





Buon giorno / Saluti
Merhaba! / Dobro jutro!
Good morning / Greetings
Goeiedag / Wees gegroet
Lotjhani! / Molweni
Sawubona! / Dumela!
Dumelang Madume / Dumelang Ditumediso / Ndi masiari
Ndimeliso
Avuxeni Xewani / Bonjour!
Guten Morgen! / İyi gün! / Sabah!

Decolonisation ...

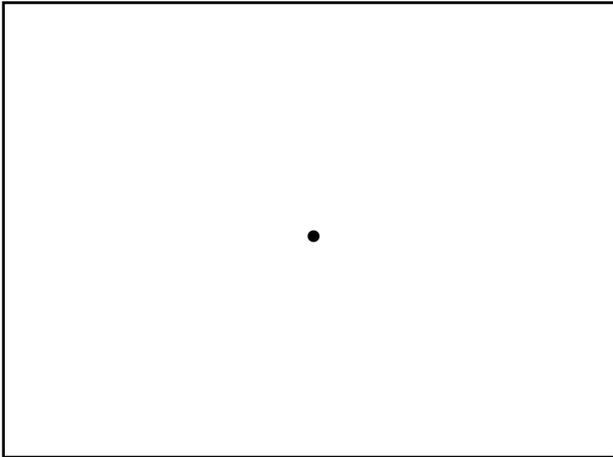
My presentation is related to and based on respect for, as well as the realisation and acknowledgement of the value of contributions of **all** potential stakeholders

Presentation overview

a. Understanding the phenomena of prophecy, healing, miracles, magic and deliverance
b. How does this phenomenon affect the religious sector especially religion?
c. How are this phenomenon used as a means of capturing people?
d. Is what we see or hear reported about churches the Holy Spirit at work or just a state of Trans?
e. How does this state of Trans manifest itself or unfold?
f. Why are people more likely to subject themselves to this?
g. Is this religion or cult?
h. The extent to which this phenomenon is so prevalent?

a. Understanding the phenomena of prophecy, healing, miracles, magic and deliverance

What do you see on the next few slides?







“If a person like you had found a way to talk with me when I was first going crazy ... at all times of my delusion that I was a grand military figure ... If you had been able to understand how crazy I had to be so that I could be strong enough to deal with this life-threatening fear ... we could have handled that crazy general” (revolving-door treatment failure) (Anderson & Goolishian, 1996, p. 25) .

One’s perceptions are shaped/ framed by your idiosyncratic background?

Essential to check if person’s view of reality is **consistent with [generally held views of] reality**. Is everybody e.g. really "out to get me"? (“Mouse under the table” syndrome: **Important to understand person’s views/ acts/ stance from her or his perspective.**)

“The [new] guiding perspective for most therapeutic endeavors ... is committed to the assumption of the individual knower ... It is the individual who possesses the capacity to know the world and to act adaptively within it” (McNamee & Gergen, 1996, p. 1).

Power of inner persuasion/ belief

- “I was rich as I could be in my coat of many colors that my mama made for me”
- “One is only poor if one chooses to be poor” (Dolly Parton)

In dolly’s case: ‘Poverty’ is not being denied ...
 What is denied, is the notion that one is defined by one’s ‘poverty’, ‘disability’, ‘...’,)

3/15/2017

16

What is the difference between miracles and magic?

“Magic is supernormal manipulation of natural forces. The following chart summarizes these differences:

“Magic uses occult means to perform its acts.”
 (Geisler, 2002, p. 3)

Miracles	Magic
Under God’s control	Under human control
Not available on command	Available on command
Supernatural power	A supernormal power
Associated with good	Associated with evil
Associated only with truth	Associated also with error
Can overpower evil	Cannot overpower good
Affirm Jesus is God in the flesh	Denies Jesus is God in the flesh
Prophecies always true	Prophecies sometimes false
Never associated with occult practices	Often associated with occult practices

Miracles only have moral power (no violence, humiliation, hurt, coercion).
When people e.g. pray for rain, no 'miracle' is asked for. Only for God's divine help (Catholic Encyclopedia, n.d.).

Need for an African theology ...

The need to develop an African theology that takes into consideration the dynamics of cultural context and reflects the experiences of African Pentecostal churches in order to build the identity of African churches is critical.
(Spiruality03.Chapters34)

Belief in miracles lies at the heart of the Christian faith. Without the miracle of the resurrection, Christianity would have long since passed from the scene. Understanding the role of miracles in the birth and spread of our faith is essential for today's Christian (Ekstrand, 2016).

“When miracles occur, they give evidence that God is truly at work and so serve to advance the gospel” (Grudem, 2016).

Crucial to the apologetic use of miracles is the ability to distinguish true miracles from false ones. Many religions claim to be “proven” by miraculous deeds. While Judaism claims that Moses’ rod became a serpent and Christianity holds that Jesus walked on water, Islam’s Muhammad is supposed to have moved a mountain, and Hindu gurus claim the power to levitate themselves (Geisler, 2002) .

Asking people to drink *Rattex*, eat OMO, eat snakes, etc., constitutes everything but a miracle.

In essence, that is brutal bullying of people, exploitation of their vulnerability, and manipulation.

b. How does this phenomenon affect the religious sector especially religion?

Insecurity; uncertainty; mistrust; fear;
feelings of having been betrayed;
enhancing existing vulnerability;

c. How is this phenomenon used as a means of capturing people?

Trance

Rapport is established. Bond of trust and faith is created, which facilitates trance.
As well as possibility of exploiting and manipulating people.

Often, people enter a hypnotic trance-like state (one which is most definitely not therapeutic!).

In this state, they are extremely susceptible to suggestion

d. Is what we see or hear reported about churches the Holy Spirit at work or just a state of Trance?

Healing is the essence of Jesus' story

Jesus healed people. Cured them of their blindness, disability, etc.

Never, ever did Jesus do ANY harm (Holcomb, 2014).
Now compare acts that have been reported on recently: These vile acts (spraying Doom, letting people eat *Rattex*, etc., are despicable).

Jesus' miracles in particular were never magic tricks, designed only to impress and coerce. . . . Instead, he used miraculous power to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and raise the dead (Keller, 2012).

e. How does this state of Trans manifest itself or unfold?



- South Africa's Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL) rightfully and strongly condemns these acts as shocking and repugnant; urging all and sundry NOT to subject ANYONE "to conditions that are detrimental to their health and wellbeing."

Trance

Person enters 'trance' become highly susceptible to and easily 'swayed' by suggestions ...
More so because of esteem/ awe in which pastors are held.
Vulnerable people (heaven knows how vulnerable we all are in 2017), desperate for help, are granted opportunity to connect, to be seen, to be heard, to become 'stars' of 'show'.

Why are so many people so highly susceptible today?

One plausible explanation; not entire solution but one that helps us to explain what is happening:

Pre-1994 common enemy was apartheid. Effects of apartheid were highly visible:.

Our common goal was therefore clear and achievable: Defeat that evil system.

Today, the enemy is much less well defined ... Poverty is on the rise, unemployment, feelings of hopelessness ...

Free-flowing anxiety is rife and on the increase

Who is to blame? What? Can something be done?

f. Why are people more likely to subject themselves to this?

Response ... First and foremost:

People are responding to what is happening in society and we need to try to understand their response before considering how to address their response.

Vital to understand: Trance promotes

...

movement from

Invisible → visible → and actually SEEN

Silent → audible → and actually HEARD

What can be more 'rewarding'?

[Certain political parties masterfully use this technique to promote their own interests ...]

We live in postmodern, post-structural, rapidly changing society

Few 'firm/ stable' truths/ realities previously generally accepted are now under scrutiny

Few things are regarded as sacrosanct

It has become not only acceptable but important to question matters

Xhosa saying: *Xa umculo utshintsho nomduda uyatshintsha* (When the music changes, so must the dance)

Revolution taking place ... Global clash between two major competing forces currently vying for global domination (Gurri, 2015)

a. Structure (think: local school): Hierarchical structures (reflect conventional power structure): Disregard for the individual, a top-down approach, slowness, rules, inadequate allowance for creativity and initiative

3/15/2017

44

**b. Lack of structure (think Tweet, Twitter, Internet, WhatsApp)
Networking and connectivity highlight connectedness: Characterised by impermanence, disregard for authority, unlimited potential for creativity and innovation, freedom of expression, feeling of being listened to by all people at all times**

45

3/15/2017

g. Is this religion or cult?

You be the judge

Note, though ...

First: Shakespeare: *"There are more things in heaven and earth . . ."*

Second: "Supernormal events do occur ..."

However,

"Miracles are never performed for entertainment" (Geisler, 2002).

I am reminded of the assumption that the display of a pattern of violation of (or disregard for) the rights of others or of an inability to grasp the consequences of their actions characterizes antisocial behaviour (antisocial personality disorder) (also revealing inadequate moral development).

Education & Awareness | Victim Support | Cult Group Investigation
<https://www.familiesagainstcultteachings.org/Cult-Education/Cult-Warning-Signs/>
Ten warning signs of a potentially unsafe group/leader

1. Absolute authoritarianism without meaningful accountability.
2. No tolerance for questions or critical inquiry.
8. Followers feel they can never be "good enough".
9. The group/leader is always right.
10. The group/leader is the exclusive means of knowing "truth" or receiving validation, no other process of discovery is really acceptable or credible.

Education & Awareness | Victim Support | Cult Group Investigation
<https://www.familiesagainstcultteachings.org/Cult-Education/Cult-Warning-Signs/>
Ten warning signs regarding people involved in/with a potentially unsafe group/leader

1. Extreme obsessiveness regarding the group/leader resulting in the exclusion of almost every practical consideration.
2. Individual identity, the group, the leader and/or God as distinct and separate categories of existence become increasingly blurred. Instead, in the follower's mind these identities become substantially and increasingly fused -- as that person's involvement with the group/leader continues and deepens.
3. Whenever the group/leader is criticized or questioned it is characterized as "persecution".
4. Uncharacteristically stilted and seemingly programmed conversation and mannerisms, cloning of the group/leader in personal behavior.

What is a cult?

One cult expert defined a cult as "a highly manipulative group which exploits and sometimes physically and/or psychologically damages members and recruits." The world defines a cult as any particular group's beliefs and practices that are sufficiently deviant or novel from that of the mainstream and often have ambiguous laws or requirements, so making a precise definition of a cult is rather difficult (Wellmann, 2016).

h. The extent to which this phenomenon is so prevalent?

Examples of bizarre 'healing acts': Extremely prevalent ...

Limpopo pastor 'heals' people with Doom | DESTINY Magazine
www.destinyconnect.com > News

Nov 21, 2016 - A pastor from Limpopo has come under fire for using Doom to 'heal' his ... when his church was accused of feeding members snakes and rats.

PICTURES: Prophet feeds snakes to congregation - eNCA
www.enca.com/south-africa/prophet-feeds-congregation-snakes

Jul 15, 2015 - The understudy of the prophet who made his congregation **eat grass and drink petrol** ... like chocolate and turns snakes into chocolate and feeds these to his congregation. ... Grass-eating pastor 'remorseful' over petrol video.

Doom pastor made people eat Omo washing powder - Connect ...
connect.citizen.co.za/yoh-2j-.../doom-pastor-made-people-eat-omo-washing-powder/

Nov 28, 2016 - Doom pastor made people eat Omo washing powder ... If you thought Limpopo 'prophet' Lethebo Rabalago spraying Doom into ... News Feed.

Missing: rats
Limpopo pastor gives congregants Dettol to drink - EWN

ewn.co.za/2016/12/09/limpopo-pastor-gives-congregants-miracle-dettol-to-drink

Dec 9, 2016 - **Prophet Phala reportedly told his congregation that drinking the antiseptic liquid would cure their ailments.**
Missing: rats

Snake pastor 'shows power' by driving over 2 congregants | News24
www.news24.com/.../snake-pastor-shows-power-by-driving-over-2-congregants-2011...

Jun 8, 2015 - **Controversial "snake pastor" Penuel Mnguni** is back in the public eye again, ... Mnguni has previously been criticized for having his flock nibble on a snake, and bite off part of a rat's tail. ... "commanded a young lady from the congregation to become a white horse, ... RSS feeds News delivered really simply.
 Pretoria church photos go viral over snake-eating | News24
www.news24.com/.../Pretoria-church-photos-go-viral-over-snake-eating-20150715

Jul 15, 2015 - A Pretoria church has gone viral on social media after congregants were ... Pastor Lesego Daniel, **who has also made headlines after allegedly calling on his members to drink petrol and eat grass.** Mnguni's followers are said to come from as far afield as Limpopo ... RSS feeds News delivered really simply.
 Snake Pastor Bitten By His Own Snake, Dies - The Southern Daily ...
thesoutherndaily.co.za/Bizarre-Boys-Of-Cloth

Dec 16, 2015 - **The controversial South African Prophet who made his followers eat snakes in his church saying that he had turned them into a chocolate just ...**
 African Pastor Makes His Followers Eat A Snake During Service ...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AoMLZn8Yc>

Jul 13, 2015 - Uploaded by Real GoRealiz TV
 What a shame, African pastor tells his congregation to eat snake and that it will become chocolate, and they ...
 The 'Doom' prophet who uses insect spray to heal his flock - HeraldLIVE
www.heraldlive.co.za/news/2016/11/21/doom-prophet-uses-insect-spray-heal-flock/

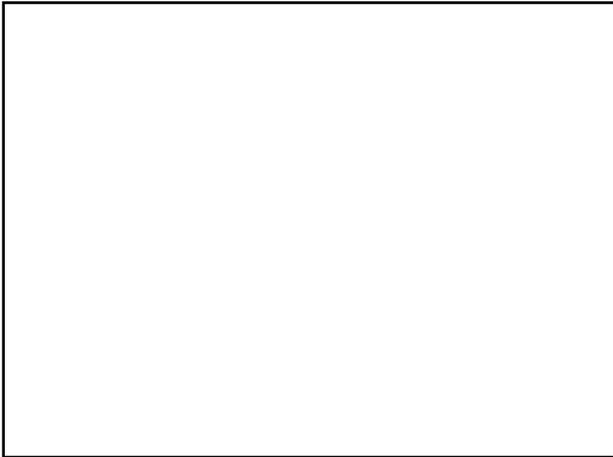
Nov 21, 2016 - The 24-year-old pastor from Limpopo, who also calls himself the Detective, was ... Flowers and grass are also on the list of items Rabalago has used to cure congregation members. ... belief systems by pastors, following complaints of pastors feeding people grass, petrol and snakes. ... Live Exchange Rates.
 Moment Penuel Mnguni fed worshippers LIVE SNAKES to test their ...
www.dailymail.co.uk/.../Pictured-shocking-moment-miracle-working-prophet-fed-wo...

Jul 20, 2015 - Delicious: The popular pastor told his congregation that the snakes ... Controversial priest Mnguni also feeds his congregation with pieces of ...

9. Concluding comments

'Drone' overview

- "Looking straight down from a height of several hundred meters, incredible scenes ... emerge" (Miller, 2016)









So much has been reported on ...

Corruption, corruption, corruption ...
Fact that so many perpetrators get off scot-free
Fact that people feel that there is nothing they can do to change dire situation

Every day in the newspapers, on social media, we learn about new instances of corruption, self-enrichment ...

How vulnerable is our society?

"I had to be witness in a court because my little sister was raped by ... thugs. I will always remember that evening, when we were dragged to the river in the dark. I still hear her screams. They grab her ... It is good to talk about it now, it is the only way I can share the pain with you."

Net effect

Escalating vulnerability among people
Escalating susceptibility to being convinced to entering some form of trance where I can find protection

What am I asking for?

That we consider the bigger picture: The SA framework in which despicable acts (such as those highlighted in this presentation) are embedded.
How many more times will we have to read about wasteful spending of money? People getting richer by the hour while others are dying from hunger? Corruption?
To change the situation, we need to start right at the top
...
Never, ever should the most vulnerable of all people e.g. be left wondering whether they will have food on their table next month ...

The future of humankind will be less bleak if we join hands today to overcome challenges in a spirit of collaboration (Di Fabio & Maree, 2016).

Dhanyawaadagalu
Vandane
Shukriya
Meherbani
Thank You
 Thank you!
 Dankie
 Ngiyabonga!/ Enkosi
 Ngiyabonga!/ Ke a leboga!
 Re a leboha!/ Ndo Livhuwa
 Inkomu/ Ha khensa
 Merci beaucoup
 Danke schön
 Güle güle
 Elkheir

14. References

Anderson, H., & Goolishian, H. (1996). In S. McNamee & K. J. Gergen, *Therapy as social construction* (pp.25-39). London, England; SAGE.

Di Fabio, A., & Maree, J. G. (2016). Using a transdisciplinary interpretive lens to broaden reflections on alleviating poverty and promoting decent work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6; doi: ...

Catholic Encyclopedia. (n.d.). *Miracle*. Retrieved from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10338a.html>

Ekstrand, D. W. (2016). *Signs, wonders & miracles*. Retrieved from 54af23f9d8866_Signs,%20Wonders%20&%20Miracles.pdf

Fourie, E. (2010). *Elementary level training: hypnotherapy*. Johannesburg, South Africa: The South African Society of Clinical Hypnosis.

Geisler, N. (2002). *Magic and miracles*. Retrieved from <https://www.jashow.org/articles/guests-and-authors/dr-norman-geisler-2/magic-and-miracles/>

Grudem, (2015). *Systematic Theology*. 360.

Holcomb, J. (2014). *Why don't we see miracles like the apostles did?* [Bible & Theology](#).

Keller, T. (2014). *The Reason for God*, 95–96.

Wellmann, J. (2016). *What are some examples of religious cults?* Retrieved from <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/2016/03/24/what-are-some-examples-of-religious-cults/Here-are-a-few-examples-of-religious-cults>.

3/15/2017 68
