse traditional healers as a so-called religious and cultural heritage that must be up kept. This unhealthy political-climate is also very well misused by the traditional healers themselves to advance their own interests, like Act No 22 (2007) and thus professional status. The traditional healer, with all his supernatural doings, is a pre-modern spiritual phenomenon with an ambiguous status, stretching back to Apollo’s oracles and wizards (Latif, 2010; Mbatha et al, 2012; Ritchken, 1989; SA, 1957, 2007, 2015; Stewart & Stewart, 1988).

Evidence is clear that the South African traditional healer is not a theological or religious entity as viewed and recognised in modern-day life. It seems as if the name religious practitioner, as with his misleading identity as a medical healer, had derived from a misunderstanding by early colonists and missionaries about his true religious role in the pre-modern South African Society. He is at most an augur, bone-thrower, forecaster, fortune-teller, predictor, soothsayer, witch-doctor and wizard: an entity in line with Act No 22 (2007)’s definition traditional philosophy which main intentions and focuses are the supernatural that is accompanied by fearful, unexpected, unpredictable and bad life-experiences threatening everyday-life, the afterlife with the ancestors in a central role and witch-hunting and-finding. It is further clear that his diviner’s practice-activities can be in terms of the mentioned definition traditional philosophy and the legal meanings of the words divination and diviner inscribed into it, be in conflict with the Regulations of the Witchcraft Suppression Act No 3 of 1957 (Gumede, 1991; Reader’s Digest, 1993; Richter, 2003; SA, 1957, 2007).

With special note to the promulgation of Act No 22 (2007), together with the role of the traditional healer specific as a religious practitioner inscribed in it, it must be mentioned that religion can not and may not be factored into the law-making process (especially into the healthcare), even if it is seen as fitting and is needed by the country. South Africa has a secular Constitution, with a Bill of Rights that guarantees freedom of religion (as well as non-belief). There is also the Ethics Act (No 82, 1990) that guides the

correct and good behaviour and decision-making of the Executives of the South African State. Thus, both the South African State and its government must always remain neutral in relation to religion and neither favour any specific religion or group of believers (Devenish, 2014; Jeffreys, 2014; Mthombothi 2014a; SA, 1990).

With Act No 22 (2007) the State and the ANC-government did not stay neutral: they favoured the Traditional African Religions and the traditional healer as a pre-modern religious practitioner with their official statutory regulating of him as a healthcare practitioner. They failed the Constitution and had put indigenous South Africans back into a New Apartheid (although now a religions and cultural one), where, through Act No 22 (2007) the present government (as they accused the pre-1994 Regime of doing with the Dutch Reformed Churches in Apartheid) formed an association through Act No 22 (2007) with the traditional healer as an outdated religious group. At the same time Black people is belittled and degraded in their right to think and to live religious free by certain Black leaders under the cloak of an untrue and false neo-Africanism; one that includes specific religion as prejudice and bias (Devenish, 2014; Jeffreys, 2014; "JZ's own words", 2014; Louw, 1984; Mthombothi, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2014e; Ndebele, 2014; Pirow, 1958; Van Onselen, 2014b).

The South African traditional healer's assumed exclusive religious distinctiveness is non-existing in the modern-day Indigenous African Religions, the African Society or in the General South African Society. Act No 22 (2007) is clearly inapplicable and inappropriate in its aim to accommodate and to regulate an outdated and indistinctive type of a pre-modern religious-caregiver as a modern-day professional, specific inside the formal health establishment. This kind of religious-registration, if there is merit, belongs exclusively with independent religion- or church-groups, totally outside governmental regulation and relationship.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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