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MISSIONARY INTERVENTIONS IN ZULU RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: THE TERM FOR THE SUPREME BEING

ABSTRACT

The traditional Zulu people conducted their religious practices orally and in their appeals to a Supreme Being used the terms *uNkulunkulu* (the Great-Great-One) or *uMvelinqangi* (the First-to-Appear) interchangeably. However, with the translation of the Bible into isiZulu, the concept of the Supreme Being that was originally known by the Zulu people was changed and cast into a Christian mould. This paper explains these interventions in terms of Toury's work. By using a corpus-based approach, the linguistic choices of the translators will be analysed to demonstrate that the earliest translators adopted the norms of the source text and culture, while in the latest translations the norms of the target culture were adhered to.

1. INTRODUCTION

The terms *uNkulunkulu* (the Great-Great-One) or *uMvelinqangi* (the First-to-Appear) were used interchangeably by the traditional Zulu people to refer to the Supreme Being. Controversy arose around the use of these terms after the advent of missionary societies and European government officials who worked among the Zulu people. Although there was some agreement among scholars of anthropology and theology regarding the knowledge of the existence of a Supreme God among the Zulu people, there was a difference of opinion with regard to the terms they used to refer to the Supreme Being. Hexham (1987:120) alludes to some missionaries' beliefs that the Zulu people had no word in their own language to express the sublime object of their worship. Smith (1950:102) acknowledges that the term *uNkulunkulu* had been a matter of controversy for more than 100 years.

This paper seeks to illustrate that long before the arrival of missionaries, the Zulu people believed in a Supreme Being whom they called *uNkulunkulu* or *uMvelinqangi* and that, with the translation of the Bible into isiZulu, these traditional terms for the Supreme Being were changed in preference to terms which were unknown to the people.

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The assumption that underlies this paper is that in the earliest translations of the Bible, the isiZulu traditional terms for the Supreme Being were cast aside in preference for terms which were foreign to the people. The missionaries perceived the use of traditional terms as inappropriate on the basis that their use would contaminate the Christian concept of the God of the Bible because of their association with Zulu religious practices such as ancestor worship and creation myths. Eiselen and Schapera (1946:247-249) define ancestor worship as one that is based on the belief that a person, or rather part of a person, survives after death. The surviving soul becomes a spirit (*ithongo* or *idlozi*) which continues to linger around its grave or former home indefinitely. Ancestor worship was therefore considered to be pagan and barbaric in terms of Christian convictions.

The American Missionary Society that supplied the evangelical pioneers among the Zulu people in the mid-1830s rejected the traditional terms *uNkulunkulu* and *uMvelinqangi* on the basis of their association with creation myths which differed from the biblical account of creation. According to Hermanson[1], the word *uNkulunkulu* seemed to have been used in Zulu traditional life to refer to some sort of beetle which moves about in an encasing of bits of wood. This notion is confirmed by Colenso (1905) in his Zulu-English dictionary who in addition to the definition of *uNkulunkulu* as the Great-Great one, the Supreme Being, the traditional Creator of all things (also called *uMvelinqangi*), also describes the term as referring to a type of fly which makes a little cylindrical cell of stalks of grass. By using the isiZulu term for the Supreme Being, the missionaries, therefore did not want to cause confusion by creating the impression that the God whom they were proclaiming was an insect. They therefore steered clear of the term *uNkulunkulu* and used the term *uTixo* instead.

The American missionaries were not completely in the dark about the actual meaning of the word *uNkulunkulu* when they introduced *uThixo*. This is attested to in a passage by Mr. Champion (in Hexham 1987:120) which states that the word *uNkulunkulu* (the real isiZulu word with an emphatic significance, "the great, great …")

> is objected to by our American friends as a suitable name for the great God, on the grounds of it being applied by the natives to a sprung reed, and concerning whom they believe various other things inconsistent with the Deity.

The passage further points to the fact that the name *uNkulunkulu* is also the name of a worm that makes a covering of grass for itself. Smith (1950:103) maintains that the majority of the missionaries in those days disagreed with Colenso after he discovered that *uNkulunkulu* was the isiZulu name for the Supreme Being.

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1   Personal interview with Dr. E. A. Hermanson, 12 July 2006.

A brief outline of the history of isiZulu Bible translation is given in the next section to highlight the context in which the various terms for the Supreme Being were used in the isiZulu Bible.

2. isiZULU BIBLE TRANSLATION

The first complete book of the Bible translated into isiZulu was the Gospel of Matthew, which was translated by Rev. George Champion of the American Board Mission and was printed in 1848. The New Testament (also translated by the missionaries of the American Board Mission) was published in 1865. The first complete Bible (again, translated by the American Board Mission) was published by the American Bible Society in 1883. In 1855 Bishop Colenso produced the 1848 translation of the American Board Mission with adaptations and in 1897 the New Testament (Hermanson 1995:144,145).

In 1939 the British and Foreign Bible Society took over the responsibility of publishing the isiZulu Bible from the American Bible Society. In 1944 the Natal Missionary Conference took a decision to translate the whole Bible into isiZulu. This translation was first published in 1959 (the year in which a new orthography began to be used) and it is this Zulu Bible that is currently in popular use (Hermanson 1991:72).

The Bible Society of South Africa became autonomous in 1965 and assumed the responsibility of publishing the isiZulu Bible. It published the new translation of the New Testament and Psalms in 1986. This new translation was a result of a translators' seminar in 1967, where it was decided that Scripture should be translated into the indigenous languages of South Africa by using the principle of dynamic equivalence. This means translating a text in such a manner that the meaning of the original is transported into the target language so that it triggers the same response in its hearers as the original had done (Hermanson 1995:148; Nida 1969:202). Unfortunately, the translation of the remainder of the Old Testament in isiZulu (based on the principle of dynamic equivalence) has not yet been completed.

Twelve isiZulu biblical texts of the Book of Matthew will be used for analysis in this paper. The following section will expand on the theoretical model that will inform the arguments which are presented in this paper and will draw attention to the research tools to be used for analysis.

3. THEORETICAL MODEL AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS

Prescriptive approaches to translation were most prevalent during the period when the translation of the Bible was done. Critical to these approaches was the important status that was accorded to the source text, which entailed a

requirement for accuracy and faithfulness on the part of the translator and also the notion of equivalence. These issues dominated all discussion on translation and were never questioned in the literature. Translations were to be as equivalent to their originals as possible, with equivalence being understood mainly as a semantic or formal category (Baker 1993:235, 236).

The translation of the Bible into the indigenous languages of South Africa was carried out when prescriptive theories were still widespread. Hermanson (2002a:7-17) divides the translation of the Bible into the indigenous languages of South Africa into two distinct periods, namely the missionary period and the Bible Society period. During the missionary period translators used formal equivalence when translating the Scriptures into these languages — matching items word for word and structure for structure wherever possible, since translation theory was not well developed. During the Bible Society period translators started to use dynamic/functional equivalence. The translation of the Zulu New Testament and Psalms, produced in 1986 by the Bible Society of South Africa, falls in the latter period.

The mid-1970s saw a break-away from the way in which the study of translation was conducted. A new paradigm for the study of literary translation on the basis of a comprehensive theory and ongoing practical research was established. The notion of equivalence and the status of the source text were re-assessed and new ideas began to develop about the nature of translation (Baker 1993:236). An approach that assumed a high-level of interdependency among the various systems and subsystems was developed and expanded to take the target system and culture as a starting point. Toury (1980) was one of the main proponents of this new paradigm which is known as descriptive translation studies (DTS). The descriptive model considers translations as items that are never produced in a vacuum, unaffected by time and culture. Most importantly, translations are seen as factors of the target culture. These notions which DTS purported afforded me an opportunity to collect isiZulu translations of the Book of Matthew, study them, describe the various terms observed in them and interpret the results. The descriptive approach lends itself well to the study because it supports corpus work by which the corpus that is used in this study will be analysed.

DTS's natural progression led to the development of a corpus-based approach that is known as corpus-based translation studies. In the 1990s corpus linguistic analytical tools were introduced to study the product and process of translation from a descriptive rather than a prescriptive view. This new paradigm was called corpus-based translation studies (commonly known as CTS). CTS is simply defined as the descriptive branch of translation studies which uses corpora (that is, any collection of writings) in a processed or unprocessed form, usually by a specific author. Laviosa (2003:45) defines CTS as the branch

of the discipline that uses corpora of original and/or translated texts for the empirical study of the product and process of translation.

Olohan (2004:1) describes a corpus as a collection of texts that is selected and complied according to specific criteria. The texts are held in electronic format (that is, as computer files) so that various kinds of corpus tools or software can be used to carry out an analysis. Baker (1995:223) upholds a similar notion of a corpus. She maintains that a corpus can refer to a collection of texts that is held in machine-readable form and is capable of being analysed automatically or semi-automatically in various ways. Kenny (2001:105) adds another dimension to this definition by alluding to the fact that corpora are used together with corpus tools and techniques to search, sort, count, analyse and display the vast quantity of data. For the purposes of this paper, the collected Biblical texts of the Book of Matthew were scanned, proofread and presented in a machine-readable format. The KWIC (Key Word In Context) concordancer was used to analyse the corpus data. The concordancer (which is provided by WordSmith Tools, a Windows-based suite of programs) is the most pertinent corpus-processing tool. A concordancer is a tool which retrieves all occurrences of a particular search word (*uNkulunkulu*, *uMvelinqangi* and *uTixo* in this regard), together with other words that occur in their immediate context and displays them in an easy-to-read format. From this display, the user is able to do any type of analysis.

The primary motivation for the use of a concordancer for this paper is to see which term for the Supreme Being was used in which texts so that comparisons, judgments and conclusions can be drawn. When the researcher used the concordancer, occurrences of a specified search word or expression in the corpus were displayed with the specified search word or expression set in the middle of the concordance line. In this manner the researcher was able to see the context in which the search word or expression occurred and the frequency of its occurrence in the corpus. The results that were presented by the concordances were interpreted, after which the necessary findings and conclusions were presented.

4. THE CORPUS

As mentioned earlier, the corpus of this paper comprises 12 isiZulu translations of the Book of Matthew. Such a corpus is termed monolingual since it consists of texts that are produced in one language only — isiZulu in this case (Kenny 2001; Kruger 2002). These are:

Table 1: isiZulu translations of the Book of Matthew

Year	Text	Translation/Adaptation/Version	Author/Publisher
1848	Umatu	Translation of the Book of Matthew	Authors: George Champion & Newton Adams Publishers: American Board Mission
1855	Umatu	Adaptation of the 1848 translation of Matthew	Author: Colenso
1865	Ivangeli ngokuloba kuka Mateu (Gospel according to Matthew)	Translation of the New Testament	Publishers: American Bible Society
1866	Ivangeli elilotywe u Mateus (Gospel according to Matthew)	Translation of the Gospels	Author: John Döhne
1897	Ivangeli ukuti Izindab' ezinhle ezalotshwa UMATU (Gospel of the Good News according to Matthew)	Translation of the New Testament	Author: Colenso
1924	Ivangeli ngokuloba kuka Mateu (Gospel according to Matthew)	Translation of the Holy Bible	Publishers: American Bible Society
1924	Ivangeli elilotshwe uMateus (Gospel according to Matthew)	Translation of the New Testament	Publishers: Hermansburg Mission
1959	Ivangeli ngokukaMathewu (Gospel according to Matthew)	Translation of the Holy Bible	Publishers: The British and Foreign Bible Society
1966	Ivangeli Eliyingcwele LikaJesu Kristo Njengoba Libhalwe NguMathewu Ocwebileyo (Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to the Holy Matthew)	Translation of the New Testament	Publishers: Roman Catholic
1986	UMatewu usilandisa INDABA EMNANDI (Matthew narrates to us the GOOD NEWS)	Translation of the New Testament and Psalms	Publishers: South African Bible Society
1994	NgokukaMathewu (Gospel according to Matthew)	Translation of the New Testament	Publishers: Watch Tower Tract Society
1997	Ivangeli ngokukaMathewu (Gospel according to Matthew)	Revision of the 1959 translation	Publishers: Bible Society of South Africa

The reason for selecting the Book of Matthew is mainly because it was the first book of the Bible that was translated into isiZulu and will, without question, demonstrate the use of the term for the Supreme Being from the earliest stages of Bible translation up to and including the latest stage.

5. MISSIONARY INTERVENTIONS IN ZULU RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The Zulu people have maintained and developed their identity in the context of a very complex history. Soon after missionaries were granted permission to work among the Zulu people, they began to establish missions and the concepts of Western culture began to exert their influence on the people. The Zulu way of life and their religious patterns were affected. In this setting of change, the development of new religious patterns became manifest. The Bible was translated into isiZulu and their concepts of God (*uNkulunkulu* — the Great-Great-One and *uMvelinqangi* — the First-to-Appear) were changed.

Most missionaries were convinced that a foreign term would amply serve the purpose. What most of them did not grasp was that the word *uNkulunkulu* had existed even before the advent of white men to the shores of this country — as is evidenced by the use of the term in myths such as the one that explains the origin of death: *uNkulunkulu* sent a chameleon to the people and he said: "Go and say to men: Let men not die." The chameleon set out; but it went very leisurely; loitering on the way; and as it went, it ate of the *ubukhwebezane* (*lantana salifolia*) fruit tree. At length *uNkulunkulu* sent a lizard after the chameleon. The lizard went; it ran at great haste, for *uNkulunkulu* had said, "Lizard, when you have arrived, say to the people: 'Let men die.' So the lizard went and said: "Let men die." The lizard went back to *uNkulunkulu*, before the chameleon had reached his destination. When he finally arrived, the people said: "We have heard the word of the lizard." This also attests to the fact that the Zulu people believed in a Deity to whom they referred as *uNkulunkulu*.

It is apparent that the term *uThixo* was used in the translations of 1848 and 1865, which were produced by the American Missionary Society and also in Döhne's translation of 1866. It should be mentioned here that the 1883 translation and its 1893 edition (produced by the American Bible Society) used the term *uThixo* in reference to the Supreme Being. The Bible Society of South Africa still publishes the 1893 revision, because it is still used by churches such as the Nazareth Baptist Church that was founded by Isaiah Shembe despite the fact that it is an extremely old orthography which has not been in use for years. The spelling of the word *uTixo*, as realised in the texts above, represents an old orthography. The two latter texts were not included in the corpus because they are similar to texts that are included and analysing them would therefore not bring new insight.

6. CORPUS ANALYSIS

6.1   The use of the term *uThixo* in the isiZulu Bible

The concordances of the term *uThixo* in the Zulu Bible.

Table 2: Concordance lines that contain the term *uThixo*

N	Concordance	Word no	File	%
5	li'kukumsha kualo ku ti, **Utixo** e na ti. Lapo Ujos	407	1848ab~1.txt	2
6	e nye. Ni nge konze **Utixo** no Mamona. Ngak	3,248	1848ab~1.txt	16
9	gokuba gi ya tyo ku ni, **Utixo** a nga vusela Uabe	1,123	1848ab~1.txt	6
7	lama sabaktani, okuti **Utixo** wami, Utixo wami,	20,509	1848ab~1.txt	97
10	gokuba ba ya ku bona **Utixo**. Ba ya busisua a	1,874	1848ab~1.txt	9
3	mangala, ba m dumisa **Utixo** o nike abantu ama	4,178	1865ab~1.txt	23
4	enye. Ni nge konze **Utixo** noMamona. Ngalo	2,819	1865ab~1.txt	16
12	zi bona. Ba bonga **Utixo** ka Israeli. uJesu w	8,768	1865ab~1.txt	49
13	noTixo ka Jakobe; **Utixo** a siye uTixo wabaf	13,006	1865ab~1.txt	72
14	ngemvelo yenu na? **Utixo** wa yala ukuti, Du	8,362	1865ab~1.txt	46
1	nyamanye pela. Lokuke **Utixo** a ku hlanganisile	11,788	1866do~1.txt	59
2	okuba ba ya ku m bona **Utixo**. Ba ya busiswa	1,943	1866do~1.txt	9
8	enye. Ni nge m konze **Utixo** no Mamona. Ku n	3,190	1866do~1.txt	16
11	isifungo e wa si fungela **Utixo**. Mina, kanti ngi ti	2,467	1866do~1.txt	12
17	lwa nguye. E be tembe **Utixo**, ma ka m kulule	19,138	1866do~1.txt	96

From the concordance, it could be deduced that the term *uThixo* for the Supreme Being was presented at the very onset of the American Board Mission's undertaking to evangelise the Zulu people. The American missionaries

continued to use *uThixo* not only in their first translation of 1848 and in their New Testament of 1865, but also in their entire Bible of 1883 and its revised version of 1893.

Hexham (1987:161) claims that the origin of this term is uncertain and that it could be the term of a species of a mantis which is called "The Khoi god". According to Hodgson (1982:42), Van der Kemp (who first worked among the Khoi people and became the first missionary to the Xhosa people, from 1799 to 1801) is widely quoted as saying that the Xhosa people had no word in their language to express the notion of the Deity; they had received the word *uThixo* from adjacent nations and had therefore "borrowed" the word from the Khoi people. Although the missionaries agreed on the Khoi derivation of *uThixo*, their differences in opinion as to its original meaning were as many and varied as was their spelling of the word: *uThixo*, *uTikxo*, *uTixo*, *Thiko*, *Utika*, *uTikla*, *uTikwa*, *Tuika*, *Thuuicke*, etc. (Hodgson 1982:91). These statements are supported by Smith (1950:99) who alleges that in the catechism which Van der Kemp wrote to the Khoi people of Bethelsdorp (his settlement), he translated the term for the Supreme Being with *Thuickwe*, which he spelt *Tuiqoa* (*uThixo*). An extract which Hexham (1987:120) obtained from the records of Mr. Champion of the American Missionary Society accedes to the fact that *uThixo* is foreign to the isiZulu language since it was introduced into Zulu by the Europeans and has no meaning since it is a word of Hottentot extraction.

Hodgson (1982:9, 41) maintains that the Xhosa people, through their contact with the Khoi people, incorporated a large number of religious terms from the Khoi people and that those that are not present in the isiZulu language must have been acquired during the period of Xhosa expansion through the Transkei and Ciskei. There is evidence to suggest that the mutual influences of the Khoi and Xhosa myths of life and death influenced their ritual and that the more developed Khoi notions of the Supreme Being brought about changes in the Xhosa world view and religion. This strongly influenced the missionaries who worked among the Zulu people to totally avoid isiZulu traditional terms that referred to the Supreme Being in preference to *uThixo*, because they had first come into contact with a Nguni language at Bethelsdorp and sometimes used Xhosa interpreters. They were also given grammars and translations in isiXhosa to aid their language study (Booth 1967:xi, 12).

Regarding the association of the term *uThixo* with the isiXhosa language, Smith (1950:99) contends that it was the Wesleyan missionary Stephen Kay who in the early 1830s on his travels discovered that *uThixo* was not a isiXhosa term, because it was seldom or never heard among the Pondo who lived in a more remote part of the territory, though it was in general used among the frontier clans in the west.

While the American missionaries rejected the use of the word *uNkulunkulu*, the Norwegian followed suit and the Wesleyans introduced *uJehova* as an alternative (Smith 1950:103).

Colenso objected to the use of the isiZulu traditional terms for the Supreme Being on the basis that they were too long. Callaway, after collecting statements from many Zulu people — some of them with memories going back to the eighteenth century — and publishing them in his classic *The Religious System of the Amazulu* (1913), concluded that the Christian use of both *uNkulunkulu* and *uThixo* was objectionable and that a new term should be introduced (Smith 1950:103-104). The question that arises is why did Colenso's 1855 adaptation of the 1848 translation of the Book of Matthew not use the term *uThixo* that was used in a translation which he adapted?

6.2   The use of the term *uDio* in Colenso's 1955 adaptation

The concordance lines below demonstrate the use of *uDio* in Colenso's 1855 adaptation:

Table 3: Concordance lines of the word uDio in Colenso's 1855 translation

N	Concordance	Word no	File	%
1	ele a-nye. Ni-nge-konze **uDio** noMamona. Ngako	3,294	1855co~1.txt	16
2	Velo yenu na? Gokuba **uDio** wa-yaleza uku-ti,	9,922	1855co~1.txt	47
3	gokuba gi-ya-jo ku-ni, **uDio** a-nga-vusela uAbeh	1,113	1855co~1.txt	6
4	gokuba ba-ya-ku-bona **uDio**. Ba-ya-busiswa ab	1,900	1855co~1.txt	9
5	ku-ni gu-*Dio* uku-ti, "Gi-ng'**uDio** ka-Abehama, no	15,516	1855co~1.txt	72

In his attempt to steer clear of vernacular words Colenso used the word *uDio*, which is derived from the Greek term for the Supreme Being *Deus*, in his adaptation of the American missionaries' translation of the Gospel of Matthew that appeared in 1855. Henry Callaway, a colleague of Colenso and later the Anglican Bishop of Kaffraria, also used *uDio* in his translations. He wrote extensively (both in books and letters to the newspapers) on what he understood to be the true meanings of the words that have been mentioned and various other terms that were used in Zulu religion and folklore, based on interviews with scores of informants over many years (Hermanson 2002b:4).

According to Hermanson (2002b:6), this was the most disagreeable thing to do since vowels do not occur side by side in the isiZulu language; to avoid

such an occurrence, a semi-vowel is usually inserted to separate the vowels. Therefore, if this happens in this case, the meaning of *uDio* would completely change and become *udiwo* (a drinking pot).

Smith (1950:103) argues that Colenso challenged the use of *uThixo* to refer to the Supreme Being on the basis that it was a foreign term — a "barbaric un-meaning Khoi term" — and set out to discover a genuine isiZulu alternative.

So, while the earliest missionaries had feared that the existing vernacular terms for God would convey unbiblical connotations about the Christian God to the people, Colenso concluded that they in fact conveyed the exact meaning of the Hebrew terms. In his translation of the New Testament, probably first to appear in 1876, Colenso used the term *uNkulunkulu* for God (Hermanson 2002b:5).

6.3   The use of the term *uNkulunkulu* in the isiZulu Bible

The concordance lines below demonstrate the use of *uNkulunkulu* in the latest translations of the Bible:

Table 4: Concordance lines of the word *uNkulunkulu* in the Zulu Bible

No	Concordance	Word no	File	%
123	ngoba ngiti kinina, **uNkulunkulu** angavusela	680	1897co~1.txt	6
126	enza kwenu? Lokupela **uNkulunkulu** wati, 'Yazis	5,867	1897co~1.txt	46
127	kona; se e xwayisiwe **uNkulunkulu** epupweni,	841	1924ab~1.txt	5
130	omkulu, Ngi ku fungisa **uNkulunkulu** opilayo uku	16,052	1924ab~1.txt	91
135	omkulu Ngikufungisa **uNkulunkulu** opilayo, sit	11,751	1924he~1.txt	91
140	Jesu: Wotanda iNkosi, **uNkulunkulu** wako, ngen	9,360	1924he~1.txt	72
136	Woyithanda i-Nkosi **uNkulunkulu** wakho nga	9,197	1959b&~1.txt	72
117	ngokuba ngithi kini: **uNkulunkulu** angamvuse	706	1959b&~1.txt	5
133	zakhe ethi UJivazile **uNkulunkulu**; sisafunela	12,060	1966ro~1.txt	91
139	Jesu: Wothanda inkosi, **uNkulunkulu** wakho nge	9,570	1966ro~1.txt	72
124	khanda ngamatshe labo **uNkulunkulu** abathumela	10,342	1986sa~1.txt	77

128	lubonwe nanini. Ukuba **uNkulunkulu** ubengasinc	10,615	1986sa~1.txt	79
125	ovivinyweni uJehova **uNkulunkulu** wakho.'	1,143	1994ne~1.txt	7
129	kuye: "Ngikufungisa **uNkulunkulu** ophilayo uk	13,761	1994ne~1.txt	91
138	"Woyithanda iNkosi **uNkulunkulu** wakho ng	9,234	1997sa~1.txt	75
143	omkhulu: "Ngikufungisa **uNkulunkulu** ophilayo uk	11,612	1997sa~1.txt	94

Assisted by Theophilus Shepstone who was an expert in the isiZulu language, Colenso questioned many Zulu people and missionaries. When he visited Inanda on his missionary travels, Colenso gathered that *unkulunkulu* refers to the caddis-worm and his informants indicated to him that *uNkulunkulu* was the term for God. His inquiries led him to the conclusion that the true words for the Deity in isiZulu were *uNkulunkulu* and *uMvelinqangi* (Smith 1950:103).

In the extensive revision of the New Testament in 1917 and the complete Bible of 1924, *uNkulunkulu* was used. When the British and Foreign Bible Society took responsibility for the isiZulu Bible translation, they also used *uNkulunkulu* in their 1959 translation. As observed in the concordance line, the Bible Society of South Africa (after taking responsibility for publishing the Zulu Bible) continued to use the word *uNkulunkulu* in their revision of 1977 and in the 1997 editions which was in the new orthography. The term *uNkulunkulu* is also used in the Catholic New Testament that was published in 1966 (Hermanson 1991:80; Hermanson 2002b:6).

It is interesting to note that Callaway only wrote extensively on *uNkulunkulu* and *uMvelinqangi* during the late 1800s. The term appeared in dictionary entries long after the use of the unknown term as can be seen in the following dictionaries: JL Döhne of the American Board, in *A Zulu-Kafir dictionary* (1857), defined *uNkulunkulu* as the first great individual and the progenitor of one or all nations. The Roman Catholic missionary AT Bryant was of the same opinion as Döhne. In Bryant's (1905) monumental *Zulu-English dictionary*, he defined *uNkulunkulu* as the great-great ancestor or ancestral spirit (of humankind), the first man who is supposed to have made most of the things round about, hence adopted by the missionaries to express, God, the Creator (Smith 1950:104).

The use of *uMvelinqangi* to refer to the Christian God was, however, rejected by the translators of the Bible into isiZulu because it would suggest that He was the first of all created beings, whereas — according to the Christian persuasion — He is eternal (Hermanson 2002b:3, 4).

6.4   The use of the term *uMvelinqangi* in the isiZulu Bible

It is interesting to note that *uMvelinqangi* is also used in the 1986 translation of the New Testament and Psalms that was produced by the Bible Society of South Africa:

Table 5: Concordance lines of the term *uMvelinqangi* in the 1986 translation of the New Testament and Psalms

No	Concordance	Word no	File	%
1	Baba osezulwini. Mhla **uMvelinqangi** esehlulela	2,474	1986ma~1.txt	18
2	besaba badumisa **uMvelinqangi** onike aban	3,057	1986ma~1.txt	23
3	umzwilili oshaywa uwe, **uMvelinqangi** engazi. Ka	3,831	1986ma~1.txt	29
4	ngempela, mhla wosuku **uMvelinqangi** ayokwahlul	4,274	1986ma~1.txt	32
5	ngithi kini, mhla wosuku **uMvelinqangi** ayokwahlul	4,832	1986ma~1.txt	36
6	bazo. Kuyothi mhla **uMvelinqangi** esewahlule	4,900	1986ma~1.txt	
7	owodwa uqhakazile. **uMvelinqangi** unakekela	2,172	1986ma~1.txt	1
8	lapha. Kuyothi mhla **uMvelinqangi** esewahlule	4,925	1986ma~1.txt	37
9	namhla lokhu selokhu **uMvelinqangi** adala umhl	10,608	1986ma~1.txt	79
10	ithi kuwe, mhla wosuku **uMvelinqangi** ayokwahlul	4,310	1986ma~1.txt	32
11	kuyothi mhla wosuku **uMvelinqangi** ayokwahlul	3,635	1986ma~1.txt	27
12	engazi. Kanjalo nani, **uMvelinqangi**i wazi ngish	3,834	1986ma~1.txt	29
13	gcwele ukuthi ekuqaleni **uMvelinqangi** wadala aba	7,930	1986ma~1.txt	59
14	ngcwele akushoyo kini **uMvelinqangi** lapho ethi:	9,711	1986ma~1.txt	72

Although at present the Zulu people use the word *uNkulunkulu* for the Supreme Being to refer to the Christian God, this was not the case when the people were introduced to Christianity. Traditionally, the Zulu people spoke of *uNkulunkulu* to refer to the Supreme Being whom they regarded as the original ancestor of all people, the one who created all things and instituted the present order of society. He was not worshipped "for he was said to have died so long ago that no one knows his praises, and as he left no progeny, no one can worship him" (Eiselen & Schapera 1946:263). The Christian concept of *uNkulunkulu* has now effectively displaced the traditional concept so that no clear account can be obtained of the latter and his attributes (Eiselen & Schapera 1946:369).

Although the term *uThixo* is of foreign origin, it is still used by the AmaNazarethe and other Christian groups in their worship of God who still uses the 1893 copy of the Bible in which it appears. Through the use of word formation processes, a derivation from the word *uThixo* has resulted in the use of another word in isiZulu (*iziThixo*, which refers to idol worship) entering the lexicon of the language.

Toury (1995:56) has this to say about the choices that translators make. A translator can (1) subject himself or herself either to the original text with the norms it has realised or to the norms that are active in the source culture or (2) to the norms of the text that will host the end product. If the first option is adopted, the translation will tend to subscribe to the norms of the source text and, through them, also to the norms of the source language and culture, and if on the other hand the second option is adopted, the norm system of the target culture will prevail. Regarding the choices made by the translators of the Zulu Bible, it could therefore be construed that the earliest translators of the Zulu Bible (including Colenso) were source text-oriented since they adopted terms which did not derive from the target culture; and a target text-orientation is demonstrated in later translations.

7. CONCLUSION

The Christian Bible that is used at present uses *uNkulunkulu* to refer to the Supreme Being, which is the same term that was used by the Zulu people in their traditional religious practices. The Christian term refers to a different concept than the one referred to in Zulu traditional religion because the attributes of the Supreme Being in both types of religious practices differ. Missionary interventions in Zulu religious practices that were associated with the introduction of *uThixo* in the Zulu language had virtuous consequences. Although *uThixo* was initially a foreign word of Khoi or San origin, it has found a place in the isiZulu language. The word *uThixo* is also still used by many Zulu people today and it is the opinion of the researcher that in the minds of the people, this word carries more weight when referring to the Christian God. The word has

further developed in the language to the extent that words such as *isithixo* have been derived from it. Therefore the translation of the Bible into isiZulu has in a way contributed to the development of modern language (see also Masubelele 2007).

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