

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



AN HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO HEALING TRAJECTORIES OF SELECTED MEGACHURCHES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN RELIGIOSITY SPACE, 2010-2018

By

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**An historical investigation into healing trajectories of selected
megachurches in the South African religiosity space,
2010-2018**

**Dissertation submitted in the fulfilment of the requirement for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in History**

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DECLARATION

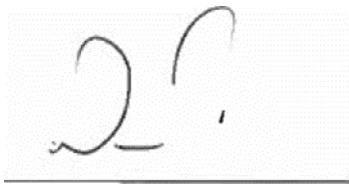
- I, **Lethabo Stanley Mabuza** hereby declare that a research on “*An historical investigation into healing trajectories of selected megachurches in the South African religiosity space, 2010-2018*” is an invention of my efforts; equally in conception and execution, and all sources I have employed have been correctly acknowledged.
- This study has not been deferred to for any degree at any educational institution or university.



Lethabo Stanley Mabuza

APPROVAL

This research thesis has been read and approved in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the Degree of Doctor of PHILOSOPHY (History), Department of History, Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law, University of Zululand, South Africa.



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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my children Sibongile, Alex and Lungile Mabuza.

May you follow the very same step and be academically successful and prosper in your life.

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Figure 2.1: Map of Limpopo Province

Figure 2.2: Map of Gauteng Province

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ABM: African Based Model
- AIC: African Independent Churches
- ATR: African Traditional Religion.
- ATH: African Traditional Healers.
- CRLC: Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Culture, Religious and Linguistic Communities.
- CWC: Christian Worship Centre
- ECG: Enlighten Christian Gendering
- HGC: Christian Worship House
- IBR-Model: Indigenous Knowledge System, Biomedical and Religious Model
- RLWC: Rivers of the Living Water Church.
- SANAC: South African National Aids Council
- SANCF: South African National Christian Forum
- SACRRF: South African Charter for Religious Rights and Freedom.
- TCM: Traditional Chines Medicine
- WCC: World Council of Churches

Abstract

Contemporary South Africa is currently caught up in cross-road of incredulity of peculiar spiritual activities within religiosity space. The emergence of newly established churches, prophets and pastors in South Africa seems to be contributing factors on some questionable healing practices. In relation to some miracle practices, miracle healing today plays an important role in shaping the church existence in South African space. In some circumstances there were incidents couples with trending strange practices that form part of miracles which were taking place such as congregants made to eat grass, drink petrol, eat rats, snakes, spray doom and some cases putting ministers' shoe on women's private places and also standing on devotees' bodies. It is in view of the above incidents that this study focused on investigation into healing trajectories of selected megachurches in South African religiosity space from 2010-2018. In this regard, South African government has a huge role to play in order to enforce ethical principles onto some churches and religious groups. In this study the researcher employed a qualitative method approach. The aim of the study was to investigate into the healing trajectories of some selected megachurches in South African religiosity space. The design for the study was interpretative phenomenal hence included ethnographic, exploratory and contextual approaches. Non-probability and purposeful sampling procedures were employed in this study in which Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis strategy was also employed to analyse the data for the research. The researcher considered interpretative phenomenal approach to analyse the data in order to determine healing trajectories within megachurches in the South African religiosity space. The findings of the study were that: most of the megachurches perform miracles healing that are fake and unfounded, however, some participants indicated that they got spiritual, economic and social assistant from other megachurches that perform both healing and miracles. Criticism surfaced from the narrative of sick people who went and attended healing services to some megachurches with great hopes to be healed and such healing miracles did not happen. The study also found that social and economic aspects are the major contributing factors that propel people to flock to some megachurches both miracles and problem solving. The findings further revealed that in some megachurches faith and biomedicine are discouraged to be utilised by members, thus, pastors and prophets who discourage their members from considering biomedical treatments are found to be genocide. The findings also revealed that sexual abuse in some megachurches is a serious problem that constitutes unethical conduct by some prophets and pastors. It also surfaced from the findings that some church leaders visit Western African states for the

purpose to acquire powers for healing from the African Traditional Healers. Findings also indicated that there are no distinctions between “major” and “white collar” prophets. Their (prophets) actions are similar. Both classes of prophets are after money and they both display criminal acts to their members. A numbers of sexual abuse on female followers and congregants were reported as others are still under SAPS investigations. The findings further suggests that regulation of churches and religious practices might attempt to solve the crisis of abusive pastors and prophets in some selected churches, this might be an opportunity where new and challenging religious problems would be curbed.

Key Words: African Traditional Religion; Christian religion; healing; Megachurch; Pentecostal churches; Religiosity, Rituals.

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Chapter 1

Background to the Study

1.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces matters which are discussed in this study. It commences with the general background and leads to the main aim and objectives, research questions, expectations used in the study, the framework of the study. The chapter also presents an introduction of the research design and methodology, data collection methods and procedures, instrumentation, data analysis and interpretation, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, ethical considerations, work plan and references.

As a result, contemporary South Africa finds itself at a fork in the path of scepticism about strange spiritual activities linked to potential invisible entities or forces. Christianity, like any other faith, faces assault from various spheres of spiritual space. In South Africa, the advent of new megachurch, prophets and pastors appear to be significant elements in some shaky healing practices. This is accomplished by fostering positive interpersonal relationship between human beings and the spiritual entities on the other,¹ and spiritual entities on the other. The term “megachurch” is used in this study to referred to both Charismatic and Pentecostal churches.

Miracle healing in relation to various miracle practices, now plays a significant part in moulding the church existence in South African. Healing is one of the supreme interaction themes in the long and history of Christianity and religious entities. Variations in therapeutic techniques and beliefs jeopardize a place for religious sector improvements, such as church practices and knowledge of holiness, history, culture renaissance and God’s kingdom.² Some criminal cases in some megachurches started trending on social media. Those churches have been receiving attention as strange practices that form part of miracles were taking place such as congregants were made to eat grass, drinking petrol, eating rats, snakes, spraying doom and putting the ministers’ shoe on women’s private places and also standing on devotees’ bodies etc.³

¹ Patrick A. Twumasi. History of Pluralistic Medical Systems: A Sociological Analysis of the Ghanaian Case. University of Ghana. 1975 p39

² Amanda Porterfield. Healing in the History of Christianity, Florida State University, 2011. ISBN-13: 9780195157185

³ Kelebogile Thomas Resane, And they shall make you Eat Grass like Oxen: Reflection on Recent Practices in some New Charismatic Churches, 2017, p5

³ Gary.B. Ferngren and Darrel.W. Amundsen. Healing and Medicine: Healing and Medicine in Greece and Rome, 2019, p1

In the 1990s and 2000s, the main concentration of megachurches were to spread richness, marriages, jobs and welfare miracle healing to those who believed to be in need. Hence, from 2010, megachurches have shifted their theological and religious practices into spiritual therapeutic approach. Throughout human history, human being is disturbed by his or wellbeing and this has been a major concern since the creation. Thus, poverty and physical ailments are amongst the aspects of the problems facing the majority of South African community.

Most of African Christians endure to have broken worldview, which needs a healing process to meet their wants and to ease their meaningful inner incorporation. There is ongoing notion that suggest that some healing churches provide healing practices that are questionable for human health and human dignity in particular to vulnerable people. When situation like this transpire, intermediations are required from a variety of spiritual and associated ritual experts using a mass of interpretative alternative within the framework of their religious institutions.⁴

However, there are numerous other crises based on economic, psychological and social nature that confront community under healing concept. In contrast, during the Graeco-Roman era, Asclepius attracted huge number of the sick people who required incredible healing. At Epidaurus those seeking healing underwent a rite of ritual purification before offering simple sacrifices of cake and fruit. People would lie on the couch; waiting for vision from the deity who would appear with a rod around which a serpent was coiled in which later becomes a symbol of modern healing.⁵

Thus, this research investigates historical healing trajectories on some selected megachurches in the South African religiosity space from 2010-2018. It is within the contemporary healing traditions and their influences to religious spectrums that represent the material of belief system.⁶ The researcher had drawn attention on some healing practices and rituals in megachurches and exploitation of belief system to megachurch members thereof. The researcher was triggered primarily by some peculiar incidents in mega-churches as reported by the media and journalists from different sectors from 2010 to 2018.

It seems that some healing rituals are the central part of megachurch activities of healing ministry. The purpose of revitalisation of such rituals by the megachurches is to resuscitate

⁴ Adadow Yodana: Desselation titled: Socio- Religious Factors Influencing the Increase Pausibility of Faith Healing in Ghana. 2014

⁵ Gary.B. Ferngren and Darrel.W. Amundsen. Healing and Medicine: Healing and Medicine in Greece and Rome, 2019, p1

⁶ Marcia.C Inhorn, Healing and Medicine: Popular healing practices in Middle Eastern Culture, 2012,p.3834

the indigenous belief system and cultural practices in order to capture membership. In terms of African religiosity, traditional healing is perceived as a manifestation of power.⁷ In the light of the African worldview, Mbiti argues that life is perceived in its entirety rather than in segments. However, people are at harmony when their connection with God, the spirits, other people and the rest of creation is upright.⁸ Nevertheless, the phenomenon of healing is not a new practice in Africa as prior the Western Christianity Africans had their own healing services provided to community.

The classical megachurches that emerged soon after the charismatic churches specialise in types of healing practices that attract members from charismatic and mainline churches to megachurches. With this background in view, the healing trajectories taking place in megachurches are the results of non-regulation of religions in South Africa. Between 1652 and 1994 religion in South Africa was regulated in terms of the Constitution by the Parliament hence some of the contemporary religious challenges were minimal. The regulation was in line with the Constantinian Model which promoted the relationship between the State and the Church. The Church by then was controlled by the government. In 1996, South Africa attained a democratic Constitution that guarantees freedom of religion. However, the South African Constitution does not clearly define the nature of the freedom of religion that religious institution has to consider. This implies that prior to South African democratic state, the freedom of religion was in force, but regulated by the legislation. It was clear that the Constantinian model determined which role to be played by the Church with limitations thereof.

In the light of the said perspective, the problem surfaced after 1994, when the South African Constitution provided freedom of religion, omitted the degree of such freedom to religious institutions. The Christian religion is currently besieged by ritual cults within megachurches space. The current principal dialogue in South Africa is that South Africa, like various societies, seeks healing as part of cultural practices. Due to healing practices as performed in some mega-churches, the question to be answered is pertinent that how do healing pastors,

⁷ Mai. Chaza, and L. Dube, Research Associates, Research Institute for theology and Religion, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa. Article: Resistance of many African women struggling with the question of church mission in Africa today.

⁸ John Samuel Mbiti African Religion and Philosophy. 1969.p2

John Samuel Mbiti (1931–2019) was a Kenyan-born Christian philosopher and writer. He was an ordained Anglican priest, and is considered "the father of modern African theology". Born in Mulango, Kitui County, in British Kenya on 30 November 1931, Mbiti studied in Uganda and the United States before taking his doctorate in 1963 at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. He taught religion and theology in Makerere University, Uganda, from 1964 to 1974 and was subsequently director of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute in Bogis-Bossey, Switzerland. He held visiting professorships at universities across the world and published extensively on philosophy, theology and African oral traditions.

prophets and church leaders in South Africa affect South African socio-political and economic spectrum.

Such miraculous healing practices in mega-churches seem to be fuelled by the fact that the State has no bill and those churches and religions in a democratic South Africa are not regulated. In South Africa any person who wanted to establish a church, appears to be free of doing that with no proper procedure. This viewpoint was also supported by Coertzen⁹ who further argued that any person without proper qualifications or documentations can start the Church at his own will.

Due to the said aspects which some are questionable practices and rituals as performed in some mega-churches, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Culture, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission) in August 2015 began a probe on the abuse of people's belief system.¹⁰

Based on the investigation instituted by the CRL Commission and allegations surrounding healing practices in the megachurches, this research aims at investigating healing trajectories on selected megachurches in South African within religiosity space from 2010-2018.

1.2 Problem Statement

Before 1994, freedom of religion was not constitutionally enshrined on South African Constitution. After 1994, freedom of religion has been guaranteed by section 15 of the Constitution of South Africa. The way some church leaders conduct themselves and perform some of rituals and practices, pose a question as to what does freedom of religion mean in South Africa. Yet the government appears to be silent on some practices, abuse of people and belief system as emanate from such church leaders. There is wide spread for the concerns that churches, especially the newly established megachurches are bringing Christian religiosity into disrepute through their unacceptable practices, such as forcing people to drink petrol, eating grasses and some are spraying poisonous substances on people and some other prophets claim to have raised the dead from death. Such practices have opened a debate within diverse structures of religion in particular the Christian Religion. However the concern escalates as one of the Civil Rights Movement cautioned the South Africans to avoid getting swayed by "staged miracles" as pictures and videos of man purportedly being resurrected by one of the popular Prophet Lukau in Johannesburg. Rapes and fraudulent scandals that

⁹ Paper 418 CRL Commission, 2016 p.2-3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

involve prophets and pastors are also a concern that needs intervention. Such acts support proposal from some religious stakeholders like CRL commission as it suggests that it is crucial to call for regulation of religions in South Africa in order to manage the church ethics. Apart from the issues raised above, some of South Africans argue that the call for regulating religions in South Africa is pointless and undemocratic since it poses grave threats to the future of Religious Freedom. Given the said viewpoint, “the South African Charter for Religious Rights and Freedoms (SACRRF), provided a foundation from which to develop such a Code of Ethics” (2017, Freedom of Religion South Africa). However the Code of Ethics is all about ascertaining and providing principles on behaviour, standards and methods that should be anticipated from a *bona fide* religious experts, leaders and religious institutions. Most of the churches chose not to be involved in discussions and are against any form of regulating religion for various reasons. Thus, the other challenging factor is that legislation to regulate religion in South Africa is not being considered by Parliament and the recommendations by CRL commission are regarded as simply recommendations with no authority thereof. South Africans have right to follow any religion of their choice, that is enshrined in the Constitution.¹¹ The problem starts when some Prophets and Pastors start inverting schemes that dupe people in to miracles and fake acts of healing.

1.3 The purpose of the study/ contributions to the body of knowledge

The study contributed to the academic synergy on healing practices based on selected megachurches and government intervention strategy. The study also closed a conceptual gap within the pre-existing knowledge system about healing trajectories on some megachurches within South African religiosity space. Based on the said perspective, the study further brought sense of awareness to South African community regarding forces behind healing practices and rituals as performed in some selected megachurches.

The contribution of the study on healing space can be acknowledged within the emerging field of cognitive historiography, which upheld the cooperation between historians and researchers from the wide spectrum of healing science in order to gain a deeper understanding of South African community regarding their faith, beliefs, culture and their thinking capacity. Some healing practices and rituals in some megachurches have put the Christian religion into ridicule state. Thus, this study addressed some frustration and confusions in terms of contemporary healing practices to South African community.

¹¹ Ibid – see CRL Commission 2018 Paper.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The aim of the study was to investigate into the healing trajectories of some selected megachurches in South African religiosity space.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives were formulated:

- To determine the features and nature of a historical healing phenomenon in South African megachurches.
- To establish critical aspects in mega-churches that affect socio-economic traits in South African space.
- To investigate the tragedies of healing practices in mega-churches as impact to spiritual, health and social aspects of humanity.
- To analyse the historical sources of power as applied by pastors and prophets of megachurches in South Africa for healing.

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the features and nature of a historical healing phenomenon in South African megachurches?
- What are critical aspects in megachurches that affect socio-economic traits in South African space?
- How do healing practices in megachurches impact on spiritual, health and social aspects of humanity?
- What are the historical sources of power as applied by pastors and prophets of megachurches in South Africa for healing?

6 Definitions of concepts

- 1.6.1 Dialogue-** is an excursion into continuous discovery, constant wonder, the absolute joy of admiration in the realization that as human-being are after all the same in the certainty of our human nature and all the value of being human.¹² In support of this viewpoint, dialogue is an existence ability to advance peace and harmony within the society or a group of people.
- 1.6.2 Healing-** All ancient healing experts shared similar notion about the concept of healing. However the definition of healing contrasts. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) healing is *“the sum total of all knowledge and practices, whether explicable or not, used in diagnosing, preventing or eliminating a physical, mental or social disequilibrium and which rely exclusively on past experience and observation handed down from generation to generation, verbally or in writing”* and *“ health practices, approaches, knowledge, and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercise, applied singular or in combination, to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being”*.¹³ This implies that healing is the re-attainment of wellbeing. Healing however, includes body and mind, soul and spirit, as well as interactions and community, ethics and justice.
- 1.6.3 Regulation-** is to put something that is in existence under the law. It is an order issued by regulatory agency of government and has a force of law that compels something to be done.¹⁴ In other words regulation is the process to control something through legal process.
- 1.6.4 Religiosity-** Durkheim in Weber argued that a religiosity is a unified system of beliefs and practices relatives to sacred things.¹⁵ Thus religion and religiosity are one concept of the set of beliefs and practices as understood by communal sectors.
- 1.6.5 South Africa** – is one of the States within African continent and is comprised of nine provinces. This state is a multi-cultural country with diverse of nationalities.
- 1.6.6 Theology** - is the study of religious dogmas and substances of divinity, which is specifically the study of Deity and the relations between Divinity and humanity and

¹² Gerard Hall. S.M. Prophetic Dialogue as a Practical Theological category. Australian e-Journal of Theology. 2007. Ghana. 1975 p39

¹³ WHO, 1976.pg 8

¹⁴ Merriam-Webster Dictionary

¹⁵ Weber, E et. al 2013. Journal of Religious Culture. pg. 3-5

the cosmos.¹⁶ This implies that theology is the study of belief, experience and rituals that humankind execute in order for them to understand the existence of Divinity.

1.6.7 Prophets- “are women and men who have listened carefully to God, who are able to discern the signs of the times, who are attentive to people’s expressions, tone of voice, and body language”.¹⁷.

1.6.8 Prophetic Healing – Prophetic healing is one of the complex concepts. Prophetic healing is one of the spiritual strategies to address the future of an individual from healing perspectives.

1.6.9 Phenomena - is the research terminology to determine and to affirm that a particular process do exists.¹⁸

1.7 The structure of the dissertation

The research is comprised of six chapters

Chapter One: Background of the study

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework and literature review

Chapter Three: Reflection on healing ministry in some selected South African megachurches

Chapter Four: Research methodology

Chapter Five: Data presentation and data analysis

Chapter Six: The interpretation of the data and Literature Control

¹⁶ Collins English Dictionary, 12th Edition. 2014.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Loc.Cit.

1.8 Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the general approach the researcher uses to carry out research project”.¹⁹ The researcher had employed qualitative approach for this study since the study is a case study base. Qualitative case study methods have been employed to describe the views of community stakeholders on quality reviews.

1.8.1 Research design

Since the study method is qualitative, the study designs approach is multidisciplinary in nature. The researcher had considered interpretative phenomenal, with inclusion of ethnographic, exploratory and contextual approaches. The researcher had employed these approaches since they appeared to be the best suited for the research theme. Further the said approaches had allowed the researcher to use of the participants’ own viewpoints, own experience and their personal understanding of this concept of healing, trajectories around healing in mega-churches within the South African space.

Theoretical frameworks have been employed so that the participants were to outline their understanding of incidents that are related to healing trajectories in selected megachurches.

1.8.2 Research Site

The researcher had therefore considered Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces for site to undertake the research.

1.8.3 Population

In this study, the researcher had considered the population to be comprised of women and men of diverse cultures from Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces. Thus, the population has also included the African traditional healers in order to determine their experiences about healing within the African spectrum.

1.8.4 Sampling

Creswell argues that the number of participants in a phenomenal design should be between 5 and 25.²⁰ On the basis of the said viewpoint, in this research the numbers of participants were determined within the sample as follows: five (05) church leaders and twenty five (30)

¹⁹ Paul .D. Leedy, and , Jeanne. Ellis. Ormord. Practical Research: Planning and Design, 9th ed. New Jersey. 2010,p12.

²⁰ John. W. Cresswell. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. University of Nebraska- Lincon. 2013.

congregants or members from five (05) mega-churches, Two (02) Traditional healers and two (02) government official from the Limpopo and Gauteng provinces would be sampled to represent the population. A total number of 39 participants have participated in this study.

1.8.5 Sampling procedure

The researcher had employed a purposive sampling procedure to select participants who were interviewed for the research. The following procedures were used in the selection of the participants: The researcher personally identified three selected megachurches within Limpopo and Gauteng provinces and pay a visit therein with the purpose to participate in particular megachurch services and follow any service order therein. The idea behind qualitative research was to purposefully select participants that were the best help for the researcher to understand the problem and the research questions²¹.

1.8.6 Data Collection Methods

In this study, the researcher had employed both observation and interview approach to collect the data. The interview strategy was a semi-structured. The observation and interviews were executed between October 2020 and December 2021.

1.8.7 Data processing

The Blanche, Durrheim and Painter's principle of processing the data was applied in this research and the principles were the following: familiarisation, immersion, inducing themes, coding, elaborating, and interpretation and checking.²²

1.8.8 Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis was to reduce, organise and provide structure to and elicit meaning from the research data.²³ In this study, the researcher had employed Interpretative Phenomenal Analysis approach and further applied model suggested by laws et al. to analyse the collected data.

Creswell states that data analysis involves participant's information and the researcher typically employs general analysis steps as well as those steps found within specific design. The researcher had employed the Cresswell steps as follows: immersion, induction, coding,

²¹ John. W. Creswell. Research Design International Student Edition, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. 2014. p190

²² Blanche. M.T., Durrheim. K. and Painter .D. Research in Practice, Applied methods for Social Sciences. University of Cape Town. 2011, P.34

²³ Denis .F. Polit and Cheryl Tatano Beck. Essentials of Nursing Research: Appraising Evidence for Nursing Practice. 7th Edition, Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia. 2010.

and interpretation.²⁴ Data were analysed and coded continuously in terms of units of meaning and lived experience.²⁵

Themes and sub-themes were identified by employing Tesh's open coding data analysis approach²⁶ and had implies that data were reduced and categorised according to Laws et al. model. The model in this regard has been outlined in Chapter Three.

1.9 Trustworthiness

The researcher had applied the model of Lincoln and Guba in De Vos to ensure trustworthiness which included the following principles: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability.²⁷ The researcher further explained each of the said principle to be in line with trustworthiness for the research in Chapter three.

1.10 Validity and Reliability

In qualitative study, the researcher must ensure that the information captured during data collection is authentic. So, for the validity and reliability purposes for this research, The researcher had adhered to the principles hereto. Chapter three detailed the procedure followed with regard to validity and reliability in this research.

²⁴ Ibid see Creswell. p212.

²⁵ Lisa .Lopez. Levers. Traditional Healing as indigenous Knowledge, The journal of psychology in Africa. 2006.

²⁶ Loc. cit.

²⁷ A.S. De Vos, H.Fouche and C. Delpont. Research at grassroots level, Pretoria. 2004 pg. 209

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses both the theoretical framework and literature review in accordance with study topic. The first part of the chapter offers the theoretical worldview to the study, namely Social Construction Theory and Religious Functionalism Theory. Thus, both the Social Construction Theory and Religious Functionalism Theory were considered relevant to this study because they corresponded with the aims and the study methodology. However, Social Construction Theory and Religious Functionalism Theory aimed at identifying, describing and to undertake an investigation on forces behind healing practices on selected mega-churches in South African religiosity space. The study in this regard aimed to relate these constructions to religious discourses on the topic. As will be reflected in the discussions and findings of the research, rituals and culture are the results of diverse process taking place in the context of healing practices.

In view of the above worldviews, the concept of “healing” forms part of megachurch practices that is a complex phenomenological framework as it constitutes African cultural practices that create a worldview point. In this aspect, Skrtic points out that a paradigm or a worldview is a shared pattern of basic beliefs and assumptions about the nature of the world and how it works.²⁸ These suggest that a paradigm is a means to an end to respond to some phenomenological problems. A theoretical framework can also be defined as a systematic ordering of ideas about the phenomena being investigated or a systematic account of the relation among a set of variables’.²⁹

There is ongoing dialogue within the spectrum of religiosity that suggests that there is misinterpretation, discomfort and misunderstandings regarding healing aspects. In this study, the researcher had opted to employ both social construction and religious factionalism theories to respond to the aims and the objectives of the study.

²⁸ Thomas M. Skrtic, Ph.D., is the Williamson Family Distinguished Professor of education in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas. His academic interests are classical pragmatism, institutional theory, and democratic social reform, which inform several of his published works, including *Behind Special Education: A Critical Analysis of Professional Culture and School Organization* (1991), *Disability and Democracy: Reconstructing (Special) Education for Postmodernity* (1995), and more recently, his contributions to *Challenging Orthodoxy in Special Education: Dissenting Voices* (Gallagher et al., 2004). In 2004 he was recognized in the *Encyclopaedia of Educational Leadership* as one of the two most influential figures in reconceptualising the philosophy and practice of special education.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

The second part of the Chapter presents the literature review regarding historical healing on selected megachurches in South African religiosity space. The literature illustrates that both social constructs and religious factionalism theories on healing can be observed as remodelling of grounded theory. It can also be opined that through religious factionalism and social construction theories the church construct its practices and rituals and further express what is acceptable and not acceptable in different social context.

2.1.1 Social Construction Theory

According to Gergen, Lightfoot and Sydow, there are various methods to narrate the story of social constructionism with each narration constructing constructionism from its framework.³⁰ Historically, social constructionism had emerged some decades ago and its geneses in sociology have been related with post-modern period in qualitative research.³¹ This implies that for social constructionists what people ought to consider being knowledge of the sphere and self and its source attempt to make sense of social world. This theory should be related to “healing phenomena”, as it “endeavours to come to terms with the nature of reality”.³²

In this study, traditional practices are understood as social construct to address the religious practices surrounding current healing phenomena within megachurch space. The researcher had adopted the social construction theory as indicated above because this theory is concerned with the way some people think, structure their mind sets and further utilise their experiences to analyse the world. According to Jackson and Penrose social construction theory makes people to understand that what they know has been constructed by the society. The values and the meaning of things exist because the society exists.³³ This theory is in line with the concepts of indigenous knowledge system whereby the production and the reality of life develop from the historical social proceedings through cultural practices. Historically, healing as part of African religious practice reflects what is considered real and is phenomenal. Thus, in social construction indigenous knowledge is based on philosophy of indigenous people and community that understand healing within their contextual space. In this aspect, Moyo argues that in social construction, societies learn that every person’s social

³⁰ Kenneth J. Gergen, Cynthia. Lightfoot, and Lisa. Sydow. (2004). "Social Construction: Vistas In Clinical Child And Adolescent Psychology". *Journal Of Clinical Child And Adolescent Psychology*. Volume 33, Issue 2. p.389-399.

³¹ Tom Andrews. Grounded Theory Review, What is Social Constructionism? 2012. p1

³² Ibid

³³ Peter Jackson, and Jan Penrose. Construction of Race, Place and Nation., London, University College of London Press, 1993, pp. viii + 216,

and interpersonal reality has been constructed through collaboration with other human lives and human institutions.³⁴

According to Freedman and Comb, members of community can construct, modify and further sustain what their community holds to be true, real and meaningful.³⁵ In this study the concept “*healing*” under social construction theory, can also be understood as truth and reality that exist within a particular community.

In addition, Gergen in Galbin defined social constructionism as a perspective which believes that great deal of human life exists as it does due to social and interpersonal influences. Based on Gergen contribution; social constructivism model provides the theoretical framework that addresses some healing practices that are in line with African practices.³⁶ According to Gergen this theory clarifies the paradigm of health in such a way that its contrast can be used further in interdisciplinary researches on health related issues. However, the African worldview supports the notion that prophetic healing is also health related aspect. Owen argued this perspective of theoretical framework that social constructivism regards individuals as integral part of cultural practises, political and also historical evolution in a specific times and places.³⁷ Owen’s arguments provide a fresh perspective with which to analyse what transpire on the process of regulating religious institutions that declared themselves healing hubs.

In the light of the above worldviews, social constructionism has contributed much to the field of health illness and health in various methods. The essential views of social constructionism in illness and health is that medical practice and considerations is socially constructed and disease is not discovery but invention. The idea that illness and health are socially constructed permits researchers to explore the social forces in terms of how they shape societal understanding on healing, health and illness.³⁸

³⁴ Aynos Masotcha Moyo. Prophets, Profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe. 2013 Vol. 12. University of Bamberg Press.

³⁵ Jill Freedman and Gene Comb. Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities. W.W Norton Co. (1996)

³⁶ Alexandra Galbin. An Introduction to Social Construction, Social Research Reports. Vol. 26. 2014. P83-85 Owen (1995)

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Phil Brown. Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and Illness. Journal of Health and Social Behaviour, Brown University. p34.

2.1.2 Religious Functionalism Theory

Considering the fact that healing includes the rituals based on global context, in the context of this research which is based on both African religiosity and indigenous knowledge approach, The researcher also adopt Durkheim's theory of religious functionalism. This theory played a vital role in this research, especially when the researcher had to focus on social functions of both megachurches healing models and South African government in relation to regulation of religious institutions that promote healing practices. Healing in the megachurches is viewed as a phenomenon that underpinned the study as based on both the trajectories of selected megachurches and the impact for government failing to regulate the churches and religion within the South African community. Religiosity in the background of this theory is understood as communal get-together of family, clan and the community. Durkheim in his book "*The Elements of Religious Life*" points out that there are no religions that are false. All are true in their own space. All fulfil given conditions of human existence, though ways are different.³⁹ The researcher in this perspective, dispute the Durkheim views that there are no religion that are false. Satanism as one of the religion is globally disputed and regarded as false religion due to its practices and norms that destroy humanity. In support of Durkheim's views, Mbiti adds and argued that Africans are religious people and their religious beliefs cannot separate them from their cultural practices.⁴⁰ Religious practices in many African societies are articulated through taboos, veneration of ancestors and rituals,⁴¹ whereas according to Durkheim, rituals are more important in religion than beliefs. In other words, for Durkheim any analysis of the role of religious practice had to be conveyed in terms of the social determination or function of religious activity. Hence, Durkheim's understanding is grounded upon the hypothesis that for society to exist, certain hidden functions have to be executed.

In the same vein, Kamwaria in Kamwaria and Kotola add that African traditional religion has a role in healing practices as encourage that an African's life is culturally healthy within the premise of African worldview. This cultural based knowledge has also embrace cultural

³⁹ Edmud Weber, E et al. Journal of Religious Culture.2013. Journal of Religious Culture Journal für Religionskultur Ed. by / Hrsg. von Edmund Weber in Association with / in Zusammenarbeit mit Matthias Benad, Mustafa Cimsit, Alexandra Landmann & Vladislav Serikov Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main. pg.3

⁴⁰ Mbiti (1997) in The Significance of John S. Mbiti's Works in the Study of Pan-African Literature Babacar Mbaye Kent State University

⁴¹ Naaman, R.K. (2015). African Traditional Religion: An Introduction. United Kingdom, in Edward Saguti. Alternative Rituals of Widows Cleansing in Relation to Womens' Sexual Rights in Zambia. MA Thesis 2016

practices that are influenced by African behaviour and promote ritual practices that address the needs of Africans wellbeing's holistically in terms of healing.⁴²

However, the application of this theoretical framework in this study had served as a reflection on the theology of healing in a holistic approach. Furthermore the theoretical framework has also been an instrumental tool to address African related problems that are related to both religiosity and health of individuals within the realms of Africanism. The benefit from this theory has been to broaden the scope of knowledge in research healing based on African and mega-churches reflection on indigenous knowledge system to heal and to understand the religious spectrum. This perspective is also argued by Kandemhiri and Smit who pointed out that traditional African culture has tendency of detecting illnesses and finding solutions for addressing such illnesses, and such practices are commonly referred to as indigenous healing.⁴³ Under this view, "the social aspect, such a forming churches, arise in this theory as by-product"⁴⁴ of the megachurches.

2.2 Conceptualisation of megachurch

Megachurch generally refers to any Protestant church with a large number that determined the population. Although very large congregations have existed throughout Christian history, there has been a fast proliferation of churches with massive population since the decade of the 1970's. As such, some researchers are of the views that such church form is a typical organizational response to cultural paradigm shifts and changes in communal patterns⁴⁵ through the religious and social development.

Similarly, Protestant spiritual frontrunners reacted to this paradigm shift by developing radically new strategies for the worship practices. They utilized their charisma and entrepreneurial approach to send their messages to the grassroots and members. In the same vein, Protestant leader's manipulation of these approaches of outreach was able to attract various new followers to the conservative protestant cause, and encouraged local community to join these big groups of veneration⁴⁶.

Generally, the word 'mega' is translated as 'extra-large'. Hence, the term 'megachurch' would seem to imply a congregational development of considerable proportion and thereby

⁴² J. Kamwaria, and S. Kotola, *International Journal of humanities and Social Sciences*.2012. Vol 2.pg.(59-55) & (322-3280).

⁴³ Colleta .M Kandemhiri and Talita .C. Smit. *Literary perspectives of healing practices and approaches to medicine in Chinodya's 'strife'*. *Journal of studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2016.

⁴⁴ Gilat Levy and Ronny Razin. *A Theory of Religion: Linking Individual Beliefs, Rituals and Social Cohesion*. 2006. p6

⁴⁵ Scott Thumma, *Hartford Institute for Religious Research*.

⁴⁶ *Megachurches pros and cons*

drawing scholarly attention. In the light of the above opinion, most conversant academic research, seem to focus on the size of the congregation.⁴⁷ As already noted, megachurch in this research is referred to the level of charismatic churches that consider miracle healing practices in their devotions and liturgical orders. Megachurches in South Africa are not a new phenomenon. This is not to say that megachurches were absent from the history of the Christian Church.

Historically, megachurch, as it is described here, is more than a church with a huge attendance further characterised by miraculous healing practices. It is a church with a distinguishing pattern of healing services and spiritual ministries. The speedy proliferation of this form of congregational life has taken place within the last some decades⁴⁸. It is a particular and distinctive response to such cultural milieu. These definitive traits are uniquely modern, fashioned in reaction to and patterned after modern society.

A number of megachurches were founded after 1955. The explosive growth experienced by these congregations, however, did not begin in earnest until the decade of the eighties.⁴⁹ In fact, it is precisely their healing practices which attract so much attention to the members and community.

In a religious vein, megachurches inspire a selfish and self-focused view of worship. The members of megachurch are often taught to focus on their own existence and problems, instead of seeing themselves as servants who should help their fellow man. Members are in turn encouraged to understand God as a vehicle for their ambitions.⁵⁰ This goes hand-in-hand with the prosperity and miraculous healing gospel as the core of megachurch teaches, which is the impression that God rewards believers with material goods and success.

2.3 Trajectories of historical healing from theological perspectives

A critical research on healing from the Bible reveals how God approached health and healing to mankind from both the genesis, Israelites and Messianic or Christ era for healing purposes. When children of Israel found themselves in predicament situation, God intervened with the personality of “Jehovah” in Old Testament and said “For I am the Lord that heals you”,⁵¹ and

⁴⁷ Stephen Hunt. Handbook of Megachurches. 2020. pg. 1-20

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Vaughan 1993:50-51

⁵⁰ Jeff Somers. The Dark side of Megachurches. 2021

⁵¹ Holy Bible Exodus 15:26

this declaration is key to the notion that God Himself is the healer of mankind. This notion was augmented in the book of Sanhedrin 10 which states: “*I will put more of the diseases upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord your healer*”. Apart from this praxis, the Jews of the first century associated healing with forgiveness of iniquities.

This notion of healing as in the OT has influenced the conceptualisation of “healing through objects” as embraced by some Megachurch in South Africa. Gaiser in his writings, demonstrated OT healing methodology by employing Moses Healing theories as he argues: Moses creating a bronze snake illustrated a definition from magic theory which states; it’s a rational system-based on analogy and comparisons that echoes similarities between duo identical things or allusions.⁵² The Gaiser narrative is evidence that healing in the OT was also approached in a form of objects and use of symbols, hence God as inventor thereof.

One cannot dispute the argument that the Moses account to the Israelites has the prospect of bringing misperception and perils into megachurch healing practices, when Moses was instructed to hang the snake on a pole and anyone bitten can look at the bronze snake lives.

The healing ministry of Jesus as transmits to healing models of some megachurches will be hallmark approach from theological worldview. Thus, similar to OT different approaches of healing have been discovered from the New Testament Bible and this was further evidence that God is mostly concerned with the wellness and wholeness of mankind.⁵³ With reference to the book of Genesis, God’s insertion of medical institutions in the agenda of creation like making trees, crops and herbs attests that God is a vehicle for healing as applied also to NT healing methods. This insight draws attention that various instruments were used in various healing models to augment the notion that God “himself brings a ministry of healing to broken minds, broken bodies, broken spirits and broken relationships”⁵⁴ by employing various medicine to deal with different kinds of problems.

Some historians and theologians will agree on the notion that various divergent models of healing exists and that reflected the biblical references. Jesus during his ministry has employed numerous healing models to execute healing to mankind. In his book, *Spirituality, Health and Wholeness*, Rice argued that Jesus miracle uphold the value of physical health and offer a basis for endeavours to discharge suffering and heal the sick. Jesus further healed

⁵² Frederick J. Gaiser. *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academy. 2010. p40-41

⁵³ Charles Onomudo Aluede and D.B. Ekewenu. *Healing Through Music and Dancing in the Bible: Its Scope, Competence and Implications for the Nigerian Music Healers*. *Ethno-Med*, 3(2): 2009. P159-163. Delta State University, Nigeria.

⁵⁴ John Goldingay. *Theology and Healing*. p25

John Goldingay is Director of Academic Studies at St John’s College, Nottingham.

leprosy, deafness, paralysis and cured the blind people.⁵⁵ Jesus model of healing was to reinstate human beings to appropriate relationship with God. With Jesus model of healing, not all healing approach involved miracles, so this perspective augments the notion that not all miracles are the acts of healing.

Theologically, the notion of healing through miracles is not easy to define. In a narrow sense this concept is mostly referred to God's acts and events. However, miracles are also used in a wider wisdom to condemn something amazing and extraordinary and these are viewed as the tremendous deeds of God rather of human being. For example, the man who was paralyzed for so many years was healed in Mark two and the acts predicts that healing of Jesus is holistic. Jesus approach to paralysed man was both spiritual and physical though the entire healing ministry was focused towards spiritual ends.

Jesus was also observant to the emotional needs of his followers and disciples. He once advised his disciples to come distance themselves from the crowd and rest a little bit.⁵⁶ Thus, social aspects were also considerate in the ministry of Jesus. The raised dead people were restored to the bereaved families- Jairus' daughter, Lazarus of Bethany and the son of the widow of Nain.⁵⁷ Three important aspects surfaced into Jesus healing ministry. Firstly, Jesus recognised the helplessness and exposure of the sick in their essential of care. Secondly, Jesus bought back the outcast people into human community through his healing word. Thirdly, Jesus further endorsed the need for spiritual healing. It is from this perspective that in the book M.D., the author examines Jesus as the great physician.

The said author further acknowledged Jesus as one of the specialists into precise field of medicine. Jesus made the lame men to walk, and bowed to stand straight. He healed the sick with heart illnesses, healed man with palsy and he caused the deaf to hear.⁵⁸ One can add and argue that Jesus approach on healing is significant in the sense that the substantial desire of Jesus healing methods is the aspiration to get rid of people's misfortunes and afflictions. This constitutes God desire to make human being whole through healing. It is also important to indicate that Jesus healing worldviews attributes to both religious functionalism and social construction theories in the sense that Jesus healing rituals denotes all manner of disparate and tremendous phenomena.

⁵⁵ Richard. Rice. Towards a theology of wholeness: A tentative model of whole person care. In S. Sorajjakool and H. Lamberton (Eds.), *Spirituality, Health, and Wholeness*. 2004. p15-36.

⁵⁶ Holy Bible: Mark 6:31

⁵⁷ Loc. cit see also Rice p24.

⁵⁸ Alvin Lloyd Maragh. *The Healing Ministry of Jesus as Recorded in the Synoptic Gospel*. Loma Linda University, Electronic Thesis, Dissertations and Projects. 2006 p7-10

However, in South African religiosity space the healing divine drive are the typical beliefs that preoccupied the mind of megachurch followers who hold the view that healing remains central in the ministry of megachurch. Their ministry 'are mostly characterised with Pentecostal features such as casting out demons, healing the sick, with proclivity towards deliverance from any form of bondage such as poverty, unemployment, marital needs, etc.'⁵⁹ As opined above, healing has been an instrument of God to manifest his power to his people in biblical era. Paunds in his writings, argues thus "In the Old Testament the Lord God (Yahweh) alone was the source of all healing. In every aspect of life man is dependent on the Lord God alone."⁶⁰ In support of this theological perspective, Act 3:6-8 supports this viewpoint through the incident of a lame man that was cured in Jesus name mentioned thus:

But Peter said to him, I have no money at all, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I order you to get up and walk!7 then he took him by his right hand and helped him up. At once the man's feet and ankles became strong;8 he jumped up, stood on his feet, and started walking around. He then went into the Temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God.⁶¹

All in all, irrespective of megachurch healing approach, "the Classical Charismatic view is similar to Pentecostal worldview, however, is considerably less triumphalist than its Pentecostal counterpart. It stresses that people should expect miraculous healing from God, but that we should also accept the teaching of Eccl 3: 2-3 that there is a "time to die" and a time for the Lord to take life rather than heal. However, it is noteworthy to note that in spite of this view, God is still considered by the Jews as the "Great Medicine-man" the Jehovah Rapha, the Healer of His people and as such the afflicted basically look up to Him for help.⁶² It is of this view that the megachurch should keep hold of this theological reality and phenomena of healing into our healing experience of Jesus Christ. One goal why God does let his people in afflictions, sufferings and pains is that His healing power can be revealed and fulfil a positive role in the humankind life expectancy, which is God's concern today.

⁵⁹ Kelebogile Thomas Resane. "And they shall make you eat grass like oxen" (Daniel 4:24): Reflection on recent practices in some New Charismatic Churches', Pharos Journal of theology 98, 2016. P1-17.

⁶⁰ W. Paunds. Healing in the Bible, Abide in Christ. (Paper presented at William Carey University). 2012. p1.

⁶¹ Holly Bible

⁶² Ibid see Aluede and Ekewenu. p160

2.4 Historical Development of healing in ancient period

In the ancient Greek, sickness and disease were viewed as divine punishment and healing as reasonably a gift from gods.⁶³ The Greeks and Romans nationalities persuaded means to physical healing and religious interferences as ancient Hebrews' did. It is from this perspective that healing methods in the ancient era entailed religious rites, special methods and rituals which brought forth the miraculous powers of divine being, mysterious and other supernatural beings⁶⁴. The early church was an epicentre of healing practices and miracles where to exhibit the power of God to community. Prophecy, miraculous healing, and casting out of evil spirits were evidence that the church was in operation within community that was sick and in need. In the Roman and Greek world some religious groups and parties had a view that all diseases and sickness were brought upon the society by evil spirits and demons.

The Middle East is also known and recorded as a region of healing phenomena to the Middle East community. Thus, the Middle East is the region which is rich with healing history and is one of the limited regions in the world in which inscribed resources regarding health related beliefs and rituals are backdated literally five thousand years. The archives from the past revealed that popular healing practices established during the Middle Eastern countries are extremely rooted in three ancient healing traditions namely pharaonic (Egyptian), *yunani* (Hellenic) and prophetic (Islamic). All these three ancient healing customs gained power before the rise of Western biomedicine in the region during the nineteenth-century colonial period.⁶⁵

Both the Greeks and Romans were used to miracles, especially when a new god had to be legitimated or when sanctuary was established (Garland in Dumitrescu).⁶⁶ Likewise, during the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman period, sicknesses and ailments were professed as a special kind of hardship triggered by a personified understanding of Treasure, whose irregular nature was held accountable for human misery.⁶⁷ Contrary to Greek viewpoint of the ancient period, as there was understanding that illnesses were from the divinities who desired to reprove people for their wicked and blasphemous activities, the Graeco-Roman belief that

⁶³ Cartwright, Mark. "[Ancient Greek Medicine](#)." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Ancient History Encyclopedia, 11 Apr 2018. Web. 06 Jul 2020.

⁶⁴ Walter Addison Jaine. *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations* (1925) retrieved on 2020/07/07

⁶⁵ Marcia .C Inhorn. *Healing Medicine: Popular healing practices in Middle East Culture*, 2012. p1-5

⁶⁶ Christian Dumitrescu. *A Historical Survey of Healing and Exorcism*. 2015. P25

⁶⁷ Panayotis Pachis, *Healing Gods, Heroes' and ritual in Graeco-Roman World*. 2016. P e14

impersonal and phenomenal forces infiltrating and controlling the world caused sickness and misery changed the way people illuminate their illnesses worldview.⁶⁸

It is envisaged that the ancient Egyptian believed in prayer as an answer to wellbeing of community problems, but they also had indigenous medicines such as herbs for healing purposes. Ancient Egyptians also had to believe that the ancestors, their gods and evil spirits strategically they cause illnesses to mankind. Within this broader conceptual relevance of divine intervention, several gods initially related to human health and well-being continued to enjoy a high esteem as the marvellous agents of healing from classical times onwards.⁶⁹ Most of the priests were healers of the time and is where the medical doctors emerged. Thus the evidence suggests that medical healers played a significant role in the past regarding looking after the wellbeing of community.

The contributing factor was that ancient Egyptians as civilised the concept of health and healing emerged and was put into practice. Pachis also remarked that among the priest, the most famous superhuman healer, who offered help to anyone seeking treatment, was Asclepius. This viewpoint was also articulated by Mogiovi who also stressed that for so many centuries during the Middle Ages, Kings and Princes were believed to have power of healing through the royal touch.⁷⁰

During the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman era, most cities of the *oecumenical* had established new place of worship to honour Asclepius and further refurbished his ancient sanctuaries, which turned into major healing centre as was appealing to various aspirants.⁷¹ Thus, it was during this period that during maturation the supplicants expected to have direct communication with the healing god, in which they believed that they would instantly save them from misery or disclose the means of redemption from their wellbeing problems.

Prophetic healing as part of healing spectrum within the Islamic nationality also arose during the period following the Islamic Prophet's death in 632 and it influenced the healing practices throughout the region. Healing had established the religious healing practices which were grounded in both the Islamic Scriptures and biblical Jewish scriptures. In view of these phenomena, Inhorn further argues that prophetic healing traditions continued to flourish in various regions of the Middle East, predominantly in the kingdoms of the North Africa. Most

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Loc.cit see Pachis .P, p.e14

⁷⁰ John Mongivi, A History of Hypnosis: from Ancient Times to Modern Psychology 2014, p1

⁷¹ Ibid

of the Islamic pilgrims from the villages and urban places visited the pilgrimages for healing and miracles purposes.⁷² In the Graeco-Roman era, the focal point of the pilgrimage was incubation, in which the healing process was varied to suit the pilgrim.⁷³

2.5 Historical development of Megachurches in South African Space

The prevailing view of megachurch claims they represent a new religious system, born in the United States of America in the years between 1970s and 80s.⁷⁴ Contrary to this view, this study demonstrated that megachurch has long history based on Charismatic and Pentecostal churches that derived from Protestantism as was echoed by “several historians that megachurch lack precedent”.⁷⁵ This notion was also resonated by Eagle who claimed that “megachurches are not an invention of the 1970s and 80s but have been around since reformation era. He further pointed out that these megachurches “developed from the Protestant tradition with the purpose to attain cultural impact by proposing a variety of programs tailored to people’s needs.”⁷⁶

As decreed in chapter one, Megachurch in this research refers to both Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches respectively. There is numeral of Charismatic and Pentecostal churches established in African Continent between 1920s and 1960s and were preceded by other healing movements. Pentecostal churches are classified into two institutions namely, the Neo-Pentecostal and the Classical Pentecostal Churches. Kgatle maintains that the Neo-Pentecostal Church in South Africa refers to churches that have crossed denominational boundaries. These are the churches idolise the healing, miraculous, deliverance and enactment of bizarre church performances as executed by charismatic and influential spiritual leaders.⁷⁷

Khanya in this viewpoint, opined Neo-Pentecostal megachurch as modern church that welcome members from charismatic Churches as members who were unhappy by the inhospitality of the mainline churches.⁷⁸ These churches failed to attain tremendous social visibility hence they promoted the theology of faith healing and prosperity gospel to her

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Gary .B. Ferngren and Darrel .W. Amundsen. *Healing and Medicine: Healing and Medicine in Greece and Rome*, 2019, p2-3

⁷⁴ David. E. Eagle. *Historicising the Megachurch*. Journal of Social History. Oxford University Press. 2015 p1

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ David E. Eagle, “Historicizing the megachurch”, *Journal of Social History* (Spring 2015). P1-16

⁷⁷ Mookgo Solomon Kgatle. *The unusual practices within some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in South Africa: Reflections and Recommendations*. 2017. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attributions License.

⁷⁸ Steve Hayes. *Neopentecostal megachurches and their celebrity pastors*. 2014

followers. However, Charismatics view the healing of physical problems through prayer as only one trait of their spiritual worship. On the other hand, because this is the largest cumulative of church activities in healing, the charismatics have had a considerable influence on how healing is regarded today⁷⁹ even by other Protestant churches. In this regard, Charismatic church believe in and has aspiration to practice the supernatural rituals resulting in various phenomena from the opening up of the worshipping space to miraculous healing and prophetic practices as it was underscoring the re-establishment of the New Testament gifts.

The upsurge of Charismatic and Pentecostal movements was aggravated by the lack of emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the neglect of healing practices in the mainline churches. People in the third –world lands attracted to Pentecostal and Charismatic religion usually come out from uneducated and poor classes and were drawn in because of their religious roots. The majority of Africans joins the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements because the natures of religious practices are in line with African healing models. In this regards Young-Gi argues and maintain that a charismatic megachurch includes both “Pentecostal and Charismatic mega-churches”⁸⁰. One can also argue the notion that the nature of the mega-churches is established on the activities that take place during church services in particular the execution of healing rituals as also argued by Gundani that one of the marketing strategies of megachurch is announcement of healing services.⁸¹

The Pentecostal movement was established within the fundamental, separatist wing of the late nineteenth-century Holiness movement in the United States. It represented the mixture of extremist Wesleyan and Keswick views on premillennialism, dispensationalism, faith healing, and "the Baptism in the Spirit" as an award of miraculous powers. The movement was condemned and disliked by all other Christian churches, and it at first entailed of a few small controversial issues of the Holiness cults and many independent congregations.⁸² Historically, Pentecostals held a theological approach in three acts of grace: conversion, sanctification, and Baptism in the Spirit. In 1908, William H. Durham presented his "Finished Work of Calvary" doctrine, in which conversion and sanctification were

⁷⁹ Charlotte Saikowski, *The Impact of Charismatics*, 1987

⁸⁰ Hong Young-Gi. The background and characteristics of the Charismatic mega-churches in Korea *Asia Journal of Pentecostal Studies*. 2000. p102

⁸¹ Paul .H. Gundani. *Church, Media, and Healing: A Case Study from Zimbabwe*, *World & World* Volume xxi, number 2, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul Minnesota. 2001. p

⁸² *Encyclopaedia: Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity* (revised 2020, 25 May)

professed a single act of grace. A majority of American Pentecostals accepted this doctrine and those who upheld the theology of three acts of grace were called "Second Work Pentecostals." They were primarily from Wesleyan theological worldviews. The largest such denominations are the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), and the Pentecostal Holiness Church.⁸³

Modern emerging small churches look fourth unto megachurch models. Thus, the current megachurches exist within a complex historical context.⁸⁴ This is fuelled by the fact that in South Africa there is ongoing trend that most of young people both the male and female congregants exit their churches to form their own independent churches in villages and suburbs. In this aspect, Galli argues that most of the cathedral churches in the late ancient times and in the Middle Ages were basically mega-churches, so he further remarked that megachurches today are not new phenomena or something evil.⁸⁵ It is imperative to comprehend the charismatic activities under "megachurch phenomena" because it has tended to dictate the modern-day Christian healing scene.

However, Thumma described the megachurch from the perspective of historical spectrum in terms of growth rate, structures and numerical size. He remarks that the growth of megachurch is influenced by historical, theological and socio-traditional factors.⁸⁶ With reference to the establishment of both the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, megachurches were established in America between 1970 and 80's with the view to represent new religious practices. Contrary to this view, megachurches enjoy the historical tradition of both Charismatic and Pentecostal missions and practices. Megachurches differ from other Charismatic practices because it offers its members with tools to meet their emotional, social and spiritual needs. This viewpoint was also remarked by David Eagle in his *Journal of Social History; Historizing the Megachurch*; as he echoed Bill Hybels who claimed that:

"we are on the verge of making kingdom history... doing things new way for whom new generation".⁸⁷

However, Yohn in Saikowski, pointed out that the charismatic programme appeals to emotion and does not need deep considerations. It denotes a childlike stage of developing faith of individuals through promoting the notion of 'me'-centred principle.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Charity ,R Carney. Lakewood Church and Roots of the Megachurch Movement in the South, Academic Jornal Article.

⁸⁵ Mark Galli, chaos and Grace: Discovering the liberating work of the Holy Spirit. 2011.

⁸⁶ Cornelius .J.P, Niemandt, & Yongsoo Lee, 2015, 'A Korean perspective on megachurches as missional churches', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36(1), Art. #1421, 8 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i1.1421>

⁸⁷ David .E. Eagle. *Historizing the Megachurch*, Journal of Social History. Oxford University Press. 2015. p1.

It was from the aforesaid perspective that megachurch emerged from the important development of modern Christian history. This view was also supported by Peter Drucker who articulated that megachurches are surely the important social phenomenon in American society in the year 30th. Several historians are in agreement that megachurches lack model of spiritual operation. In contrary, Martin Marty argued that megachurches are the development of the Age of Greed. However most of the Historians claim that megachurches are nothing but are deep root of evolution from the tradition of the Protestant religion. Critics of megachurch followed a similar line. Several historians agree that mega-church lack precedent. In this aspect, Allit in Dube argue that they “megachurches” were designed to provide an entire way of life and Marty in Dube also remarked that megachurches are just invention of the Age of Greed.⁸⁹ Megachurch must be viewed as a collective social phenomenon rather than as individual strange moments of remarkable growth and successful spiritual ground-breaking schemes.

However, the trails traditions and practices of the Pentecostal denominations created the historical view that megachurches represent new tradition of worship and that are inventive, and exceptional. Anderson emphasised that Pentecostalism has been a vanguard of the growth of Christianity in the twentieth century. The Holy Spirit was the one inspiring all activities including “signs and wonders”. Thus Pentecostals were known for their innovative disorder as they claimed to have been sent by the Holy Spirit to execute their spiritual activities that include inter alia prophecy, seeing visions.⁹⁰ Thus, the said notion still exist as the Pentecostal still claimed to perform their spiritual activities through the directive from Spirit. The Spirit according to Pomerville in Anderson is “superintend and administrator of mission”, and is evidenced by the emergence of the Pentecostal movements worldwide.⁹¹ This notion above holds the view that “these spirit-type churches emphasise divine healing” and further that the main attraction of spirit-type AIC’s are healing, prophecy and exorcism.”⁹² It is of this viewpoint that the surge of megachurches in South Africa has advanced upon the emphasis on wealth or prosperity and healing seekers. These remarks underpin the opinion that there are people who view megachurches as a personal socio-

⁸⁸ Ibid see Saikowski

⁸⁹ Bekithemba Dube. Is Gabola a Decolonial Church or Another Trajectory of Freedom of Religion in Post-Colonial South Africa? Rethinking Ethical Issues in Religious Praxis. University of Free State. 2019. p2

⁹⁰ Anderson Allan. Structure and Patterns in Pentecostal Mission, *Missionalia* 32: p233, 2004.

⁹¹ Ibid p.235

⁹² Lilian Dube, Tabona Shoko and Stephen Hayes. African Initiatives in Healing Ministry. First Edition, University of South Africa: Pretoria. 2011. P120.

economic solution and in other area of leadership and theologies; they further see such churches as healing epicentres.

2.6 Healing trajectories in South African Mega-churches

The surges of healing prophets and pastors in South African megachurches have resorted to risky healing practices that impose some questions from different religious institutions and governmental bodies. Thus, the current healing practices and rituals have led to the abuse of many citizens as orchestrated by some popular prophetic figures who have commercialised the healing to their personal benefits. In this perspective, prophecy and prophetic gifts have also become tools of profits in healing sceneries.⁹³ The controversy arises as some emerging religious movements are characterised by exhortation, violation of human rights, and the promotion of patriarchal tendencies among many.⁹⁴ Megachurches have never surrendered her practice between prayer and healing but enhanced it with strange instruments and approach.

Masenya and Masenya remarked that some young pastor's breakaway from their mother churches hiding behind spiritual viewpoints, hence their motives are material and financial expectations. Healing in this regard is executed based on financial muscles of individuals⁹⁵ and this leads to promotion of unethical conduct in some cases of healing churches.

In this research churches are classified into two categories namely: Mega-churches and the mainline churches. According to Thumma⁹⁶ "a megachurch is a congregation that is composed of more congregants that attend a service". However Asamoah-Gyadu argues that mega-church are perceived as strange or bigger congregations which embrace the charismatic stream of Christianity.⁹⁷ As indicated on the discussion of the development of megachurch in South Africa, megachurch in this study is cited as a newly developing Charismatic and Pentecostal church that embraces culture of healing and prophetic practices. Historically, the Pentecostal healing tradition has originated upon common understanding of Christian practice of laying on of hands when praying for the sick.⁹⁸

⁹³ Simbarashe Pondani. Prophet of doom: The Phenomenon of Healing and Power dynamics in Neo-Pentecostal African Churches,; p1.

⁹⁴ Bekithemba Dube. Is Gabola a Decolonial Church or Another Trajectory of Freedom of Religion in Post-Colonial South Africa? Rethinking Ethical Issues in Religious Praxis. University of Free State. 2019

⁹⁵ Madipoane, Masenya and Malesela Masenya. Church breakaways as a prototype of commercialisation and commodification of religion in the Pentecostal Church Movement in South Africa: considering curricula offering for pastors. 2018, p634.

⁹⁶ Scott Thumma. Exploring the Megachurch Phenomena: their characteristics and cultural context, Hartfield Institute for Religion Research. 2007. p2

⁹⁷ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. African Pentecostal/ Charismatic Christianity: An overview. 2006

⁹⁸ Ibid see Pondani. Prophet of doom: pii.

Yet, megachurches openly reprove believers to reserve themselves from traditional healers; the notions that propel the church are carved from the identical local ideas and beliefs that rotate around the reality of witches, spirits and demons. This implies that the mega-churches are typically attractive with Charismatic culture and practices such as casting out demons and healing the sick.⁹⁹ Healing in some mega-churches commands a huge volume of influence on people across the country. Anderson and Otwang in Sibarashe remarked that several members of various Pentecostal churches said they were in the church because it was the one revealed to them by an ancestors and that if they would go to other churches to meet the prophet, they would be healed.¹⁰⁰ Some of the church leaders like pastors and prophets seem to take an advance of healing seekers in particular those who appear to be vulnerable physically, socially and spiritually. Those are the people who are manipulated and according to Theron¹⁰¹ various honest and sincere Christians who are prayed for are not instantly healed from their illness as promised by the faith healers. Kenny in Dube adds that South African religious background is branded by unusual churches and colourful preachers who use all kinds of strange rituals to attract congregants.¹⁰²

Khoaseb pointed out that healers in some mega-churches promise both wealth and instant healing.¹⁰³ Such healers emphasise the necessity for all diseases and conditions to be bought to them for remedy, with the belief that God never fail in his efforts to offer cure to his people. The said narratives demonstrate the conflict between abuse of people and the spiritual aspect of individuals. Most of people who are disparate due to their social and spiritual challenges they put their trusts on pastors and prophets who claims to have solutions on the needy. This viewpoint was also supported by Davis who argues that due to spiritual abuse some Christians become victims of such exploitation, sometimes by perpetrators whom toxic faith system might look healthier.¹⁰⁴ In view of the said perspective, an examination to such healing phenomenal appears to be disturbing, abusive and questionable on human aspects psychologically, socially and spiritually. Such practices seem to have disempowered and stole self-reliance of the faith healers followers.

⁹⁹ Kelebogile Thomas Resane. And they shall make you eat grass like oxen: Reflections on recent practices in some new charismatic churches, *Pharos Journal of Theology*. 2017

¹⁰⁰ Pondai Simbarashe. Prophet of doom: The Phenomenon of healing and power dynamic in Neo-Pentecostal African Churches. University of Stellenbosch 2019. p29-30

¹⁰¹ Jacques P. J. Theron. *Towards a Practical Theological Theory for the Healing Ministry*. 1999. p.57

¹⁰² Ibid see Dube et al. p2.

¹⁰³ Martin Khoaseb. *The Faith Healing Practice in Pastoral Care: A Pastoral Assessment*; Dissertation for PHD, Stellenbosch University. 2014 :p64

¹⁰⁴ Wendell J. Davis, *Healing a Wounded Leader, the Methods of Healing a Wounded Leader, the Transformation Into An Active and Effective Leader*. 2013.

Looking at history, miracle healing has sparked reaction from religious community. In 15th century, Europe became a good example for the healing paradigm shift. Roman Catholic Church by then as mega-church was selling a particular brand of heavenly prosperity theology as it was selling indulgences to worshippers for the purpose of salvation. Thus, what the mega-churches in South Africa are offering is the view that make sense of widening gap between wealth and poverty and bogus healing.¹⁰⁵ The practice of healing has always been controversial and complex aspect. During the period of 2016, irregular incident ensued in South Africa where certain church worshipers in one of the megachurches fell prey to unkind practices on the part of their clerics or prophets. One such occurrence involved a self-proclaimed prophet at Mount Zion General Assembly Church, commonly identified as the “prophet of doom”.¹⁰⁶ Henrico pointed out that the prophet purported to have sprayed an insecticide with the brand name Doom onto his congregants’ faces and on the bodies of some congregants during church services for purported healing purposes.¹⁰⁷ In 2015, the media reported about pastors who made congregants eat snakes, drink petrol and remove their clothes as part of their religious devotion.

There was also a similar incident which was reported that one prophet in Brazil claimed to have been endowed with heavenly milk that came out of his genitals when he received oral sex from his congregants. The state intervened and the pastor was arrested. In view of this notion, Mokhoathi and Rembe emphasised that the evangelical pastor has convinced his followers to drink his semen’s, which he claimed was ‘Holy Milk’ in order to be healed of their sicknesses.¹⁰⁸ It needs to be mentioned that these pastors and prophets take an advantage of the health status and biological necessities of their congregants. Hence said pastors and prophets are aware that some people are disparate and as a result they take an advantage to exploit and undermine the constitutional rights of the congregants. It needs also to be mentioned that the acts seem to be an unconcealed abuse of power. In view of the said acts, I would agree with Yidana who opined that “these healers occasionally employed the services of their deity and other powerful spirits to cure people of their afflictions”.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Maria Frahm-Arp. Respite from Revolution- the appeal of miracle churches, University of Johannesburg 2019

¹⁰⁶ Thinandavha D. Mudau. Moving to different streams of healing praxis: A reformed missionary approach of healing in the African context. 2016. Thesis

¹⁰⁷ Radley Henrico. Proselytising the regulation of religious bodies in South Africa.2019. pg. 2-4

According to Henrico, various religious faiths in South Africa simply continued pursuing their spiritual goals.

¹⁰⁸ Joel Mokhoathi, and Nasila S. Rembe,. Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in South Africa,2017. Vol.116

¹⁰⁹ Adadow Yidana; Dissertation on Socio-Religious Influencing the Increase Plausibility of Faith Healing in Ghana, Martin Luther University, 2014.p12.

Most of congregants appear to suffer silently from the abuse of the Charismatic, Pentecostal and mega-church prophets and pastors who execute upon their constitutional human right because they are in need of healing. The question arise that what is the government doing to protect and defend the constitutional rights of citizens who are abused by religious leadership in the name of prophetic healing. The deeds of prophets and pastors against the congregants tarnish the image of the church worshipers under the rituals of prophetic healing. Mokhoathi and Rembe further argue that the said ill-treatments of the congregants are due to the facts that are no strategic methods that are put in place by the government to regulate the religious practices at hand.¹¹⁰ However, the deplorable acts such as these became a concern and are challenged by the CRL Rights Commission. Thus, what make these more complex is that South African Constitution does not provide any form of limitation on religious practices.

Demirel and Mansour supported the viewpoint that the Prophet acted on his own opinion and when he was convinced that his opinion was wrong, he changed it.¹¹¹ It is clear that these claims of healing do not embrace any jurisdictional authority hence they apply some practices based on their own will. From this framework one can infer that some Prophets and pastors in some mega-churches act upon cultures and rituals they were born and raised in. From the said trajectories, it seems that some megachurch leaders ignore a Jesus Christ holistic approach models that embraces healing from psychological, spiritual and physical perspectives. Bate remarks that, ‘a multi-disciplinary approach is essential because of the nature of both healing and religion’.¹¹²

2.7 Healing trajectory from African Religious perspective

Throughout history, African healing practices and rituals were for to contain the wholeness of human health and were regarded as a main societal responsibility. Physical pain and anguish were the only problems facing the humankind. Within the African worldview, life is perceived in its entirety rather than in segments.¹¹³ Thus megachurches with its liturgy of

¹¹⁰ Ibid see Mokhoathi and Rembe.

¹¹¹ Serdar Demirel, and Saad Eldin Mansour. A theoretical Framework for al-tib al Nbawi in Modern Times University of Malasia: 2011. Pg. 36-38

According to Demirel et.al the prophets applied certain healing practices and special substances for healing purposes. Thus medicine form part of their practices.

¹¹² Stuart C. Bate, An interdisciplinary approach to understanding and assessing religious healing in South African Christianity: 2001: p361 386

¹¹³ Yunghsiang S. Han and Jaco Beyers. A critical evaluation of the understanding of God in J.S. Mbiti's theology. Acta Theologica Vol 37 No. 2. 2017

healing strategy and social change have impacted rather negatively on the African society. The African traditional healing practices, time and again embrace a variety of matters that are health – related. Those are the typology of healing which are rooted in both the Christian and African traditions.

The development and the utilisation of African traditional medicine have a very long historical background that corresponds to indigenous knowledge System of healing. Traditional African healing conceptualise healing trajectory in megachurch discourse from African worldview. In November 2015, the minister of Health published the regulations for Traditional Health Practitioners in Government Gazette No. 39358, Notice No 1052 in terms of Section 47,¹¹⁴ read together with section 21 of the Traditional Health Practitioner Act,¹¹⁵ purportedly after consultation with the Council to suggest the enactment of Traditional Healing Practitioners and the use of traditional medicine be recognised by the state.

The African worldview denotes the way in which Africans remark their world which in turn influences their ways of knowing and doing. All knowledge systems have philosophical underpinnings and are contextual and cultural based.¹¹⁶ In contrast, the Christian religion from its emergence in African Continent disregarded the existence of African Traditional Religion; hence it was arrogance towards religious practices for traditional religions like African and Asian religions. The Western ideal was further prompted by the notion that Africans did not have records for the past and that they do not have religious conviction as well. Lugira on this perspective argued that African religion can be understood as indigenous religion of the aboriginal Africans. It is a religion that echoes the worldview of indigenous Africa, and admits to sustain traditions, while being vigorous enough to familiarize itself to the present and also give room to the future.¹¹⁷ It should be noted that religion is a social construct in which African religion should be discussed in the milieu of healing practices to attain positive aspects that society can benefit. In the same vain, the African Religion researchers like Naam established that African religion is one of the richest of African heritage, which dictates and shape the worldview of African society and further express their way of life.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Traditional Health Practitioners in Government Gazette No. 39358, Notice No 1052 in terms of Section 47

¹¹⁵ Traditional Health Practitioners Act of 2007, Republic of South Africa. Government Gazette No 30660, January 2008 (cited 29 May 2020)

¹¹⁶ Leseba Baloyi and Molebogeng Mokobe-Rabothata. The African Conception of Death: A Cultural Implication. UNISA. P234.

¹¹⁷ Aloysius Muzzanganda Lugira. African Traditional Religion. 2009,p9-16

¹¹⁸ Naam, 2015,p44

Healing trajectories in this regard, in African culture are perceived as holistic and historically, are performed in various approaches. This perspective was also echoed by Sue and Sue in Yeh when they remarked that indigenous methods of healing take a holistic viewpoint towards well-being.¹¹⁹ This perspective is in support of the notion that African Traditional Religion view traditional healers as the embracer of healing and wellness of individuals' worldviews, meaning that they perceive themselves as the healing instrument of the community.¹²⁰ In support of the above worldviews, Magesa argues that the "phenomenon of holistic healing is not new in Africa. Long before the coming of the Western Christianity, Africans had their own medicine- people and diviners who provided healing services".¹²¹ Mndede also supported this worldview when in his research pointed out that the healing practices of traditional healers are holistic and further embrace "biological, physical, spiritual and social aspects of patient".¹²² It is from this viewpoint that some of researchers have determined that though people in Africa would identify themselves as Christians, when are faced with anguish like sickness, poverty, death and various life hindrances, they however turn to their African traditional rituals and beliefs. Rituals in the framework of African religion can heal the damages which members of the society committed that causes calamities and reinstate the status quo of the community and individual.¹²³ This is evidence that for centuries, healers' have been acknowledged as entities that are accredited in their societies as having special helping skills and acumen.

Thus, healing is an African phenomenon that cannot be discussed in the absence of health and sickness. Sickness and health appears to be compelling circumstances to both spiritual and physical well-being of human-beings. Historically, the word health appeared approximately in the year 1000 A.D. The word originally means the state and the condition of being sound and whole.¹²⁴ However, World Health Organization (WHO) defines the concept of health as a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".¹²⁵ In dealing with health, Balog in Boruchovitch and Mednick suggests three main aspects that to have developed in more recent period and he outlined them as thus:

¹¹⁹ Christine J Yeh and Carla Hunter. *Indigenous and Interdependent Perspective of Healing: Implications for Counselling and Research*. University of San Francisco. 2017. p410

¹²⁰ Lethabo S. Mabuza. *An Analysis of Current Healing Practices in some selected Megachurches in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province*. 2018

¹²¹ Laureti Magesa. *Anatomy of Inculturation- Transforming the Church in Africa*. 2004 p68

¹²² Mndede, 2006.p49

¹²³ Ibid Magesa 2004. p79

¹²⁴ Evely Boruchovitch & Birgitte R. Mednick. *The Maeaning of Health and Illness: Some Consideration for Health Psychology*. Vol 7. No.2

Itatiba PSICO-USF. 2002.

¹²⁵ World Health Organization Constitution, adopted by International Health Conference, New York on 19 June-22 July 1946. No.2,p100

The WHO concept, the traditional medical concept and the ecological concept. The said main opinion concepts as suggested by Balog, yet support the notion that health should be viewed from holistic approach in order to address the total needs of human being. For the ancient Greek health was always an aspect of supreme importance. The Balog viewpoints on health are however in line with African Traditional approach and are commendable in addressing health related aspects to humanity.

It should be acknowledged that Traditional Healing Methods (THM) have been employed by Africans for the deterrence, diagnosis and treatment of social, mental and physical diseases of diverse geneses before and even after the initiation of conventional medicine¹²⁶ and this augment the viewpoints argued by Mndede that the African Traditional Healers approach of healing is holistic.

In light of the above perspectives, Veenstra¹²⁷ acknowledged nine steps of African healing. He described that the African healer considers diagnostic stage by checking with his ancestors through prophetic approach. In this stage the healer identifies the patient with the assistance of his or her intuitive powers. The spiritualist will notify the patient about his or her condition and ailment. It is at this stage wherein the traditional healer provides love and reassurance to the patient as to how the treatment should take place.

The other stage is about treatment in which Veenstra argues that traditional healing stresses the symbolic nature of treatment, involving rituals as purification ceremonies and sacrifices. On this aspect of prevention the patient will be offered with traditional treatments, and other related healing substances as a protective measure for the patient to get well and to recover. Other substances that might be provided to the patient or consultant are to prevent witches, evil spirits and other supernatural agents of misfortune. The other indigenous substance deals with purification the body through emetics, steaming and washing. This African ideal of heal was also well captured by Ozioma and Chinwe who asserted that a traditional healer is one who provides medical care in the community that he lives, using herbs, minerals and other methods based on culture and beliefs of particular society.¹²⁸ Veenstra further argued the approach of exorcism in which according to him the process takes place when a person is

¹²⁶ World Health Organisation. Changing History. 2004.

¹²⁷ Ibid see Thinandavha D. Mashau (Veenstra 2006:30-39)

¹²⁸ Ezkwelisi-Ofili Josophine Ozioma and Okaka .Nwamaka Chinwe. Herbal Medicines in African Traditional Medicine. 2019.

possessed by evil spirits. This method is not exorcism as such, but more of a replacement of the evil spirit by a familiar spirit in family clan.¹²⁹

Contrary to Western healing approach that focuses mainly on the diagnosis of an individual and the prescription of medicine and/or the undergoing of an operation, the traditional healers pay attention to the steps as described above (Veenstra).¹³⁰ Most importantly, however, healing involves the whole person: his physical, psychological, spiritual and social aspects. The patient is not treated in isolation from his family and in some instances the healing process is further facilitated by including members of the community. In the same vein, Nyato remarked that in traditional cosmology, healing and religiosity are an integral part of people. Thus in African society, illness and misfortunes are considered to be religious experience.¹³¹ Berinyuu added that rituals and symbols are integral part of healing practices of the traditional healers, priests and African life as a whole¹³². In support of this view, Truter pointed that African traditional healing is intertwined with cultural and religious beliefs and is holistic in nature. It must be noted that traditional healing does not focus only on the physical condition, but also on the spiritual psychological and social aspects of society, family and individuals.¹³³ This idea was also supported by Ozioma and Chinwe who pointed out that most of traditional medical practitioners are good psychotherapists, proficient of faith (spiritual) healing and etc.¹³⁴ It seem astonishing that Western theologian researchers know so little about attitudes towards African megachurch approach on healing as megachurch healing methods are linked with African traditional practices. It is of this ideal that the African megachurch healing methods have become an integral part of African Traditional Healing practices; hence the practices thereof are not conflicted with faith healing prototype.

2.8 Dialogue on religion and healing practices

Religion contributes noticeably to the establishment of moral standards and ethics of the church institutions. Fagan points out that religious practice seem to have massive prospects for addressing contemporary societal problems. The practice of religion has impact on behaviour and social relations within the community¹³⁵ in terms of healing. Thus based on

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Ibid see Thinandavha D. Mashau (Veenstra (2006:30-39)

¹³¹ Salvory Stephen Nyato 2015, Indigenous Belief and Healing in Historic Perspective: Experience from Buha and Unyamwezi, Western Tanzania. p.189.

¹³² Abram Adu Berinyuu, Pastoral Care to the sick in Africa: An approach to Transcultural Pastoral Theology. 1988, 101

¹³³ Ilse Truter, African Traditional healers: Cultural and religious beliefs intertwined in a holistic way, SA Pharmaceutical Journal. 2007, p56

¹³⁴ Ibid See, Ozioma and Chinwe, 2019

¹³⁵ Patrick Fagan, Why Religion Matters: The impact of religious practices on social stability. 1996

this perspective, the dialogue are very essential in the face of ambush of strange healing traditions, doctrines and practices within megachurches spiritual space.

From Christian worldview point, Gerard argues that interreligious dialogue as an integral element of the Church evangelising mission is vital.¹³⁶ Pope John Paul II supported this view in his address to the Interreligious Assembly on October 28, 1999 when he articulated great bliss at the expansion of interreligious relations and stimulated the continuance of such dialogue and action for the sake of humankind. Pope John Paul II articulated, "The task before us is therefore to promote a culture of dialogue. Individually and together, we must show how religious belief inspires peace, encourages solidarity, promotes justice and upholds liberty." He further said, "Greater mutual esteem and growing trust must lead to still more effective and coordinated common action on behalf of the human family."¹³⁷ This call of interreligious dialogue was also echoed by World Council of Churches which during the course of 2017 and 2018 it led a call for a dialogue to encourage healing and health for all persons. WCC view health as more than physical and mental well-being, and healing as not mainly medical. However, health and healing are viewed by WCC as essential for Jesus' ministry and of his call to his disciples and on that aspect the church has been involved in health services for centuries.¹³⁸

The CRL Rights Commission in South Africa together with other religious leaders inaugurated a dialogue with regard to the proper ways of executing healing and any other spiritual exercise in the name of the church. Thus, several cases including healing practices and rituals that raised controversy amongst concerned citizens have been brought forth to the Commission.

However, Gerard provided the products of dialogue and argued that products of dialogue are the knowledge about the constructive significance of other traditions; overpowering prejudice; cleansing culture of degrading elements; safeguarding traditional cultural ethics of indigenous people; and refining one's own faith. In contrast, by encouraging dialogue by WCC amid the faith based organizations was to contribute on the theological source of medical mission and further to advance new models of Christian health care.¹³⁹ In the same vain, "the Christian in Healthcare" dialogue has tried to draw up the essential philosophies for a "Christian medical science" which echoed to construct an anthroposophical method to

¹³⁶ Gerard S.M. Hall. *Prophetic Dialogue as a Practical Theological category*. 2007.

¹³⁷ Joe Couture and Ruth Couture. *Biidaaban: The Mnjikaning Community Healing Model*, APC 23 CA 2003. (Pope John Paul II Speech)

¹³⁸ World Council of Churches: *Health and Healing*. p1 Viewed on 2020/07/15

¹³⁹ *Ibid* see WCC. p1

healing and intend to point out aspects of our approach on health and healing that are precise Christianity.¹⁴⁰

According to Arinze and Tomko the dialogue of religious experience is all about persons, embedded in their own sacred customs, share their divine treasures, based on prayer and meditation, faith and the manner in which people pursuit God.¹⁴¹ Thus the said views are supported by the viewpoint that the megachurch practices on healing seem to bring confusion within religiosity space and misrepresent the undiscerning members.

The concept “dialogue and healing” was also presented at the fifth General Chapter of the Catholic Missionary Society of the Divine Word Missionaries. The term was suggested as the most proper allegory or type for pronouncing a Christian missionary theology for modern times. The category of “dialogue on healing” is one such effort to advance a practical, missionary theology that appreciate human experience and reason while being doubtful of all human structures in the Church and humanity.¹⁴² Tension ascended over the leadership when interrogating whether individuals had particular gifts of healing and exorcism. In this perspective, Bartmann et al. remark thus:

*“Whoever fails to take the religious search for healing today seriously cannot in their mission work, approach people in a credible and inviting way”.*¹⁴³

The above viewpoint on dialogue is also supported by Bevans who argued that

*“Mission is dialogical because God is dialogical both in God’s deepest nature and in the way God acts in the world; mission is also a healing tool because God’s inner nature is also prophetic healer”.*¹⁴⁴

From this perspective, God is regarded as healer who deals with healing of mankind. To augment this worldview, is that a prophetic healer means to be a person who is embedded in dialogue, hence the Jewish scripture reveals that “no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the Holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God” (2 Peter 1:20). This supports the notion that if then God is a Deity of healing, and the church segmented in God’s mission, mission must be lived out as healing tool and the church must be a healer as well. However healing in dialogue is a complex reality. Sometimes healing is

¹⁴⁰ Ibid see WCC

¹⁴¹ Francis Arinze and Jozef Tomko. Dialogue and Proclamation. A document released by Vatican on JUNE 20, 1991

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Peter Bartmann, Beate Jakob, Ulrich Laepple and Dietrich Werner. Health, Healing and Spirituality. The future of the Church’s ministry of Healing. The German Institute for Medical Mission (difaem), Tubingen. p50-51 Viewed on 2020/07/15. p50

¹⁴⁴ Steve Bevans. Presentation paper at RFC Transformation of Religious Life on 2012

delighting and at times is a difficult task. Healing is a mission done in dialogue and prophetic healing is done in dialogue to execute prophetic mission. According to Bevans mission is prophetic dialogue and that mission is also a dialogical prophecy.¹⁴⁵ The said worldviews as Bevans argues suggest that “healing on dialogue” becomes a tool to address healing trajectories as prevail in mega-church religiosity space. This view was also remarked during dialogue conference with a purpose to highlight some fundamental questions concerning ethics and values with regard to healing, as the responsibility of Christian Churches.¹⁴⁶

2.9 Megachurch response to biomedicine

The notion that medicine is not a discovery of Christian religiosity is remarkable. In this anthropologic view, the Greeks, Romans, Chines and other pre-Christian nationalities have remarkable histories that reveal the human aspiration to revitalize and protect life through healing arts.¹⁴⁷ Although Christians comprehend sickness and healing in light of lifecycle,¹⁴⁸ their medical tradition is grounded within ancient Greek culture and knowledge for its code of ethics and its coherent method.¹⁴⁹ In this regard, Dornemann takes a novel approach towards the concept of healing as he established three conceptual framework that Jesus ministerial work was explicit in the sense that it encompasses offices such of: doctor, healer and exorcist.¹⁵⁰

In this regards there is a challenge that needs some probe regarding proclamations made by some prophets and pastors in some mega-churches who claim to have power for the curing or healing persons with HIV and AIDS. However, some mega churches are of the view that antiretroviral treatment and the use of faith concerning healing work together.¹⁵¹ Blazanor argues that People can apply their faith as well as adhere to treatment. There is no paradox between having faith and taking treatment for healing. The use of medication is not against the application of faith. The use of faith should inspire individuals to adhere to treatment and with assurance that the word of God does not prohibit any usage of medicines towards healing and cure and health.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Loc. Cit

¹⁴⁶ Ibid see Peter Bartmann et al. p50-51 Viewed on 2020/07/15

¹⁴⁷ John. W. Love. The Concept of Medicine in the Early Church, *The Linacre Quarterly*, 75:3, 225-238, DOI: [10.1179/002436308803889503](https://doi.org/10.1179/002436308803889503)
.2008. p225

¹⁴⁸ Loc. cit. p226

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

¹⁵⁰ Ibid see John .W. Love. p230

¹⁵¹ Blazanor Enterprises. *The New Teaching in the Postmodern Church: Faith Healing Salvation and the Gospel of Prosperity*. 2016 April

¹⁵² Ibid

Blazanor further warn Pastors, Prophets, congregants, and individuals that the application of faith leading people to abandon any kind of medical treatment positions the sick person at very high risk which may lead to death if not attended to on time. As indicated above, there have been peddlers and fake healers who claim to have power of curing HIV and AIDS. Earlier the diagnostic of the pandemic, some people of faith denounced people who were diagnosed with HIV AIDS and were followed by the latest and emergent Pentecostal and Charismatic mega-churches who encourage their converts to withdraw from medical treatments.¹⁵³

Such encouragement denotes spiritual leader who is irresponsible and inconsistent with the biblical versions. “Colossians 4:14 denotes to Luke as the “beloved physician,” viewing that Luke was a physician. The Bible states nowhere that Luke stopped applying his skills after being transformed. One of the accolades and appellations of Yahweh is Jehovah Rapha, the Lord our Healer (Ex. 15: 26) a praise-word Yahweh got by healing the waters of Marah with a tree. Apocalyptically the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22: 2). In this regard, “Olive oil also can be applied on sores, lacerations and abrasions. Wine was applied medicinally in the New Testament. Timothy was advised by Apostle Paul, in 1Timothy 5:23, to drink a little wine as a gastrointestinal relief due to his ill-health. Similarly, the Good Samaritan used to apply wine (in Luke 10:34), to protect up his wounds by pouring in oil and wine.”¹⁵⁴ In this regard, Alcohol is an antiseptic whereas wine is regarded as medicine and part of food substance. Plato in this viewpoint argues thus:

“The greatest mistake in the treatment of diseases is that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, although the two cannot be separated.”

Despite the fact that Plato said this in decades, his notions are still relevant in today’s humanity. Most of Church leaders like of some megachurches in South Africa and individuals consider the view that faith and medicine should remain separate and that there is no link in between the duo. Nevertheless, the novel research demonstrates that faith plays a vital role in the wellbeing of patients.¹⁵⁵ As a result of this study, there is a developing curiosity in exploring the role of physicians in patients’ religiousness. Once claims of healing occur in a religiosity space it is commonly entitled a miracle from God.

¹⁵³ Loc. cit.

¹⁵⁴ Holly Bible.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid see Blazanor

In the light of the above worldview, most of megachurches as referred to both the African Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in the early years of their era used to be contrasting to the view of making use of medical practitioners and their prescriptions. This position has significantly changed as people are free to go to the surgery and consult with their medical practitioners' physical treatments. It noteworthy to state that God's acumen is also revealed in medical and scientific models of healing. Wagner in this perspective argues that spiritual gifts of healing do not necessarily make medical doctors obsolete.¹⁵⁶ The biomedical healing model is targeted to psychological and physical aspect of the body when the illness is supported from spiritual aspects become obsolete.

2.10 Ethnographic tools of healing in the megachurch (Faith healing)

The primary appeal of megachurches ministry is divine healing and deliverance from demons or evil spirits. The ethnographic tools of healing in the megachurches are however based on faith healing. Faith healing is the practice of prayer and gesture such as laying on of hands and the application of some substances that some provoke divine intervention in spiritual and physical healing space.¹⁵⁷ Historically this type of ethnographic tools of healing faith has been popular over years as a practice in some Charismatic and Pentecostal churches.

Faith healing practices still dominant in South African megachurches as most members of African Independent Churches (AIC) believe in healing by means of symbolic objects.¹⁵⁸ In contrast, scientists and philosophers dismissed faith healing as pseudoscience.¹⁵⁹ However, Christian Physician Reginald Cherry views faith healing as pathway of healing in which God uses both natural and supernatural to heal. At the simplest interpretation, faith healing is healing through faith.

Faith healing is all empirical evidence¹⁶⁰, which suggest that some individuals do keenly trust that faith healing is phenomenal. In the same vain, Roman Catholic recognised two types of healing which one is justified by science and one justified by grace. The Roman Catholic approach in this regard is that healing through natural means emphasise the use of medicine and healing by means of grace is through laying on of hands and the use of anointing oil.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Wagner 1979. p239

¹⁵⁷ S. William et al. 2016 FAITH Healing Thearda.com. University Park, PA: Association of Religion Data archives.

¹⁵⁸ Solomon Kgatle Mookgo. The Parctice and Impact of Divine Healing in Saint John Apostolic Faith Mission: A Missiological Perspective, UNISA Scriptura 117, 2018, p1-11

¹⁵⁹ Mahner Martin (2013). Piogliucei, Massimo. Boundy Maarter (eds). "Philosophy of Pseudoscience Reconsidering the Demarcation problem. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. P30.

¹⁶⁰ Charlie Stack. The Psychology of Extraordinary Beliefs: The Ohio University. 2018,p1-2

¹⁶¹ See Wikipedia

This critical turn on ethnographic approach of healing practices by megachurches develop the healing model of multidisciplinary approach which leads healing to be flexible and holistic within religiosity space. Furthermore the approach is employed across a range of different cultural healing discipline. The practice of faith healing embrace a wide kind of undertakings like execution elaborate rituals, wearing of specific rings, exorcism of evil spirits and other related sacrificial practices. The danger of faith healing seems to be a serious concern, in the sense that it leads individuals to self-fulfilling prophecy or a powerful healer, whereas the result thereof shows to have positive spiritual and ritualistic results.

The offending part comes into effect when participants in this aspect have unrealistic expectations and some expect things are not possible to happen by faith. This opinion suggests that some people who believe in faith healing are uninformed. In light of this perspective, a case was reported where a man got sick and had a rash, seemly he over-heard about faith healing on the radio, instead of consulting the medical doctor he opted for a faith healer and later died.¹⁶² In South Africa, there are various cases of this nature, but the aforesaid incident is evident that faith healing should not be supported with ignorance and negligence.

The following ethnographic healing tools are discussed in this part: the use of anointing oil, giving testimony, laying on of hands, exorcism and deliverance as well as healing through music.

2.10.1 Use of anointing oil

Some pastors and prophets in megachurches inspire their congregants to utilise anointing oil. The theological interpretation in this regard is that anointing oil has the power of God's healing and delivering power. The church leader in this aspect emphasise that 'It is a point of contact in spiritual warfare and is a symbol of the Holy Spirit' (Magaya).¹⁶³ The pastor or the prophet in this repute claims that the anointing oil protects a person from fatal risks and traps. More so, anointing oil further cleanses and purifies an individual. The anointing oil disrupts the suppression and problem and triggered by the evil one. In contrast, Maganya, In his *Grace of All Time* calls it the blank cheque anointing. In short, anointing oil heals, consecrates, blesses and aggravates heavenly intervention. Henceforth the anointing oil can

¹⁶² Ibid

¹⁶³ Walter Magaya 2016b, Magaya 2016c, *Witchcraft: Teaching* by Prophet W Magaya.

be used on all affected parts of the body and further applied even on any documents for business purposes and alike.¹⁶⁴

In South Africa, megachurches pose a spiritual and economic threat to mainline churches. Apart from the element of statistical figures, the issue at stake is ecclesiological in nature. There are a lot of distorted biblical ideologies and ethics. This is a disturbing spiritual advancement. The prophet promises healing and wealth and people trust the prophets and pastors through buying and applying anointing oil.¹⁶⁵ In April 2016, the prophet prayed that all his members get their wallets and pockets full of money. One congregant attested that she received \$350. This was related to what prophet Makandiwa performed when he prayed for his followers to receive gold from heaven after having applied anointing oil. In this circumstance, some congregants affirmed that they received money whereas the majority of them went home empty handed. The matter of healing and receiving wealth through oil anointing has not been seriously considered in mainline churches. Numerous members feel attracted to megachurches because of testimonies they see on TV channels and when they visit the church and attend the services.¹⁶⁶

2.10.2 Giving testimony Tool

Another tool used to popularise the healing in megachurches is through giving testimonies. Giving is one of the instrument in which congregants attest to the manifestations of God's power in their lives during church services (Gbote & Kgatla).¹⁶⁷ At these services some selected congregants narrate how God responded to their prayers through the prophet in terms of health or wealth after giving. On 08 May 2016 some people testified of skin healing, finding a good house or job and abandoning drugs and lives of loose morals. All these blessings were credited to the power of the prophet Magaya who had casted out the evil spirits in previous church services. The evil spirits used to hinder progress in congregants future. The material success is attributed to the prophet's call to sow the seed¹⁶⁸. These evidences inspired other members of the church also to give through the philosophy of sow the seed. In this regard, the congregants also state their dark past and their bright present situation by giving. All is to depict that when a person gives will flourish in life. These types

¹⁶⁴ Ibid see Magaya, p1

¹⁶⁵ Lethabo S. Mabuza Master's thesis: An Analysis of current healing practices on selected mega-churches in Vhembe District, 2018

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, See Magaya 2016b

¹⁶⁷ Eric Z.M. Gbote & Selelo T Kgatla, 'Prosperity gospel: A missiological assessment', in *HTS Theological Studies* 70(1), 1-10.2014:7

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, see Magaya 2016b

of testimonies attract members in similar conditions to flock to megachurch for deliverances from poverty. The trait of giving testimonies implants confidence and attracts many members to wish to do the same.

To sow a seed means that when congregants contribute financially, he or she is planting a seed which will multiply and he or she will receive in plenty. As such, financial contribution makes one recognised and answered by God. Therefore, one gets an identity through the amount of money he or she contributes to the church. 'Anything that is spent in the Lord's service is believed to have rich returns'.¹⁶⁹ This has brought the concept of the theology of increase or the theology of sowing through giving. Thus, the emphasis implies that giving in the church heals the financial status of the giver.

2.10.3 The practical laying on of hands approach

The other important aspect in megachurches is not about prophesying, but is also about healing activities. Historically, “laying on of hands” on a person was regarded as ancient ritual practice. Thus, “laying on of hands” was part of the rituals used as a means of interaction to confer a blessing from an individual to another. There is a notion that suggests that the anointed hands transfer power from the *Ruach HaKodesh* to the person who is in need of God’s power. From Hebrew perspective, the main concept of laying on of hands is that of accountability and responsibility. The Hebrew word used is “*SAMAK*” and means to lay the hand on a person. In Greek, the word used is “*EPITITHEMI*” and it has the logic of placing upon the object, so as to come in contact with it. The application of the word 'hand' in Hebrew (*yadh*) is related with power, authority and strength. Thus the term 'hand' is associated with power in the hand. The laying on of hands therefore is perceived as that which attract from a pool of abundant authority and strength. Hence the practice of laying on of hands is that which draws from the reservoir of *Elohim* and is imparted to the recipient.¹⁷⁰

In the New Testament, the laying on of hands was related with Christ healing the sick.¹⁷¹ From the Christian viewpoint, “laying on of hands” is both symbolic and official system of begging the Holy Spirit to intervene, primarily during baptism, confirmation and healing

¹⁶⁹ Conrad Chibango. 'Prosperity gospel, a pathway out of a socioeconomic crisis? The case of PHD ministries of Walter Magaya, Zimbabwe', in *Modern Research Studies, An International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3(1). 2016. p.55-82.

¹⁷⁰ Wikipedia

¹⁷¹ Holy Bible Luke 4:40

services.¹⁷² Prophet Magaya is purported to be able to employ the power of the Holy Spirit to heal the sick by laying on of hands, anointing with oil or giving holy water. In actual fact, most of megachurches offer incredible promises to the sick people and poor. Thus, teaching the word of God to the poor and the needy does not appeal anymore. This is why 'The promise of prosperity is hard to resist' (Kroesbergen).¹⁷³ The promises of deliverance attract many people to megachurches because people have been taught to bear suffering because they would receive their reward in heaven.

The healing services in most of megachurches have amalgamated many African traditional elements. The services of laying on of hands are characterised by participatory worship. In this case, this has attracted many young and old people to the service. This permits people to let out their problems to the prophet or pastor. Moreover, allowing people to exchange greetings and wish each other healing and blessing inserts congregants in a reconciliatory mood. Dancing and prayers of healing and exorcism have an African cultural influence and this is what most of the people like.

Another important reason why people feel attracted to the megachurches is that it reflects the African way of healing. According to Mugambi and Wasike to be blessed is biological and material. This is when people have access to their needs like, giving birth to children, healthiness, and other related treasure and fortunes. All these are way of healing and blessings from the Supreme Being¹⁷⁴ by means of physical touching. Gaiser¹⁷⁵ has different view approach in this perspective of laying on of hand on the sick with reference to biblical framework, as he argues that 'laying hands on someone can, in other context, be considered as a violent act,¹⁷⁶ or positive act associated with sacrifice¹⁷⁷ or it can be an action associated with blessing¹⁷⁸ and healing.¹⁷⁹ Since there is pattern as to how to execute healing by means of laying on of hand, this research presumes that people ethics determines their behaviour in particular in relation to physical respect and honour other people.

¹⁷² Wikipedia (cited on 29 May 2020)

¹⁷³ Takesure C. Mahohoma. A Theological evaluation of God Business: A case Study of Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Ministries of Zimbabwe. 2017.

¹⁷⁴ Jesse N.K. Mugambi and Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, (eds.). *Moral and ethical issues in African issues Christianity: Exploratory essays in moral theology*, Initiatives, Nairobi. 1992.

¹⁷⁵ Frederick J. Gaiser. *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academy. 2010. p173.

¹⁶⁹ Wholly Bible, Lev. 1:4,

¹⁷⁷ Ibid see Wholly Bible, Lev. 1:4,

¹⁷⁸ Ibid: Gen. 48:14

¹⁷⁹ Loc. cit. 2Kings 4: 34 and Luke 4: 40.

Some pastors and prophets encourage members to pray for themselves before the healing services starts. At times pastors or prophets will encourage their members to be annoyed with the evil one, or anything that impedes a member to progress in life materially. For instance, people say, 'You spirit of poverty, HIV, cancer, etc. come out'. This reiteration takes more time than the one the prophet spends with people.¹⁸⁰ This can be done during church service. The nature of service of healing in most of megachurches is equivalent to African tradition practices in which people go to secrete places ask for rain, healing and blessings. As indicated supra, it should be acknowledged that sometimes the emphasis “tough healing” is exaggerated such that people scramble to be touched by the prophet or the pastor.

Actually, congregants would grasp anything that is connected with the prophet for healing purposes. In this concern, Theron argues that healing influences people in many ways. 'It builds the faith of those who attend'.¹⁸¹ Thus, the main aim of People flocking to megachurches is that they want to be healed from their sicknesses and recover. This approach fuelled the journey for spiritual and social answers to church members' on various problems, but also acceptance of religious practices to social and material requests.

In this context, congregants perceive what they expect to get. They are taught that, for a financial contribution, they can submit a prayer request with money to the prophet or pastor and he will pray for them and they will be healed. During the processes of healing prayers the pastor or the prophet encourages the congregants to say, 'I receive'. People are promised healing, husbands, wives, houses, cars, etc. The major teaching is that church members should give money to the prophet for their prayers to be answered by God. In addition, most of pastors and prophets claimed that God blesses those who live upright and keep his covenant. Scriptures are quoted to supplement their teachings. In its theology most of megachurches underscores that those who believe in Jesus will be delivered as stated in Matthew 11:28-30, 'Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy and my burden light'.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

¹⁸¹ Theron 1999:57

¹⁸² Ibid

2.10.4 Music healing approach

The history of relationship between healing and music within megachurch tradition provides a particular valuable therapeutic theory for considering megachurch approach on music as one of the healing model. Thus, the acknowledgment of the role of music as a healing modality has blossom in the few decades.¹⁸³ Throughout the dissertation I employed megachurch concept to contrast the form and some practices from Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in order to assess their methods from rival music healing models. Healing and music goes hand in hand in the sense that music is one of the central activities that anchors the megachurches. Praise and worship as part of music, forms part of healing rituals in megachurches. Music affords a powerful fundamental faith to the believers and further operates as an anchor providing a direct support to spiritual resources.¹⁸⁴

In ancient Greece, music was utilised to ease stress, sooth pains and stimulate sleep on individuals. However, the character of the Chinese for medicine embraces character for music. Singing and chanting have been used by both the Africans and Native Americans as part of their healing rituals.¹⁸⁵ The phenomena related with healing through praise and worship services fuelled megachurches to gain greater prominent within mainline churches like Lutheran Church, Catholic Church, Episcopalian and Protestant Churches as large number of individuals hailing the music liturgical order in megachurches.¹⁸⁶ Even though in his history amongst Charismatics and Pentecostals, David Edward Harrell Jr. draws on similar dissimilarities to make sense of Charismatics and Pentecostals contradictory approach to healing, thus, music in this regard is fundamental attribute of megachurch individual spiritual space.¹⁸⁷ This healing approach helped pave the way for the swift spread of megachurches by means of Pentecostal and Charismatic style spirituality within the historic churches.

In the light of the said opinion, Chanda and Levitin's views are informative in this perspective of music as part of medicinal healing. They both argue that:

¹⁸³ Jesse Paledofsky and Zia Frances Shapiro. Chaplain today, e-Journal of the Association of Professional Chaplain. Vol 28 No 2 Autumn / Winter 2012 p31.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid see; Jesse Paledofsky and Shapiro Zia Frances

¹⁸⁵ Anne Fabiny, Music as Medicine: The Impact of Healing harmonies. The Longwood Serminars at Harvard Medical School. 2015,p7.

¹⁸⁶ Viginia H. Hine. Pentecostal Glossolalia: Towards a Functional Interpretation. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8, No. 2. 1969. p224

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

*“Many people use music to regulate mood and arousal, much as they use caffeine or alcohol. Neurosurgeons use it to enhance concentration, armies to coordinate movements and increase cooperation, workers to improve attention and vigilance and athletes to increase stamina and motivation”.*¹⁸⁸

Levitin in Charles Aluede and Vincent Aiwuyo detected that music is vital for healing as it function similarly with barbiturate and amphetamine do.¹⁸⁹

Within the current religious space, singing and church music are time and again reduced to worship and praise. Hymnological research, identify numerous functions for liturgical singing, that music during church service embrace a pastoral duties, which among other aims at healing congregation as well as the individuals. Liturgical music in other churches is mostly underestimated and neglected. This clause aims at understanding music and singing rituals as part of healing within the liturgy of the worship service. The study on music in liturgy, suggest that music is therapy on individuals.¹⁹⁰ From the postmodern worldview; art, music (and by inference singing), metaphors, symbolism, and rituals can play a vital role in the process of healing.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, art and music, poetry, symbols, and metaphors can contribute to meet with God; hence music has the capacity to address both the emotional and rational merits of being.¹⁹² Even the megachurches adapted their healing practices to accord with music healing approach and as a result, music in this regard remains a prominent healing practice. It is of this viewpoint that the impact of postmodernism commanded the importance of music. It is also worthwhile to note that younger generations tend to be attracted by churches and denominations where other of activities is singing and in singing they also experience more of dancing.

The above notion is consistent with the Maritz and Dreyer remarks that the holistic views of the postmodern era, as well as the rise of music therapy in the historical 60 years, contributed to a new approach of the essence of music for people.¹⁹³ In support of Maritz and Dreyer viewpoint on music, Karen Drucker Karen also points out that “Music can heal. Music can

¹⁸⁸ Chanda, M., & Levitin, D. J. (2013). The neurochemistry of music trends. *Cognitive Science*, 17(4), 179–193. [Google Scholar](#)

¹⁸⁹ Charles Aluede and Vincent Aiwuyo. *Ethnomusicologists and Medical Practitioners in Healthcare Delivery in Nigeria*. p.1

¹⁹⁰ Robb Redman. *The great worship awakening*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA. 2002. p.37-40.

¹⁹¹ J.F Maritz, J.F. & , T.F.J Dreyer, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 58(3), 2002, p1208-1220.

¹⁹² J.F Maritz, J.F. & T.F.J Dreyer, 'Musiek as hulpmiddel in pastorale terapie', *HTS Teologiese Studies* 57(3&4). 2001. p1265-1287.

¹⁹³ Ibid

inspire. Music is essential to our well-being”.¹⁹⁴ Hence, Nzewi in this viewpoint remarks that “¹⁹⁵music in traditional Africa is the art of living with health, the science of being. Music is the immaterial resonance of which the human soul and body are composed: The human body is the prototypical sound instrument and the human soul is the ethereal melody. Nzewi further argues that basics of a music event could be prescribed by a non-musical objective, which could be healing. Nzewi argument supports the notion that music is essential trait of human species. Without offering final proof, from African worldview music is perceived to be dealing with spiritual and mental sicknesses.

2.10.5 Exorcism healing approach

Another area that has drawn the attention of many people to megachurch is casting out of demons. Demons are presumed to be spirits that are supernatural beings that are able, purposive and could attack individuals. They are graded hierarchically according to their power and role in ontological order in the domain of spirits. Besides God and human beings there are demons. There are many types of spirits. The spirits can either be identified with God or human beings. Spirits can be categorised as good or evil.¹⁹⁶ In this part the focus is on evil spirits and exorcism.

Demons and evil spirits are alleged to be the root cause of many problems people face and only prophets and some anointed pastors can cast them out. The demons are categorized into groups. There are demons of poverty, diseases, death or infertility. Concerning the spirits of poverty, prophet Magaya demonstrates that such demons have declared a war against the prosperity of mankind. Demons of poverty strategize against the pleasure of people. Magaya further stresses, that God does not cause any of problem in people’s life-all problems derive from the Satan’. Tertullian argues that exorcism in his period was free and ministered to people as a public service. He further points out that faith was a prerequisite for healings, as it was augmented by anointing of oil and further call upon the name of Christ.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Keren Drucker. The Power of Music to Heal. Karen Drucker is a keynote speaker, women’s retreat facilitator, and entertainer who has recorded 20 CDs of inspirational music. She authored *Let Go of the Shore: Stories and Songs That Set the Spirit Free* (DeVorss & Company, 2010). Her chants and songs are used around the world.

¹⁹⁵ Meki Nzewi. Backcloth to Music and Healing in Traditional African Society. *Voices, A World Forum for Music Therapy*. Vol. 2 No 2. 2002.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid See Magaya 2016b

¹⁹⁷ Christain Dumitrescu. A Historical Survey of Healing and Exorcism. 2015,p30

In 2015 Magaya preached a sermon dedicated to 'Breaking the chains of poverty spirits.' He showed that God is not poor and so is there to break the chains of poverty spirits.¹⁹⁸ In this regard, Magaya reflects poverty to be a demon that holds poor community and which needs to be cast out from people. There is a belief that kinds of these spirits are related to traditional beliefs. Hence many people want to be freed from such spirits. Due to this problem most of the people attend the preaching, prayers and services physically or through TV. The spirits of debts cause one to be addicted to borrowing throughout life.¹⁹⁹ These impede a person for the development in life and needs exorcism. Illness and sufferings are the result of a spirit of disease. For this reason most of people need to be healed by the prophet or pastors. The megachurch theology suggests that the spirit of disease causes ill health, HIV and AIDS, cancer, barrenness and other types of illnesses. As such the prophet or pastors is the only one who can exorcise these spirits.

In addition Magaya further emphasise that these spirits are spiritual in nature in such a way that they cannot be visibly identified. Because they are evil these spirits are only identified with people or geographical places. Just as Jesus said by their fruits you will know them, people and places with territorial spirits are known by their deeds or actions, which include killing, hatred, stealing or prostitution.²⁰⁰

Another group of evil spirits is of witchcraft and Satanism. In his discourse on witchcraft Magaya remarks, 'Witchcraft goes back to the beginning of time and also existed during biblical times, no wonder it is mentioned in several sections of the bible being ridiculed'.²⁰¹ Persons who have witchcraft powers execute evil deeds. Due to the fact that witchcraft and Satanism come from the Satan, those spirits are twofold. Some people are commenced into witchcraft activities. Their aim is either to destroy or harm someone. Some witchcraft initiations have characteristics of snakes, owls or cats. These creatures are led by their owners to harm other people; hence they need to be cashed out through exorcism.

In the light of the above perspective, there are some various indigenous healing practices adopted from the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) that currently form part of megachurch liturgical orders. Such practices of indigenous healing have been more predominant in current era.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid See Magaya 2015a:p3

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

²⁰⁰ Ibid See Magaya 2014:1

²⁰¹ Loc. Cit

2.11 Regulation of Religions and Churches in South Africa and the CRL Rights Commission proposals

Like in other countries, South Africa's constitution as a supreme law of the state safeguards the freedom of religious institutions. Some healing practices that impacted the community elevated a dialogue within the religiosity community about some questionable activities within some churches. The CRL Commission proposed to the parliament that the regulation of religion and churches in South Africa to be enforced by the law. Thus, the responsibilities of the CRL Rights Commission as one of Chapter 9 institutions is to counsel, probe and report on some religious rights related matters. As its name implies, it is state organ that safeguards the religious freedom and rights as defined under section 239 of the Constitution. On July 2011 the Commission for the Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities in South Africa submitted to the parliament that all religious experts be registered under the authorised organisation that would be recognised by the South African government.²⁰²

According to the CRL Commission's report, the purpose of regulating the religious institution is to curb the abuse of people's belief systems".²⁰³ As indicated supra, several cases that raised controversy amongst concerned citizens, have been submitted to the commission for considerations and further make determinations. However, the proposal to regulate religious and churches practice in South Africa is being criticised by a number of religious leaders in particular the one who belong to Christian umbrella. Pollit cited Archbishop Brislin, the president of South African Catholic Bishops Conference that:

"We will oppose the recommendation and will make submission to the appropriate bodies in due course".²⁰⁴

Thus, the Catholic Bishops of South Africa are disturbed about the recommendations of the commission that priests, ministers of religion and pastors will, by law, have to register with government as "practitioners". However, the recommendations were the outcomes of an investigation over "commercialisation of Religion and Abuse of People's Belief Systems. The Commission's recommendations were also based on unusual practices by some Church

²⁰² Russell Pollit. Church opposes new plans to regulate religious practices in South Africa: 2017.

²⁰³ Collium Banda. Journal of Current Chines Affairs. The Regulation of religious in Taiwan. 2018.pg. 3-6

²⁰⁴ Ibid see Pollit, R.

Leaders who purportedly encouraged some of the members to give up taking the medications as prescribed by the medical practitioners.²⁰⁵

Regulation of religions has also turned to be a global issue in that Edge in Andre points out that the opportunity of legislation on religion, as it is phenomenal, tends to be quite uncertain in democratic worldview.²⁰⁶ In support of the aforesaid viewpoint Andre adds that in Germany and United Kingdom few cases of state or established religions inherited from tradition, very few democratic states regulate religious affairs in general. This regulation was executed despite the constitutional existence that promotes the freedom of religions in the states.²⁰⁷

However, in Canada, there is no legislation to administer religions except some of certain provisions on contributions, whereby the state is legalised to register religious institutions with a purpose to advance from tax privileges. Moreover, most of the Eastern democratic states like China (Taiwan) do not have regulation on religion.²⁰⁸

Before the emergence of the welfare state, churches have been at forefront of social services that are considered to be the natural preserve of contemporary states, such as health care, education, and child care.²⁰⁹ Most of the occasions that are questionable conduct by some religious leaders during their spiritual campaigns turn around to be tragedies as they involved cases of fraud in the name of religion, abuses of religious institutions are reported by the media to have generated emotions for republic opinions. Such behaviour as mentioned above made a call for urgent regulation of appropriate legal framework for religious affairs.²¹⁰

In contrary, some global religious leaders who have established churches and their religious institutions support the strategy form of state intervention to limit the activities of new religions. They accuse these new religions of being fraudulent, but in their demands for regulation they put the government in a dilemma. In contrast Qu in Andre states that the Buddhists, and Daoist's propose several solutions to the issues raised by their religious sectors (Buddhists, and Daoist's) as they put fourth their own proposals to suggest that the state should not legislate on religions at all²¹¹. In view of the above worldview, a majority of

²⁰⁵ CRL Commission Report 2018 pg. 1-10

CRL Commission as Chapter one institution its main task is to investigate some of irregularities within religious spectrum.

²⁰⁶ Laliberte A., Andre. Journal of current chines affairs. 2009,

²⁰⁷ Loc. Cit.

²⁰⁸ ibid

²⁰⁹ Ibid see Pollit. R

²¹⁰ Loc. Cit. See Andre, L.A

²¹¹ Ibid

religions and organizations had embraced the viewpoint that the state should not interfere into religious affairs. This viewpoint, however, led to MOI to back down in the face of oppositions as well as from the civil rights militants.

The aforesaid perspective, raised a dialogue and debate to some Eastern countries like China as it is argued that the state interventions to regulate the establishment of new religions and churches, will however curb disorders and scams that looms around. On the basis of the said strategy, the society might suffer negative proliferations of some kind. In support of the said perspective, Xingyun in Andre pointed out that the proliferation of humanity in this regard would impend on the integrity of religion in broad-spectrum.²¹²

South Africa alike, the General Secretary of the Chinese Buddhist Temple Association argued based on the above viewpoint that no country ever legislate on religions and as such the regulation proposal at its own exaggerate on the emerging problems of fraud. In view of this argument, Andre argues that most of religious leaders supported the view to oppose the regulation of the religions and the state interventions into religious affairs.²¹³

The debate on religious interference in Nigeria had played out negatively as the religious organizations and political spectrums used religion as their main weapons to hold onto powers.²¹⁴ It must be stressed that in Nigeria, traditional religions, Islamic and Christianity are faith-based institutions that are capable of impacting on behaviour attitudes of individual believers and state governance. This viewpoint is supported by theoretical framework that emphasise that Nigeria is a secular state. Thus secularism is a legal position in the highest law of Nigeria as it suggests that religious practices in the states should not influence any public or governmental decisions.²¹⁵

From sociological perspective, Durnkheim in Yesufu argues that the society generated religion as an instrument in shaping, pointing and further regulating societal ideologies and behaviour.²¹⁶ In this manner, It must be pointed out that the imposition of State religion in Nigeria was phenomenal prior the advent of British colonialists. The British governors guaranteed not to interfere on religious matter but they established the Anglo-Fulani rule that promoted the banishment of religious laws and practices.

²¹² Id.

²¹³ Ibid see Andre L.A

²¹⁴ Momoh Lawani Yesufu , the Impact of Religion on secular State: The Nigerian Experience. 2013

Momoh Lawani Yesufu is the former Study Group Director and Senior Research Fellow National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Nigeria.

²¹⁵ Ibid

²¹⁶ Loc. Cit.

2.12 The trajectories of healing ritual in South African Megachurches

Anderson in his research confirmed that megachurch in Africa has become prominent feature on the side of political and religious landscape. Pressure amounts to mainline churches and other emerging churches that want to compete with megachurches in the same space. In this part, the researcher intends to investigate the forces behind healing practices in megachurches. The main aspect that surface is “witchcraft” in which according to Olamedi in Elijah Baloyi, “witchcraft is a reality in Africa because there are indeed witches”²¹⁷, hence Gyadu remarked that people commonly belief that African religion is anticipated to deal with effects of evil triggered by demonic spirits and witchcraft.²¹⁸ In this regard, as society has anxiety of witchcraft makes them vulnerable to such and extend that they can do anything to do away with witchcraft at all costs. Hence church leaders, prophets and church pastors who claim to have the power to expel and prevent people from such practices of witchcraft are becoming attractive and popular. It is for this reason that most of people flock to them to ask for safety.²¹⁹ Besides people flocking to these pastors voluntarily for safeguards, pastors themselves advertise that people should come to them for protection.

The main issue in South Africa and African continent is that people want God to attend to their unfavourable conditions and there is belief that God can use the megachurches pastors to protect them from adversaries. Stabell justifies this notion by remarking that in various places globally, religious task is executed in the framework where talk of witchcraft is substantial element.²²⁰ It needs to be observed that fears on the side of the members and threats of witchcraft on the side of the prophets, pastors and church leaders appear to be an evangelical tool for some megachurches and other churches to retain the congregants in the church. This notion is exaggerated by the belief of some prophets and pastors (particularly from megachurches) that they have the power over witches and authority to protect the congregants. One observation revealed that during the preaching session, some members are passive, some slumbering but became active when pastors started praying for the sick, individual problems and executing demons exorcism.

²¹⁷ Elijah Baloyi. *The Evangelical role of witchcraft in some Pentecostal Movements: An African Pastoral Concern*. Missionalia 46-1. Prof ME Baloyi is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic theology, UNISA.

²¹⁸ Ibid see Elijah Baloyi p57.

²¹⁹ Loc. cit

²²⁰ Ibid

2.13 The practice of occults in megachurches

South Africa has turned to be a religious space for signs and wonders and miracles as various churches and religious ministries have pastors, apostles and prophets who execute healing rituals through miracles, wonders and signs. With this perspective the imperative questions to ask about these magnificent prophetic deeds, Are these healing practices authentic?

There is a secret, evil forces and power that have infiltrated the Church of God.²²¹ Some of the newly established churches including the megachurches turned to the occult movement institutions for miracles and healing powers. As well-defined in *Webster's New International Dictionary*, the occult embraces whatever “beyond the scope of plain understanding; mysterious, supernormal or supernatural.” The concept occult is pragmatic to numerous religious practices, many of which purport to prophesy forthcoming events.²²²

In the light of the said description, it worth note to mention that the concept occult originates from the Latin worldview “*ocultus*” and a result it carries the philosophy of hidden things, mysterious and secrets.²²³ The historian Melton of Baylor University in Texas argues that the word ‘occult’ is worthless: it simply undertakes a normative framework that legitimises some exertions of religious power.²²⁴ From theological perspective, occult refers to secret or forbidden realms of knowledge and power often identified within three domains: divination, Spiritism, and magic.²²⁵

Occultism has to do with any form of practice in the life of human beings that acknowledges the presence of demonic powers that are hidden behind activities such as magic, Spiritism and divination. In African worldview, occultism is about the practice of tapping vital forces in the cosmos space in order to influence the favourable circumstances or unfavourable situation with the help of magic, divination or witchcraft.²²⁶

In contrast, most of traditional churches have been opposing to all such systems of occultism prophecy. However, the Bible condemns occult practices but in contrast the New Testament describes various miracles, including the raising of the dead persons. The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* records that the Roman Catholic Church “does not deny that, with a special

²²¹ Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana. Church Mafia: Captured by Secret powers: An untold African Narrative. 2019

²²² The Occult versus the Churches. CQ Researchers In-depth reports of today's issues. 1970.

²²³ P.J De Bruyn. The Ten Commandments. Midrad: Varia.1992.

²²⁴ Tara Isabella Burton. Religion, culture and place. *The Wall Street Journal*. Burton is a Clarendon Scholar at Trinity College, Oxford, working on a doctorate in theology, and recently completed her first novel.

²²⁵ John Ferrer. Infiltrated: Recognising and Responding to Occultism in your Church.2020

²²⁶ Thinandavha Derrick Mashau. Occultism in African Context: A case for the Vhavenda speaking people of the Limpopo Province. North West University. 2015. p.633 and 634.

permission of God, the souls of the departed may appear to the living.²²⁷ In the light of Catholic Encyclopaedia worldview regarding the occults, The position of Catholic Church is thus, “All forms of divination are to be rejected,” and lists various efforts to unveil the future, including astrology, palm reading and the “phenomena of clairvoyance.” It also states that “all practices of magic or sorcery, by which one attempts to tame occult powers ... are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion”.²²⁸

Despite the Catholic position on occults, numerous individuals flock into these churches and participate into healing services without asking any questions. The spiritual movement under the banner of prophecy operates with powers from hell to attract crowds.²²⁹ This notion was also pointed out by McJury who views parapsychology as a direct link to demons, which the church teaches are actual creatures, not mere metaphors.

Bosch in Mashau observed that Christianity is facing a serious problem with regard to occultism.²³⁰ Occultism among some megachurches it is not something amazing but it is phenomenal practice. This practice includes tapping of spiritual realms and vital forces in the cosmos space. Through this occults practices sporadic incidents take place in some megachurch domains.

Recently, the media reported cases of pastors, prophets and faith healers who are accused of employing occultism framework. These occultist group who “claim to possess the gift of healing and exorcism are mushrooming at an accelerated pace”.²³¹ Occultism among the megachurches is rooted in the African Traditional Religion and prophetic practices.

The belief in African Traditional Religion is dominant in almost African people. Thus, prophetic practices in megachurches have to do with future prediction. In view of occultism, the prophets and faith healers believe that there are spiritual powers or spiritual forces that the prophet or healer can tap.

Given the context, some megachurch leaders fly to Western Africa for powers. It is clear that they consult with African Traditional Healers for such powers. The ATH will offer the pastors and prophets with objects that they will take them back to the country. These objects are made formulaically and comprised of several religious and magical elements, both natural

²²⁷ Ibid

²²⁸ Maria Wiering. Occult practices frightened lapse Catholic back into church.p1. Retrieved 11/23/2020

²²⁹ Ibid see Church Mafia

²³⁰ Ibid see Thinandavha Derrick Mashau. p639

²³¹ Loc. cit

and manmade.²³² Amongst the objects, are coral, this object was known for its magical, medical and protective effects in the early modern period, and often used to heal.²³³ These have revealed their diversity in many ways. Their material structure ranged from natural to manmade or human to animal; to metals, papers, woods and plastics. Some were engraved and imprinted, representing symbols, images, numbers and words²³⁴ and curious arts. The main purpose of some objects in religious sectors is to heal or protect a body or homestead. In view of the above observation, historically, the occultism practice demonstrate that from the early modern period to the modern day, healing and protection activated from different sources of powers, and took various diverse substantial forms.

In the ancient world, the use of “curious arts” was common. The Egyptian Pharaohs had their sorcerers and magicians²³⁵, as Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king did. The Bible expresses of diviners of fortune-tellers; of those with “familiar spirits”; of wizards; of enchanters and witches; of necromancers; of astrologers. Both the Bible and archaeology confirm that these practices were universal in the ancient world²³⁶ thus is not a new phenomenon. It should be noted that when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, He utterly *condemned* the use of such practices.

In spite of God’s clear and repeated forewarnings, the people of Israel, period after period, “went a whoring” after the customs and practices of the heathen. They sought out the soothsayers, the enchanters, the charmers, and the consulters of familiar spirits. They sacrificed to the “gods” of the heathen; took up their abominable customs. They even *burned their children* as human sacrificial offerings to pagan deities.²³⁷

In the present era, the disgraces committed by ancient Israel have emerged in what is called the “New Age movement”.²³⁸ Proponents of New Age practices claim to have personal achievements through channelling contact and communication through occultism. Lots of media reports on the manifestation of satanic rituals, animal sacrifices, and satanic drawings

²³² Tycz, K M, 2018, ‘Material Prayers and Maternity in Early Modern Italy: Signed, Sealed, Delivered’, in Corry, M, Faini, M and Meneghin, A (eds), *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*, (Leiden: Brill), pp 244–71

²³³ Handley, S, 2016, *Sleep in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press)

²³⁴ Annie Thwaite. A history of amulets in ten objects. 2019. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15180/191103>

²³⁵ Holly Bible. Genesis 41:8,24; Exodus 7:11; Daniel 1:20; 2:2-13; 4:7; Deuteronomy 18:4; 1 Samuel 6:2; Isaiah 2:6; Daniel 2:27; Exodus 22:18; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Leviticus 19:31; Exodus 22:18; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Deuteronomy 18:11

²³⁶ Ibid

²³⁷ Ibid see Holly Bible. Jeremiah 19:5, 32:35.

²³⁸ Philip Barnes. The New Age Movement: An Outline and Assessment. 1992. L. Philip Barnes lectures part-time in religious studies for the Department of Philosophy at the University of Ulster, Coleraine.

The New Age Movement is not an organized religion. Rather, The New Age is an umbrella term for a wide diversity of beliefs and practices, broadly of a spiritual nature, which have come to the fore in recent years, and which while being religious in character, do not conform to traditional Christian teaching. The New Age movement can be described as 'an alternative spiritual tradition', that is, an alternative to the more familiar, and until recently in the West, the culturally dominant, Judaeo-Christian tradition.p54

found on walls, buildings throughout the continent are the evidence of the existence of satanic activity. But most chilling of all are the reports of ritual related cases of women sexual abuse and ritualistic human sacrifice.

In contrast, various members of the occult do not participate in such heinous crimes. On the other hand, several occultists are conscious that they are dealing with very real forces and powers, even if they do not understand the origin and nature of such forces.

2.14 Sexual traits as rituals of healing in some megachurches

Sexual abuse had gained momentum since 2010 to 2018 as part of healing ritual in some megachurch. Historically, there is little research conducted about the mode in which Church leadership and officials responded to the victim of sexual abuse in the church. Shupe in Garland and Argueta points out that, historians drew sexual manipulation in the Christian church between clerics and laity, senior clerics and novitiates in orders, and priests and nuns to primitive periods.²³⁹ The institutional Council of Church has primarily emphasised the impact on the Church as church leaders abuse the members.²⁴⁰ McLaughlin maintains that sexual abuse by clerics is disturbing because of the devastating result on the victim's spirituality and religiosity.²⁴¹

In South Africa, a new form of sexual abuse by church leaders known as “prophets” “Bishops” and “Pastors” emerged. The current scandals have concentrated on two aspects of clergy sexual abuse, namely the actual different sexual acts and the church leaders covering up the act of sexual abuse in the church. In 2017, the media reported one on the incident that took place around Gauteng Province of Clergy sexual abuse. One of the member of the megachurch claimed that she was raped by one of the foreign prophet by the name Bushiri. She claimed that she found herself under some power that she could not even know when Prophet Bushiri allegedly took off her clothes and raped her. After having raped she was offered R5000.00 and told to leave the Hotel. Prophet Shepherd Bushiri is the Malawian, founder and the prophet of Enlightened Christian Gathering (ECG). Prophet Bushiri, popularly known as Major 1. The ECG's phenomenal growth rate ranks it as one of the fastest growing churches in the world.²⁴²

²³⁹ Diana R. Garland and Christen Argueta. How Clergy Sexual Misconduct Happens: A Qualitative Study of First-Hand Accounts. p.2

²⁴⁰ Thomas P. Doyle. Sexual Abuse by Catholic Clergy: The Spiritual Damage. 2016,p1

²⁴¹ McLaughlin, B. Devastated spirituality: the impact of clergy sexual abuse on the survivor's relationship with God and the Church. *Sexual addiction and compulsivity*. 1994.p145-158

²⁴² Chomi Khumalo, Nyasa Times. Malawi: Prophet Bushiri's ECG Ranks One of Fastest Growing Churches Globally, 2018

This approach had philosophical influence on the reaction to the offending pastors, prophets and other church leaders hence including the victims of sexual abuse. The so called prophets play in convincing the female victims that the sex acts will save them from being possessed by evil spirit or simply enable them to fulfil the will of God.²⁴³ In addition to this opinion, Capps in Garland and Argueta argue that religious leaders have the power that comes with not being under supervision of others, the power of access and accessibility and the power of knowledge about members of their congregation, often intimate knowledge.²⁴⁴

In contrast, recent popes have referred abusive clerics as sinners and to abuse as sin.²⁴⁵ This unlikely practice of sexual abuse in the megachurches is not on the abuse and its powerful destructive effects on the victim, but on the impact of the church leader during its healing execution. In the light of the said dimension, sexual abuses to megachurch appear to be not a cause of mortification to the church, but means to acquire healing powers. In the same vain, Church leadership has failed to comprehend the complex and consider the effects of sexual abuse on the victims.²⁴⁶

Thus, the media reports, SAPS cases reported and public outrage that begins in 2010 and reached the upsurge in 2018 about sexual abuse in some megachurches has forced the commissions and related governmental institutions to “face the reality of clergy abuse and further focused attention on the plight of the victims”.²⁴⁷ Thus, the healing tradition about pastors, prophets, bishops shaped the pre-existing beliefs and related miracle rational serves as powerful enabling factor in the church leadership sexual abuse.

In the light of the said opinion, some megachurch members are made to believe that the pastor or the prophet has a special privileged communication and contact with God. The upper the rank the more influence he or she has with God.²⁴⁸ As the pastor or the prophet make some divine pronouncement about the mind of God, members are expected to believe without questioning the accuracy and is presumed that the pastor or prophet has one on one with the Most High (God).

South Africa is known for corruption and this has favoured self-proclaimed prophets and pastors who inaugurate their churches on their own and allocate themselves any religious title

²⁴³ Chima Agazu. He Told me that My Waist and Private Parts Have Been Ravaged by Demons: Sexual Exploitation of Female Church Members by Prophets in Nigeria. 2016. p3

²⁴⁴ Ibid see Diana R. Garland and Christen Argueta. p.3

²⁴⁵ Ibid

²⁴⁶ Joseph Kramer. The Church needs a study of human sexuality. National Catholic Reporter. 2002

²⁴⁷ Loc Cit. see Thomas P. Doyle. 2016.

²⁴⁸ Ibid see Thomas P. Doyle. 2016.

of their choice without following the due process required to obtain such titles.²⁴⁹ The healing power over the members' sexual abuse in some megachurches is already established because the pastor or prophet by the virtue of his position is greatly enhanced because of his priesthood. The act of sexual abuse over the members by the pastor or prophet is the most obvious source of healing rituals in some megachurches.

Critical aspects in this regard is that some members like heartfelt members in some cases of this nature "declined to believe victims who disclose their abuse"²⁵⁰ and such reaction instill pain and stress to the victims thereof. Thus this situation is worsened by members who 'are incapable of questioning anything about the practice'²⁵¹ of their pastors or prophets. Similarly, Agazue in this aspect point out that vulnerability of the women is one of the causes of sexual abuse by the prophets or pastors. Agazue however argues that menopause as a one of the issue, found unmarried women being sexually abused by the prophets as they urgently sought a husband while still able to receive. He further states that these pastors or prophets use multiple of methods, including testimonies of miracles and prophecies alleged to have come true, as they give an impression that they are spiritually chained, hence they can only change their state of affairs by consulting with the prophets who are gifted of breaking the so-called spiritual chain.²⁵²

Doyle in this viewpoint argues that when a child attempts to divulge sexual abuse by the cleric some parents have refused to believe it or have even punished their child for making such accusations.²⁵³ Thus when such happen, the victim thereof determines that parents and other members are complicit with the abuser (pastor or the prophet). In the same vain, Holmes and Williams²⁵⁴ add that when these realities are questioned by the victim the reaction of the abuser is to get the complainant out of the Church.

The Catholic Church in this aspect conceded that various religious leaders have abused young people, adults and children who were under pastoral care. In the light of the said incidents the church in this regard, have formulated a document, "Towards Healing", that points out the principles that must form the basis of the Church's response to complaints of abuse and the

²⁴⁹ Ibid see Chima Agazu. 2016.p4

²⁵⁰ Ibid

²⁵¹ Loc cit

²⁵² Chima Agazue. The Role of a Culture of Superstition in the Proliferation of Religio-Commercial Pastor in Nigeria. Boomington: AuthorHouse, 2015.

²⁵³ Loc cit

²⁵⁴ Peter R. Holmes and Susan B. Williams. Church as a Safe Space A Handbook: Confronting, Resolving, and Minimizing Abuse in the Church. Milton Keynes, UK: Authentic Media, 2007.

procedures followed by positive reaction to the complainants²⁵⁵ and the victims. In 2010, Professor Patrick Parkinson, was requested to lead a process of revision of the document that includes the revision of the requirements of Canon Law, so that decisions made through *Towards Healing* could be strongly executed. The key modification in the principles at the time was the extension of abuse to include sexual, physical and emotional abuse, formalising a change that had already been accepted as experience unfolded. The objective of moving ‘towards healing’ remained supreme²⁵⁶ as the main purpose was to provide pastoral care and counselling to the victims.

2.15 The trajectories of Healing Models

Healing is part of restoring human beings wellness from holistic strategy. Historically, the early church continued to exercise healing practices from theological worldview. This view was also echoed by Bartmann et al. when they pointed out that one thing is certain that the acts of caring for the sick, acts of healing, blessing of the sick and executing pastoral care to the needy, are not limited to the early period of the Christian church, but have been phenomenal in all phases of its history.²⁵⁷ Thus, the church holds the ministry of healing as an imperative strategy of bringing forth the God’s healing skills to people who are in need.

2.15.1 The Wesley-Pentecostal Healing Model

Wesley-Pentecostals model holds this worldview of healing dynamics as it (healing) should be viewed as samples of Christos healing power. From historical perspective, there has been close connection between Pentecostalism and believe in divine healing.²⁵⁸ This notion provides evidence that Jesus Christ is however opined as an architect of healing and the provider of healing power respectively.

Thus, Wesley-Pentecostal model grows out theological viewpoint that healing dynamics are the communication of the Word, the Spirit and the Worshiping community; what R. Hollis

²⁵⁵ *Towards Healing*: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia, 2010 National Committee for Professional Standards, January 2016 (digital edition) p.1

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*

²⁵⁷ Bittner in Peter Bartmann, Beate Jakob, Ulrich Laepple and Dietrich Werner. *Health, Healing and Spirituality. The Future of the Church’s Ministry of Healing.*

²⁵⁸ Malcolm Taylor. *A Historical Perspective on Doctrine of Divine Healing.* Journal on the European Pentecostal Theological Association, EPTA Bulletin. 2015. p.54-84

Gause would describe as ‘*rapport*’ in the experience of healing.²⁵⁹ The Wesley-Pentecostal model approach echoes the primary skill of God- Centric healing approach.

Wesley approach in this model dictates that grace is the epicentre of healing. However, this theological worldview was disputed by Western and Reformers views as they maintain and viewed grace as pardon strategy of God to sanctify human beings from sin.²⁶⁰ Therefore, since healing of the body was viewed as a gift of God which is transformative and also serves as part of salvation, Wesley pointed out that in the worship setting, be in the Church, home cell or synagogue, the sick were anointed with oil and this sacramental practice signifies the work of the Holy Spirit in the gift of healing. The church service includes singing, testimonies and the preaching of the word that entails life, death and resurrection of Christ. Thus Wesley model worldview is more complex as it is dualistic in nature since it depicts God as the source of illnesses as part of the fallen order and in the other hand the model reflects God as a saviour of humanity.²⁶¹ This viewpoint augments the notion that Wesley believed much on healing through prayer. This notion was also supported by the articles that Wesley wrote when he pointed out that he once had interval prayers for his own recovery and God restored his health from various infirmities during his lifetime.²⁶² Notwithstanding the biblical mandate regarding healing, during the 19th century, healing through prayer became more predominant as other believers or congregants in Edward Irving’s congregation believed more on miraculous healing by prayer and this has become something of mecca for those congregants seeking for physical healing through prayer. Some researchers have revealed that belief in divine healing stands strong in historical scale stretching back two centuries before Pentecostalism commenced.²⁶³

2.15.2 The God-Centric Healing Model

Padela and his co-researchers, researched on healing models by employing qualitative exploration approach. Padela et al. employed the God-centric healing model and the description thereof determined the investigation of agents and their roles in healing spectrum within the Muslim community.²⁶⁴ It is argued that an individual will pursue God for healing

²⁵⁹ Kimberly Ervin Alexander. “How Wide Thy Healing Streams Are Spread” Constructing A Wesleyan Pentecostal Model of Healing for Twenty-First Century, 2004, p65-69.
Kimberly Ervin Alexander is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at the Church of God Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tenn.

²⁶⁰ Ibid

²⁶¹ Ibid

²⁶² Dojein Zivadinovic. Wesley and Charisma: An analysis of John Wesley’s view of Spiritual Gifts. Andrew University, Seminary Student Journal, Vol 1 No2. 2015.p53-71

²⁶³ Ibid see Taylor

²⁶⁴ Aasim I. Padela, Amal Killawi, Michele Heisler, Sonya Demonner & M.D. Fetters. The Role of imams in American Muslim health: Perspective of Muslim community leaders in southeast Michigan; Journal of

purpose through prayer, supplication and recitation of Qur'an and also through human agents. Individually, agent in this model is viewed as God's instrument and has various roles to execute within healing practice.²⁶⁵ Thus both spiritual and religious healing practices and beliefs as per God-centric healing model reflect the Indigenous Knowledge healing system. During Augustine era to Aquinas healing through miracles were viewed as part of God's manifestation power to his people. Dumitrescu adds that even the anointing of the sick with oil became a privilege for the dying and not for the living. Thus, the practice of healing touch became popular that it was very difficult to stop such practice.²⁶⁶

2.15.3 Prophetic Medicine Healing Model

The field of Prophetic medicine has always been controversial in various religious sectors. Historically, different community applied different treatments due to differences in their epistemology. In Islamic community, medicine is regarded not as nonspiritual field, it has a vital role in shaping the health of an individuals. Historically, prophetic medicine on healing and medical treatments covers a vast of issues on healing and health.²⁶⁷ The purpose of promoting prophetic medicine is to enable individuals to leave in physical and spiritual healthy lives.²⁶⁸ It is however believed that the geneses of medicine are intensely imbedded in a civilization's religious and cultural beliefs.

In the same vain, the indigenous Chines approach on medicine in this regard is holistic in nature as it augments the prophetic medicine healing model. The historic Chinese medical approaches are believed to be on herbal medicine.²⁶⁹ Chines records suggest that the religio-medical history in this way is vital for various reasons. Their approach of interdisciplinary paradigm like the prophetic medicine model; incorporates the modern research model in the field of history, religious studies, science, as well as the art history. This model further bids much of historical perspective that could assist to update the modern medicine methodology, the health of the mind-breath-body complex and the power of prayer in healing. The model also advocates with the cultural flows which eased the dissemination of knowledge far afield

Religion and Health. 2012.p50(2), 357-373

²⁶⁵ Ibid see Padela.

²⁶⁶ Christien Dumitrescu. A Historical Survey of Healing and Exorcism, Andrew University. 2015, p1-12

²⁶⁷ Serdar Demirel and Saad Eldin Mansour. A theoretical Framework for al-Tib-al-Nabawi (Prophetic Medicine) in Morden Times, 2011.p34-45

Department of Qur'an and Sunnah, Kulliyah of Islamic Reveal Knowledge and Human Science, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

²⁶⁸ Ibid

²⁶⁹ Richard P. Petri Jr. , Roxana.E Delgaro and Kimberly McConnel. Historical and Cultural Perspective on Integrative Medicine, Medical Acupuncture, Vol. 27. No. 5. 2015. P311

from its origins for the Traditional Chinese Medicine.²⁷⁰ Various scholars argued that the Traditional Chinese Medicine influences the provision of the Western –style health care.

However, the approach of the Chinese medical theory had never been stagnant in practice either; however it influenced the reinvent of acupuncture in 1954. From the said school of thoughts, the Traditional Chinese Medicine supports the holistic view of African healing approach in the sense of treating the body, mind and spirit as well as the individual experience of illness.²⁷¹ This influence ordered some Western medical practitioners to reconsider indigenous knowledge system approach of healing in the sense that the TCM was now practiced in USA and some parts of European Countries. This view was also supported by Petri and Delgado who pointed out that TCM spread through Asia countries and came ultimately into the Western world during the sixteenth to the twenties centuries AD.²⁷² In view of the above world view, Traditional medicine is the medicine that existed of protecting and restoring individual health earlier the advent of contemporary medicine. It has also been considered to be a knowledge and practices used in the prevention, diagnosis, and elimination of physical, mental or social imbalances and which relies exclusively on practical experience and observation handed down from generation to generation, whether orally or in writing.²⁷³ In addition, Chinese medical ritual healing fell under the rubric of “*zhuyou*” to uncover and expel the unknown, imperceptible and occult causes of illness. The practice further includes prayer, invocations, objects, gestures and exorcism of spirit possession and loss of value.

These healing methods are often employed by both the African nationalities and megachurches. It needs to be pointed out that these rituals release an imaginative space for therapeutic performance where patients and healers could use spiritual proxies and props to address complex issues that are assumed to cause afflictions.²⁷⁴ In contrast, in his biblical approach to Chinese beliefs and traditions, Daniel Tong opined Christians to circumvent TCM therapies by all means. Daniel Tong in this perspective, argued and further belief that TCM models of healing have no biomedical basis and he fears that these theories are contaminated by Daoist philosophies and might render Christians to demonic impact.²⁷⁵ In this regard, Tong missed a point in his influential view to circumvent TCM therapies to

²⁷⁰ Pamela D. Winfield. Religion and Healing in Pre-Modern Japan, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12020>

²⁷¹ Ibid

²⁷² Ibid

²⁷³ World Health Organisation 1996

²⁷⁴ Philip. S. Cho, Healing and Ritual Imagination in Chinese Medicine: The Multiple Interpretation of Zhuyou. 2014

²⁷⁵ Pak-Wah Lai. A lecture in Church History and Historical Theology, a Vice-Principal of Biblical Graduate School of Theology. The Dao of Healing: Christian Perspective on Chinese Medicine, 2018.

Christians, the point is that the “religious order is inextricably linked to providing practical care to the sick and needy” and this praxis is one of the “significant role in many Christian tradition within the ecumenical community”.²⁷⁶

Since medicine is perceived as worldly issues as argued above, Prophet Mohammed did not have negative comments on the matter as he expressed his viewpoints. The advice was that Muslim community should consider the Arab medical practices to manage their health. Thus, prophetic medicine method was understood as divine and it is based on revelation, due to its divine nature.²⁷⁷

Abadith, approved and encouraged the community to seek medical treatment for healing purposes. Prophet Mohammed argues that seeking medical treatment does not contradict with the will of Allah (God):

*“Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, namely old age. Allah has not sent down an illness without sending down a cure for it”.*²⁷⁸

The above advice hereof applied to all Muslims. The notion was to promote the society to live a healthy life and to promote spiritual health. Hence the implementation of prophetic medicine was the system of belief, the act of worship and ethics prescribed to promote coherent, strong and principled society. The prophetic medicine provides guidelines for preventive medicine model in various areas of life. This prophetic medicine approach encourage people in the community to wash or sanitise their hands, bathing, oral hygiene and prevention of eating of wild animals and birds, travelling to places where there is outbreaks of diseases and consumption of unclean water.²⁷⁹ The community is further warned in this model that touching of blood, eating of wild animal species might be the way of contracting contagious viruses. These restrictions further include quarantine strategy mostly for people who contracted the virus. Thus, preventive approach in this regard is abstinence from such practices such as consumption of unhealthy food and drinks.

The African healing model is mostly fundamental part of prophetic medicine approach. It is clear that Prophetic medicine model was open to indigenous knowledge system and experience of indigenous community in terms of health and healing of the time. It is also

²⁷⁶ Ibid see Bartmann et.al p59.

²⁷⁷ Ibid

²⁷⁸ Ibid, p37

²⁷⁹ Serdar Demirel and Saad Eldin Mansour, A theoretical Framework for al-Tib-al-Nabawi (Prophetic Medicine) in Morden Times, 2011.p39. Revelation and Science Vol. 01, No. 02 (1433H/2011) 34-45

clear that Prophet Mohammed was concerned about the health matters of his people. He was a prophet with spiritual revelations but at the same time, his approach to medicine was to address health of individuals' from holistic perspective.

Prophet's medical approach and advices as a leader and human being were grounded on Arab culture passed from generation to generation as well as the medical culture of the Greek, Persian and Indian community. Individuals were cured using the knowledge of medicine from these communities. The aim of Prophetic medicine model was to safeguard the state of physical and mental health of individuals within the society.²⁸⁰ From this angle, one can coincide with this prophetic healing model that is appropriate for Christian religiosity and church community code of healing practices as it exposes aspects that encompass both health and spiritual domain which can also be viewed as still imperative today.

2.16 Megachurch response in times of pandemic and plague.

The role of the church in times of pandemic and plague is imperative. Some scholars have remarked that it was accurate for the church reacting towards the outbreak during the early centuries.²⁸¹ Christianity was good in a responding to pandemic crisis compared to the medieval religions.

In the light of the above perspective, to take care of the sick was a rare practice during early Christian ministry. The purpose of caring for the sick was that within the theological space of Christianity and practice of the early Christians, there was an aspiration to emulate Jesus Christ, whom the very early theologian, Origen of Alexandria called him 'the great physician'.²⁸² This implies that executing charity, by consulting with the sick and providing care to the needy, often crossing social boundaries is the adherence to Jesus Ministry.

The said practice was in contrast to the pagan practises, which associated sickness with fear.²⁸³ Polycarp of Smyrna, an early Bishop, wrote that taking care of the ill people was the main mission of Christian leaders.²⁸⁴ Polycarp of Smyrna further argued that various sacred men and the early monasteries offered a place of interval and healing through their knowledge of plants and their healing assets.²⁸⁵ In the light of the said viewpoint it is evident

²⁸⁰ Ibid see Bartmann et.al

²⁸¹ Gillian Straine. The Chritian Faith and Healing during modern day pandemic. 2020. p1.

²⁸² Ibid

²⁸³ Ibid

²⁸⁴ Ibid

²⁸⁵ ibid

that, today healing ministry and health services finds its geneses in the early Christian practices and to the indigenous knowledge and care.

In the light of megachurch responding to the pandemic today, the World Health Organization (WHO) used to report a cluster of pneumonia cases in a global state. The pandemic was confirmed as the causative agent of what we now know as catastrophic Disease. Since then, the virus had spread worldwide, including South Africa. A vast number of people were infected by the virus worldwide and got sick, some recuperated whilst some died from pandemic. This unprecedented spread of virus became a challenge also to the healing churches like mega-churches as it has impacted on individuals, congregants, community, economy and the religiosity space of South Africa. The challenge was that some of the mega-churches did not understand the profound impact the drastic measures taken by the government of South Africa to prevent the spread of virus.

In view of the said phenomena, Lee argued that religion is at the centre of many lives globally as it's at the epicentre of a swiftly scattering infection of the virus. The impact of virus as contaminated China affected global sectors. Health representatives have confirmed more cases and the virus has so far killing vast of people. Amongst those cases of infections, include the mega-churches members and religious sectors with its followers. The virus also infected a number of people who attended the megachurch services in Bloemfontein, which has the vast congregants²⁸⁶.

In response to the pandemic, some Churches including the mega-churches halted their Easter services. Buddhist temples and Protestant churches around the country have also suspended their religious gatherings. The moves to limit religious activity in South Africa are by no means specific to mega-churches in order to flatten the curve of virus. Lee remarked that some religions and mega-churches had played a far bigger role in the spread of virus in a country.

The South African Governments' response against pandemic has challenged religious sectors, especially as the regulations entirely prohibited any form of in-person religious gatherings during the Risk Adjusted Strategy Alert Level 5 and 4.²⁸⁷ For the period of Alert Level 3 and

²⁸⁶ Lee Adam, 2020

²⁸⁷ Willem van Aardt. Separation of Church and State Making sense of Freedom of Religion with lockdown regulation, 2020

2, religious gatherings were limited to in person gatherings of up to 50 people irrespective of the size of the church.²⁸⁸ In response, some church leaders voiced their displeasure of the restrictions, some refused to adhere to the regulations subsequently Court order was issued against non-compliant Gauteng churches'.²⁸⁹ Several religious leaders cancelled in-person services and some moved to virtual platforms.

Scott Thumma, who studies the megachurch phenomenon at the Hartford Institute for Religion Research argues that mega-churches were remarkably well changed to meet the challenges of not meeting for a couple of weeks.²⁹⁰

Almost all megachurches raise revenue through online giving and are using it to their advantage. Distance healing is executed to the members and followers. The other challenge was that smaller congregations, in contrast, are likely to depend more on weekly offerings collected in church and are less able to turn to online worship and are therefore more vulnerable to extended suspension of worship and healing services.

Another factor affecting how churches will weather the coronavirus storm was the age profile. Most of the megachurch congregations tend to be significantly younger, and thus less likely to be in that high risk category than smaller, more traditional mainline congregations. In U.S. Episcopal churches, almost half the membership is age 65 and older, making them especially vulnerable to the coronavirus outbreak²⁹¹.

In the same vein, drawing from other countries, clarifying the connections between religion and the outbreak of the virus in Korea, Francis Jae-ryong Song, a professor in sociology at Kyung Hee University in Seoul, defined the country as a “zealous Christian state.” He pointed out that many Korean Christians have an “evangelical mind-set” and their religious activities, like attending worship sessions and outreach multiple times a week, and their unwillingness to curb those activities, may have led to the large-scale spread of the contagion²⁹².

In the context of the coronavirus, it needs to be mentioned that mega-churches and religious sectors in South Africa have played a role. The Churches underestimated the notion that the

²⁸⁸ Ibid

²⁸⁹ www.thesouthafrican.com accessed 4-10-2020)

²⁹⁰ Scott Thumma

²⁹¹ Scott Thumma, 2020

²⁹² Francis Jae-ryong Song

deadly, highly contagious new coronavirus has become a global conflagration. As China was the experience bearer, and the unfolding tragedy in Italy had shown, extreme restrictions on daily life were the only firebreak that can slow its spread. Globally, bars and restaurants had closed, sporting events and concerts had been cancelled, streets and parks were deserted. In the light of the above there is a gap of weaknesses in religious sectors²⁹³, to be an ambassador to spread the Coronavirus to members.

Adams further remarked that he was not saying that all faiths are equally guilty. There were numerous mega-churches and mainline churches that heeded the authority of governors and execute the right thing. In the same vein, Adam was touched by the Italian priest who conducted Mass alone in an empty church while decorating the pews with photos of his parishioners. Adams further pointed out that there *are* religions that are playing an active role in spreading the contagion especially the Trump-worshipping traditionalist churches which downplay the pandemic for political reasons, and the far-out-on-a-limb sects and cults which refuse to acknowledge any rules other than their own.²⁹⁴

In the light of the above, the South African National Christian Forum (SANCF) blamed government of being unreliable in its implementation of lockdown regulations. The forum filed an application with the Johannesburg High Court to have the regulations stopping churches from opening during alert level three restrictions reversed.²⁹⁵

It was submitted that the regulations are irrational given that places of business which often attract large crowds can operate while places of worship are being discriminated against. Lockdown measures forced places of worship to close and turn away congregants as the country's COVID-19 cases continue to soar.²⁹⁶ In the same vain, Mashashane argued that what government failed to consider is that the regulations had a serve impact on the livelihoods of some clergy men and women.

“Our government doesn’t even think of giving these pastors or spiritual leaders anything.”

²⁹³ Ibid

²⁹⁴ Adam Lee

²⁹⁵ Veronica Mokhoali

²⁹⁶ Ibid. Veronica Mokhoali

In the light of the said circumstances, the Guild has responded that are helping Christians to bring healing and hope by offering an online prayer service daily and building up a global community of people receiving prayer requests and meeting to offer them to God.²⁹⁷

The Guild in Straine further pointed out that the healing ministry is growing and the movement was receiving prayer requests from across the globe. In the similar fashion, the virus was impacting the livelihood and lives of individuals on a mass of levels.²⁹⁸ It needs to be remarked that due to the pandemic, individuals were sick and perishing. As results of the pandemic, most of people were living with a great deal of doubt, insecurity and fear. In the light of the said viewpoint, Guild movement converge to pray, by offering individuals the space to send prayer requests 24/7 to a group committed to care, however the said movement was also providing a place of healing and hope to anyone.²⁹⁹

Richardson adds that the virus and its possible for death and for brokenness also appeal on Christian community to reconsider their essential principles and beliefs, so that they might act with strength and care.³⁰⁰ In the light of the said perspective, Richardson further opines that healing is an occurrence into a new way of living. As he reflects on Jesus ministry, he further remarked that Jesus commanded the man with renewed vision that he should not go back to the old life and old traditions. In the same vain, he also argued that people need to divorce the ancient village behind and discover a vision of novel world.³⁰¹

In support of the said worldview, one can add that perhaps this is a good interval to reflect in many ways that Christianity has been practicing social and physical distancing across the globe, now the impact of coronavirus has revealed the reality of Christian cultural expectation and the capacity of healing ministry.

Derozetes also pointed out that this current pandemic crisis is challenging humankind to not only deal with the instant health, economic, and psychological problems of quarantine, but also with the local and global circumstances that all find people in.³⁰² He also states that this crisis is an opportunity for individual transformation. According to Derozetes:

²⁹⁷ Ibid. Gillian Straine 2020

²⁹⁸ Ibid

²⁹⁹ Loc. cit

³⁰⁰ Sue Richardson. Christian Aid: A reflection on Love and Healing in this time of Coronavirus. 2020,p1

³⁰¹ Ibid

³⁰² Dave Derozetes

“Transformation is a process of radical change that involves more than healing, although healing may be a necessary part. Transformation also usually includes creating greater empowerment and reconnection”.

In view of Derozetes argument in relation to his remarks on the concept of transformation and healing, one can add that transformation of these designs commences with new approach of healing model in time of pandemic. In this aspect, the church can now start practicing new culture in time of healing practices, hence this view suggests that it takes determination and concentration on adopting to a new culture and act differently. Culture must be transformation in some healing churches, and this takes ones commitment. Hence Culture in this regard must include self-discipline, and “zero tolerance for bullying and harassment”.³⁰³

2.17. Conclusion

In this chapter, the concentration was on literature review on historical review of healing in some megachurches within religiosity space. Culture and religious traditions across the world display beliefs in faith healing through rituals and veneration. The healing powers of prayer and rituals within religiosity space have surfaced as the main centre of the megachurch practices. The literature review has demonstrated that most of the churches are the epicentre of faith healing. Furthermore, literature review provided a critical analysis of the scientific and theological dimensions of faith healing practices on some megachurches.

The trajectory of healing practices in some churches has been demonstrated as abuse of members by the pastors and prophets. Faith healing has been reported to have negative impact on health of some megachurch members. Thus, the outcomes of researcher on faith healing and the use of biomedical tools has revealed that to some extent the health related situation of some members has been compromised and have demanded retrospective on faith healing. For some reasons, research on the faith healing and healing rituals are perforated with challenges, and contradictions that make the theme a religious minefield. I believe that the research on trajectory of spiritual healing has led religious dialogue, and will forever be constrained by the scientific contributions.

In the forthcoming chapter I will reflect on healing ministry in some selected South African megachurches to determine how those churches perceive healing during their church service.

³⁰³ Amitha Kalachadran. During Covid 19, Healers Need Healing, Too. 2020

Chapter Three

Reflection on Healing Ministry in some selected South African megachurches

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, megachurch in this research refers to Pentecostal and charismatic churches that embrace healing ministry in their church services, hence are churches that have traversed denominational spaces. In this chapter, my concentrations are on the histories and some recent healing practices within some selected megachurches within Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces. The reflection however, focuses on some psychological, theological and socio-economic aspects and healing challenges for unusual practices. These megachurches are the churches which emphasises prosperity, prophetic healing and deliverance from demonic domains within their spiritual theological space. In the same vain, these are the churches that claim to offer an alternative series of prayers for healing, miracles and deliverance so that church leadership and owners can protect their properties and economic wealth.³⁰⁴ In the light of the said perspective, these megachurches attracted the attention of media houses in South Africa.

Given this context, the researcher critically unpacked various megachurches to illustrate healing practices and rituals by sampling three megachurches such as House of Grace Church, Christian Worship Centre, and Rivers of the Living Water Church. Thus healing activities of the said selected megachurches would be used as ethnographic tools to ground both religious functionalism and social construction theories in the light of theological and spiritual space. The main source of this section is observation and interviews by means of ethnographic approach. The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to participate and observe in the lived experiences of Church members/ congregants and Church leadership resulting from the church services and practices during healing sessions as affirmed by congregational participation.

³⁰⁴ Mookgo S. Kgate. Unusual Practices within some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in South Africa: Reflection and Recommendations. 2017. p1-3

3.2 Healing in Rivers of the Living Water Church

Rivers of the Living Waters is led by Bishop Zondo Bafana Steven. Bishop Zondo is the founder and president of the Rivers of Living Water Church. The RLWC head office is situated in Everton Johannesburg. The RLWC is a healing centre that advocates and stresses a type of Christianity that focuses in ministering to the socio-economic and spiritual needs of her members and community.

Bishop Zondo like any other religious leaders of the church is of the view that healing is from God himself as imparted unto Jesus Christ. However, his emphasis is that *“ena le matla nto ena”* “it has power this thing” referring to Christ stripes on the cross. It is from this background that Bishop Zondo illuminates the theory of religious functionalism and social construction. The theory of religious functionalism and social construction is grounded by the church motto: *“ena le matla nto ena”*

In the biblical view which Bishop Zondo believes and alludes healing practices from both the Old Testament and New Testament, he often quotes and emphasises the theology of the cross. To Bishop Zondo, healing implies that there is power in the blood of Jesus Christ hence his death on the cross was not in vain. Bishop in this regards profound various healing methods as executed by Christ during His ministry. The healing methods inter alia includes; laying on of hands, exorcism, using of natural resources and distance healing approach. The RLWC believes in miracles and faith healing. However, Bishop Zondo miracles and healing were claimed to be fake by his rivals.

As indicated above, healing in this church is mostly executed by Bishop Zondo. The profound emphases of the church are “faith unto Christ” and without it no human being can experience the power of God on the cross. Yet, this church believes that the delivering work of Messiah on the cross is not fully applied without healing. The RLWC emphasise the importance of both physical and spiritual healing. According to Bishop Zondo, a human-being needs healing from all aspects of life since salvation is regarded as the greatest miracle which individuals can ever receive.

This church has a belief that most of the problems to humanity are caused by demons, evil spirits and sin. The church believes that demons are the angels of the devil that were cast out from haven by God. Eshuf is in support of this assentation with reference to Revelation 12.9. Ferrel affirms this opinion that there are types of evil spirits that torment humanity through

deception, grief, death and fornication.³⁰⁵ Ferrel in this perspective argues further that the demons are responsible with inflicting illnesses on human beings. This was corroborated by Eshun when he points out that “for demons to inflict AIDS on a person, they first all cast a spell of lust on that person so that he or she would have multiple sexual partners.³⁰⁶ This belief of RLWC is embedded in the Akan worldview as Akan believe that “a demon may cast lust on certain individuals unknowingly so that such an individual will engage in promiscuous lifestyle hence attracting sexual infectious illnesses such as HIV-AIDS upon him or her”.³⁰⁷ This is the view of RLWC and this view is the same as the Akan traditional worldview.

The RLWC miracles and healing are however manifested through the use of anointed oil and water. The use of oil and water is African healing approach. This view was contested by Omenyo as he argued that for Christianity to find roots in African soil, there is a need for Africans themselves to appropriate the gospel to suit their cultural milieu.³⁰⁸

3.2.1 The anointed oil and water as source of healing in RLWC

The use of anointing oil and water has become a prominent substance of healing in RLWC. Religiously, anointing oil is perceived as the ritual act of pouring oil over a person’s head or entire body. In the New Testament, John described anointing of oil from the perspective of Holy One, hence both spiritual and literal anointing with oil are usually associated with Holy Spirit. In the light of the said perspective, RLWC used anointing oil to execute healing to the members thereof. In 2010-2018 the use of anointing oil and water became a trend to most of the followers and members of RLWC. Healing in its various methods has been proven to be desired by members of RLWC and the relationship between healing and prayer was never set aside, however it was enhanced with strange instruments³⁰⁹ like water and anointing oil. Thus, Asante posits that the practice of oil anointing involves beliefs, rituals and religious experience.³¹⁰

Bishop Zondo, however, inspires his RLWC members to use the anointing oil. His theological argument in this regards is that anointing oil is a mark of God’s healing and delivering power. The oil is mainly used as an element for healing because to members oil

³⁰⁵ Ferrel 2011

³⁰⁶ Fifi Eshun. Personal communication. 29 July 2011. p70 in San Jonah Library. University of Cape Coast

³⁰⁷ Ibid

³⁰⁸ Omenyo in San Jonah Library.

³⁰⁹ Pondani Simbarashe. Prophet of Doom: The Phenomenon of Healing and Power dynamic in the Neo-Pentecostal African Churches. p31

The use of anointing oil has been elaborated in the next chapter for discussions and findings.

³¹⁰ Asante 2001: 126, 128-129

signifies the power of God.³¹¹ However, Bishop Zondo teaches his followers that ‘It is a point of contact in spiritual warfare and is a symbol of the Holy Spirit’.³¹² It is further postulated that the use of anointing oil shields from fatalities and deceptions. In the same vein, it also purifies and cleanses an individual. It is also argued that the anointing breaks the bondage, burden, poverty, diseases and limitation). In his Grace of All Time Magaya calls it the blank cheque anointing. In the light of Magaya viewpoints and the call of Bishop Zondo on the use of anointing oil, both believe that anointing oil heals, consecrates, sanctifies and provokes divine intervention.³¹³ Henceforth the two content that anointing oil can also be useful even documents like business proposals and other aspects of life. During healing services on Wednesday and Friday, attendees with problems are given chance by Bishop Zondo to buy anointing oil from the church.

The anointing oil of Rivers of Living Waters Church has different colours and the colours thereof signify the power the oil has. I have determined the following oils: the Green oil, the Red oil and the goldish oil. In view of this, Eshun argues that the oil offered to members of the church, is not popular oil. But Eshun stressed that all anointing oil used for healing in the church have the same potency.³¹⁴ Eshun’s views are not collaborating with Bishop Zondo’s opinion with regard to potency of the anointing oil. Bishop has a view that the anointing oil potency differ according to the colours in his church.

In the light of the said practices, in 2015 Commission for Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Rights Communities accused Bishop Zondo for defrauding members by selling the anointing oil and water. In this regard, Bishop Zondo argued that consecrated anointing oil and water are for sale and cannot be given to parishioners free at Rivers of Living Waters Ministries International. Bishop Zondo’s argument was that there are costs for producing and packaging the blessed water and oil. Bishop Zondo and various pastors countrywide were subpoenaed to appear before the Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Rights Communities for commercialising churches.³¹⁵

³¹¹ Ibid see Personal communication. 29 July 2011. In San Jonah Library. University of Cape Coast. p77.

³¹² Walter Magaya, W. *Partake your miracle*, Sermon by Prophet W. Magaya. 2016b.

³¹³ Walter Magaya. *Grace of all time*, Sermon by Prophet W. Magaya. 2015b. p1

³¹⁴ Francis Eric Eshun. Personal communication July 29, 2011. p78 in Sam Jonah Library

³¹⁵ The Citizen Newspaper 2015

The Commission's chair, Thoko Nonhle Mkhwanazi-Xaluva, earlier told The Citizen that pastors must account for commercialising blessed water. But Bishop Zondo said he was not commercialising churches. "I am from the streets, I am streetwise. It was not God who said I must sell water."³¹⁶ Bishop Zondo maintained that the selling of water was introduced after the water contamination in Delmas which also toxic to the Orange Farm community. Bishop Zondo further pointed out before the commission that,³¹⁷

"The sick people were coming to church and it was very hot. One gentleman said 'I know how to clean the water'. So they organised the system to clean the water so that people could have clean water ... 'But to me it was like encouraging people to take pills with juice ... To drink water was healthier than any other thing.'"

Hence according to Bishop Zondo the water commercial is not and was never part of the church. He also argued that,

"Since we bless everything that comes in church, in the name of the Lord, then the water came and I raised my hands and I said 'Father bless this water in Jesus name'. People bought the water and they got healed. Now everybody wanted the water, that's how the business of water started."

Bishop Zondo pointed out that the Rivers of Living Waters Ministries International has a business running on daily basis. Due to the demand of water by the members, a shop was then registered with relevant department to sell water because the business is not part of the church. In the same vain he opined that,

"It is not a sin to sell it (anointing oil). Even Jesus himself said in Matthew 25 'go and buy oil to them that sell it'."

With his theological analyses, Bishop Zondo said the history of anointing oil can be traced back to the Bible. He highlighted that Jesus told his disciples to heal the sick, preach and anoint them with oil. In the light of this theological background Bishop Zondo further said:

"So now we are living in a sophisticated type of a country. He (Jesus) didn't tell us where to anoint them. So we have the oil, we pray for the oil and sell it to you. You go

³¹⁶ Ibid

³¹⁷ Loc. cit

*and anoint yourself wherever you anoint yourself. If I can buy oil and say come and take it, where will I get money to buy another one tomorrow. But if I want everyone to have it, I must generate some income so that I can have it,”.*³¹⁸

Eshun with this view argues that the New Testament passages studied in the preceding chapter did not specify that Jesus or Paul retailed oil or an item for healing. The leaders of the church find it essential to make fund rising from the supporters and members to support the church activities³¹⁹. This includes cleaning the church, paying electricity and paying the workers.

As part of Rivers of Living Waters Ministries International programs, Bishop Zondo proceeded from the water and anointing oil, pointed out of going to aiding the poor community, taking the children to go to school, rebuilding houses and burnt shacks, hence no one is querying or alluding to such programs of the church. This method of healing practices can be categorized under symbolic healing; the matter is not in whether symbols are used when executing healing, but in the nature of objects used in symbolic healing (Anderson & Otwang in Simbarashe).³²⁰ Besides that some members of RLWC and non-members were interviewed, Bishop Zondo and his disciples have prayed for many through contact and distance prayers and some of them claimed their healing and as a result testimonies were issues in between 2010 and 2018. Various members claimed that the use of anointed oil and water from RLWC have delivered them from various ailments and hindrances. The church also sells spiritual materials, as well as souvenirs, such as stickers, key holders, handkerchiefs³²¹ for the purpose of healing rituals.

In the light of the said worldview, according to Agazue, these materials are sometimes sold to convince members about their problems such as illnesses, poverty, impotency and alike will cease after having purchased and used the products.³²² These theological methods described above, are designed to attract members and increase profits for the Bishop.

³¹⁸ Ibid

³¹⁹ Ibid

³²⁰ Pondani Simbarashe. Prophet of Doom: The Phenomenon of Healing and Power dynamic in the Neo-Pentecostal African Churches. 2019. p31

³²¹ Ibid see Chima Agazue

³²² Loc cit

3.2.2 Laying on of hands for healing

Apart from the utilisation of both the water and oil, Bishop Zondo believes much also on laying on of hands to the sick people for healing. From 2010 to 2018 this healing methodology has contributed much on surge of membership in RLWC. The researcher has witnessed this through personal observation. Before healing session, Bishop Zondo had to preach the word from biblical point of view to stimulate the faith of the sick.

During healing proceedings, Bishop Zondo usually will walk through the lines of the congregants, touching any member or follower whom the Bishop believes he or she is in need of healing power. In some instances, he would stand from the distance and point out a member and prophesy about his or her problems in particular the kind of sickness one suffers.

Sometimes the Bishop “would give a vivid description of certain individuals, the clothes they wore, homestead”³²³, and thereafter prays for the person. The Bishop before praying for the sick and laying on of hands to them, would usually say: “*I na le matla Nto ena*” meaning “*it has power this thing*”. Some people would start screaming before the Bishop arrives or touch them. As indicated above, he would also emphasise the power of the blood and during the laying on of hands to the sick, the Bishop would declare that “I heal you in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. The implication of the statement is that Bishop Zondo heals and performs kinds of miracles through the power of Jesus Christ.

After this healing session, the following Sunday most of the members or followers who were prayed for would come to the altar to give a testimony that “they were sick or suffering from one disease or another but they have been healed”³²⁴ thus also their next of kin will attest on that. With reference to what members of RLWC testify regarding their recovery, the researcher would not be able to provide any evidence to substantiate the claim of healing because I could not determine their health condition prior healing prayers. However, of the male member claimed to be suffering from prostate cancer before the Bishop could lay on his hand on him. He claimed that after the Bishop prayed to him he recovered and the medical test became negative thereof.

³²³ Gabriel Appiah. Healing Practices among the Neo-Prophetic Groups in Ghana: A Case Study of Three Selected Neo-Prophetic Churches. University of Cape Coast. 2013. p79-81

³²⁴ Ibid see Gabriel Appiah. p81

3.2.3 The Theology of sowing the seed

The dominant characteristic of any flourishing megachurch in South Africa is sowing a seed. This implies that, the end-product of faith wealth and healthy life. In this case according to Bishop Zondo, God desires his people to live in prosperity in all aspects of life. On the contrary, poverty and illnesses are blasphemies to be broken by the use of anointing oil and water as accompanied by faith. The major philosophy in RLWC is that church members and attendees should give money to the Bishop so that God may answer upon their prayer requests and needs. Thus, the Bishop's opinion supports the Hood's viewpoint that the doctrine teaches that faith; positive speech and donations to the church's ministries will increase one's material wealth.³²⁵

The RLWC instils the philosophy that poverty is expletive. In the same vain, the Bishop and his disciples maintain that God approves those who keep his covenant by giving through sowing the seed. Scripture in this regard is cited to augment the philosophy of giving or sowing the seed to the church.

Thus the church further maintain that Jesus affirmed, 'According to your faith will it be done to you' (Mt 9:29). Also, Psalm 112:3 confirms this, saying, 'Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever'. Another text used to support the argument is Ecclesiastes 5:19. In the light of this perspective, Prophet Magaya and Ach-Bishop Zondo underscores the opinion that God did not create poverty, but it came as a result of the fall of men (cf. Gn 3:1). In other words, it is not an intention of God to see his people living in abject poverty.³²⁶

All these theological efforts by Bishop Zondo are used to validate and to encourage the RLWC members to pay tithe and support the vision and projects of the Bishop with money in order for them to receive God's financial blessings and prosperity. To sow a seed implies that when you donate and contribute financially, you plant a seed which will proliferate and profit you in abundance.³²⁷ Financial support in the church makes an individual to be answered and acknowledged by God. Consequently, an individual contract a spiritual personality through the quantity of money he or she gives or contributes to the church.

³²⁵ N. Hood. *God's Wealth: Whose money is it anyway*, Carlisle, Paternoster.2004.p57-65

³²⁶ Ibid see Magaya 2015b

³²⁷ Takesure C. Mahohoma. A Theological Evaluation of God business: A case Study of the Prophetic Healing and deliverance Ministry of Zimbabwe. 2017

However, to augment this worldviews as articulated by both Bishop Zondo and Magaya, Chibango opines that ‘Anything that is spent in the Lord’s service is believed to have rich returns’.³²⁸ This perspective brought forth the theological theory of sowing the seed. This philosophy of sow the seed is however theologically and biblically based and phenomenal. The core goal of RLWC is to convey spiritual, physical, and socio-economic deliverance to all followers who are seemed to be oppressed by the evil one.³²⁹ Thus, the fundamental teaching is Mark 10:29–30. This text is used in the framework that God gives his people many times what they offer into his hands. This implies that financial giving and contribution in the church is “what makes one enter into a cycle of endless wealth”.³³⁰

3.2.4 Pastoral care ministry as model of healing in RLWC

Pastoral care takes diverse shapes in responding to people’s needs in their context³³¹ and this approach was employed by Bishop Zondo and RLWC to address the needs of community and congregants respectively. In view of that, over the centuries it has grown in response to emerging needs. Historical developments in pastoral care are well-documented. However, pastoral care in South African space has an undersized and unsystematically documented history. Academic discussions on pastoral care concerning the continent tend to be considered under African theological frameworks. Pastoral care in South Africa has endured uneven with diverse and apparently typical ignored by both mega-churches and mainline churches. In view of this, the RLWC aims to reveal some gaps worth pursued by Church Leaders on approaches employed to address pastoral activities in pastoral ministry.³³² In the light of this approach, RLWC employed some perspectives adopted in the said ministry as to address socio-economic aspects as a new model of healing to the community. The approach is providing pastoral care to people in their communities in particular church members.

In view of the above perspective, there are two dimensions to pastoral care that are apparent in many parts of the world. These two dimensions are the core in the healing pastoral care of RLWC and are the following: the dimension that reflects on pastoral care.³³³ The other relates

³²⁸ Comrad Chibango. ‘Prosperity gospel, a pathway out of a socioeconomic crisis? The case of PHD ministries of Walter Magaya, Zimbabwe’, in *Modern Research Studies, An International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3(1),2016. p59.

³²⁹ Holy Bible, Mark 16:15–18

³³⁰ J.N Saracco., ‘Prosperity theology’, in *Dictionary of mission theology: Evangelical foundations*, edited by Corrie, J., (et al.), Inter-Varsity 2007.

³³¹ Vhumani Magezi. Reflection on pastoral care in Africa: Towards discerning emerging pragmatic pastoral ministerial responses. Vol 50, No 1.2016

³³² Ibid see Vhumani Magezi

³³³ Ibid

to the actual practice of pastoral care ministry.³³⁴ It needs to be mentioned that pastoral care practice in churches and religious sectors differ. Hence, pastoral care on the frontline requires a detailed consideration.³³⁵

In *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, Clebsch and Jaekle in Magezi argues that Christian Pastoral care drew from a specific human, historical, cultural and ecclesial context.³³⁶ In the light of the said perspective, the said authors acknowledged four basic purposes of Christian pastoral care which are guiding, healing, supporting and reconciliation.³³⁷

Thus, Pastoral ministry in various megachurch of South Africa are likely to be practiced in distinct ways. According to Magezi, “these ways organically arise as responses to the context of people’s pastoral needs”.³³⁸ In similar vein, the approaches of RLWC are different but comprehensive. The pastoral care in this mega-church is often accomplished eclectically. The application of these approaches is influenced, among other things, by Community background, personal background, intensity of problems of individuals, status of the family and other related social aspects. These pastoral care methods have some resemblances with Landman’s outline of Township Spiritualities and Counselling, but it is much broader perspective.

The approaches derive from personal reflections on existing approaches, as they entails mixing African traditional practices and Christian pastoral care practices. When problems arise, the leaders, who are the *prophets*, perform rituals to exorcise and cast away the misfortune. They perform healing functions using substances such as water and oil. Similarly, in RLWC “pastoral care is concerned with addressing the spiritual causes of misfortune and restored the person back to full health”.³³⁹

The second approach is one that draws a dichotomy between practical life and Christian values. This approach is not verbalised, but rather acted upon by individuals in church communities. In this approach, people tend to hold and adhere to Christian values and virtues when there are no problems or threats to their lives. In times of problems, in addition to prayers and Bible reading, people, however, seek extra help from Bishop Zondo. The focus of this approach is on healing. In this approach, people revert to traditional healing practices

³³⁴ Ibid

³³⁵ Loc. Cit.

³³⁶ Vhumani Magezi. *HIV/AIDS, Poverty & Pastoral Care and Counselling: A home-based and Congregational system ministerial approach in Africa*. 2007. p114

³³⁷ Ibid

³³⁸ Ibid

³³⁹ Ibid

by purchasing water and different anointing oils. Bishop Zondo as “Pastoral caregivers therefore focus on guiding people to maintain faith in Jesus and trust him as capable in providing solutions to their situations”.³⁴⁰ However, members who feel unsettled and are tormented spiritually by means of spiritual and individual forces are provided with pastoral counselling as means of healing strategies.

In the light of the above pastoral dimensions, the approach of pastoral care as part of church healing ministry in RLWC is in line with trends in pastoral care. During an interview with Bishop Zondo, the Bishop remarked that “pastoral care as it forms part of healing in RLWC, shall remain core of healing strategy in the Church ministry”.³⁴¹ Bishop Zondo further stressed that to address emerging and contemporary issues within the Christian Community and Society in general was to activate this ministry of pastoral care.

3.3 Healing in Christian Worship Centre

Christian Worship Centre (CWC) is one of the charismatic megachurches in Limpopo, Vhembe District at Midoroni village. CWC Church is known for her popular music, worship and the teachings of the controversial senior Pastor. Pastor Mudau was ordained a minister of Faith Mission Church in 1999. In 2004 he withdrawn his pastoral duties from faith Mission Church and formed a nondenominational church. In the light of the said developments, Mudau is the founder and the senior pastor of CWC Church in 2004. Since then the CWC church membership has increased to approximately 4000.

From 2010, Mudau was frequently criticised for his teachings, which often deviates from the suspect to the absolute heretical. His theological praxis emphasise that God is a healer and anyone who beliefs in Him shall receive healing. His grounded theological theory on healing maintains:

“Jesus is the only healer. He is the source of healing. His death on the cross symbolises that Jesus is the epicentre of healing methodology, what is needed is faith unto Christ”.

Pastor Mudau further teaches some oddly unorthodox views of angelology, such as that there are “diverse kinds of angels with responsibilities. He points out the healing angels, fiery angels and messenger angels and how do they work on individuals. One would argue that

³⁴⁰ Ibid

³⁴¹ Ach-Bishop Zondo of Rivers of Living Water Church Ministry.

CWC claims to frequently encounter unexplained phenomena both during her church services and also in everyday lives such as angel worshiping. This viewpoint is augmented by the notion that CWC leadership encourages his members to honour and worship the angels categorically, hence during church service one of the leaders would claim to see one of the angels visited the church for service, in particular the angel of healing.

As argued by Pirirani CWC also “believe in spirituality, prophesy, spiritual healing”³⁴² and further rely on the Holy Spirit rather than human understanding and mental power. During preaching session, Pastor Mudau is likely to divert his preaching or sermons and focus on prophetic ministry. During prophetic session the congregants would be responding thus: “*go deeper Papa*”. This response is meant to encourage the prophet of the day to prophesy more on individuals.

3.3.1 The use of icons in Christian Worship Centre

The Christian Worship Centre has healing practices similar to Rivers of Living Water Church. CWC have been determined to have affinity to use icons for spiritual freedom and healing. Some megachurch pastors and prophets uses the very same icons associated with CWC as the way of attracting the members. Historically, the notion of icons pre-dates Christianity and most likely invented with an ancient Egyptian funeral portrait.³⁴³ Thus, the first example of Christian icon is drawn from the story of the image generated by Christ Himself. The narration is that an ancient King Abgar of Osroene, who was dying of leprosy and send a message begging Jesus to visit him. According to the scripture, Christ created an image of himself by pressing his face on a cloth and from that action miracle took place.³⁴⁴ Various iconoclasts appeal to. Eusebious was against the use of icons, and as a result various iconoclasts had to react and appeal against such respond of Eusebious. In any case; “by the time of Justinian it was accepted that iconography was to be used as servant of the Christian faith”.³⁴⁵

In CWC the icons include the following; towels, handkerchiefs, cloths, key holders and candles for the purpose of accessing healing. Like in other megachurches; CWC also use the Pastors’ portraits in “delivering and healing, and members thereof, have also accepted the

³⁴² Richard Pirirani. Mt DarwinAICs: Continuity or Discontinuity with Biblical Pre-Canonical Prophets.” Research Project submitted in partial Fulfilment of BA Honours Degree in Theology and Religious Studies, Midlands State University.2015

³⁴³ Mahmoud Zibawi. The Icon: Its Meaning and History. Collegville: The Liturgical Press, 1993. p174.

³⁴⁴ Holly Bible

³⁴⁵ John Baggeley. Doors of Perception: Icons And Their Spiritual Significance. 1988. p17. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.)

belief that such portraits have healing powers'.³⁴⁶ This affirms that megachurches like CWC are committed to tradition. In this sense, Ouspensky argues that: "Tradition is the power of the historical community to understand and to know the truth. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in time".³⁴⁷ However tradition, in the Orthodox Church, is viewed as equal authority to the scripture.³⁴⁸

In support of this worldview, Biri in Mgena and Mhiza points out that the icons and portraits have importance of defensive charms.³⁴⁹ In this aspect I have observed that in CWC most of the members have devoted their belief and faith in icons and portraits. In the same vain, both the icons and portraits are in the market for sale in CWC. There is a belief and a practice that prior the procurement of the items, the senior Pastor has to pray for the icons and portraits. In support of this practices, some members of the church claims that the icons and portraits were prayed for by their pastors to curb sufferings and sicknesses. Additionally, members buy objects like anointed oil and water, for prosperity and better life with no attachments with iniquities. In view of this notion, Tracy Luedke in his research found that:

"the objects that figure in prophet healing, including clothing, bibles, mirrors, certain foods, church and hospital buildings and flags, materialise powerful social forces of the past and present; in the hands of prophet healers and their patients, they provide a means to direct these forces toward the resolution of suffering at the level of the body and the community. As they are made, held, worn, inhabited and utilised, these items in turn construct the subjectivities of those who wield them".³⁵⁰

Thus, in support of the said worldviews "the congregants themselves claim the power of the icons. They also believe that whatever the pastor touches is blessed".³⁵¹ The powers that the congregants experience from the icons and portraits, makes them to rate their pastors like in other megachurches whereby prophets and pastors "are given different titles like "Man of God", "God's Servant" and "Apostle".³⁵²

³⁴⁶ Fainos Mangena and Samson Mhizha. The Rise of White Collar Prophecy in Zimbabwe. 2013. p141

³⁴⁷ Leonid Ousoensky. Theology of the Icon: The Meaning of Icons. (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press) 1992. p.136.

³⁴⁸ Dirksen.B.H Dale. Icons for Evangelicals: The Theology and the Use of Icons in the Orthodox Churches and Potential applications for the Use of Symbol in Contemporary Evangelical Churches. 2001. p.4.

³⁴⁹ Ibid see Mngena and Mhiza.

³⁵⁰ Tracy Luedke. Spirit and Matters: The Materiality of Mozambican Prophet Healing. Journal of Southern African Studies. Vol. 33. No. 4, Histories of Healing. 2007 p715-731.

³⁵¹ Ibid see Mngena and Mhiza

³⁵² Ibid

3.4 The House of Grace Church

The House of Grace Church is one of the megachurches situated at Tshwane District Municipality in Pretoria. The HGC is led by Pastor Msimango. Its service is a revolutionised African Pentecostalism in nature and as a result, the researcher found out that has given hope not only to the Black Community but to the entire community in Tshwane District as it fosters spiritual communal life.³⁵³ HGC concentrates much on prophecy and healing which is African Based Model (ABM). The HGC healing model practice could be linked to the inherent African culture and practices of a communal lifestyle.³⁵⁴ Zuckerman attests to this view that the Black Church tends to be extra family and social life oriented.³⁵⁵

In the light of the above perspective, the healing practice is significant to the phenomenon of African worship as it leads to the growth of church membership. The increase of membership is orchestrated by the view that most of the members flock to HGC for healing and social related problems. This notion is also attested by Amadi who pointed out that because as different people of diverse background and needs to the church to get help, they come back.³⁵⁶ However, the growth of HGC was attributed to the surrounding cultural healing practices.

In similar manner, the HGC attracts members from the wider demographic that like the African traditional worship style. Similarly, due to the nature of addressing both social and physical aspects by means of healing practices, young adults and youth are also another vibrant group that form part of HGC population. It would helpful to determine what attract this variety of members and how HGC address the needs of her members.

To provide answers to these questions, this study will however rely on data collected by means of instrumental observation by the researcher. In the light of this variety of members, Gladden argues that their interaction provides answers to their diverse needs and encourages social gospel.³⁵⁷ The researcher agrees with this researchers view point, however, it should be mentioned that as the study focuses much on HGC healing practices, the researcher observed that the membership in this church is fuelled by church leadership strategies of attracting the members. The pastor would preach the prosperity gospel and promise his members that the

³⁵³ <http://www.newwine.co.uk/church/community-action/>

³⁵⁴ Ibid

³⁵⁵ Phil Zucherman, de Bois on Religion.(Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2000)p21

³⁵⁶ Mark Amadi., Thesis: British-African Pentecostal Megachurches and Postmodern Worship: *Comparative and Contemporary Influence and Impact*.p166

³⁵⁷ Jeanne Halgren, Kilde, when church Became Theatre: The Transformation of Evangelical Achitecture and Worsip in Nineteeth-Century America, (USA, Oxford University Press, 2002) p193-194

God of HGC is the answer to the members' problems like getting employment within a space of time, which God is capable of healing their types of illness.

In the light of the above, members are encouraged to buy healing icons like water, healing cloths, miracle candles and many other healing items. According to pastor Munano, these healing items are there to empower the HGC members in order to discover their lives and purposes. The researcher agree with both Pastor Munano and Gilkes whom in their arguments explained some reasons why there is an increase growth in membership within African Megachurches such as HGC. The HGC service starts with members singing and dancing prior the pastor could preach and after that call upon members who suffer from any type of ailments. During interview, pastor Munano narrates that African songs and dancing are the spiritual tools used in providing deliverance and healing. The HGC further provide members with one on one prophetic consultation after the church service. This consultation according to the researcher's observation was not for free. Any person or members who go for one on one consultation has to pay a certain amount to be seen by pastor Munano.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter the purpose was to investigate and to understand how some selected megachurches in South Africa perceive healing during their church services. The instrument employed to collect the data in this chapter was personal observation. The outcomes in this chapter are significant because they assist the readers of this thesis to understand different aspects of healing dynamics that have been under study and contributed in chapter two.

In the upcoming chapter the researcher had to concentrate on research methodology as chapter four. Research design will also be outlined and discussed thoroughly.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction - Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the general approach the researcher uses to carry out research project".³⁵⁸ The researcher had used qualitative approach for this study since the nature of the study is a case study base. A qualitative case study research method was employed to describe the views of community stakeholders on quality review. A case study has been used as an integrated system best used to access the thoughts, feelings and desires of the subject studies.³⁵⁹

4.2 Research design

Since the study method is qualitative, the research design for this study is Interpretative Phenomenal or paradigm hence this includes ethnographic, exploratory and contextual approaches. The researcher has employ this approach since it appears to be the best suited for the study theme. Ethnographic involves the conduct of the participants in a given social condition and also understanding group and members own interpretation of such group.³⁶⁰ In this approach, the conduct of the participant or the group may be moulded by the constraints the participants feel due to the situations they are in or by the society in which they belong.³⁶¹ Furthermore, the said trio approaches appears to have similar worldview in a sense that the all allowed me to use of the participants' own viewpoints, own experience and their personal understanding of this concept of healing, trajectories around healing in megachurches within the South African space. The researcher has also look at the factors that contribute to the state failing to regulate Churches or religiosity in South Africa. The researcher has endeavoured to interpret 'phenomena' in terms of what participants contributed for the purpose of theory-building.

Theory building has been based on this view that the participants had to outline their understanding of incidents that related to healing trajectories in selected megachurches. In this study, the following subheadings constituted the research method: the research site, population, sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis.

³⁵⁸ P.D, Leads, and , J.E. Omrod. Practical Research: Planning and Design, 9th ed. New Jersey. 2010.p12.

³⁵⁹ Patton 1980

³⁶⁰ M. Dewan. Understanding ethnography: An 'Exotic' Ethnographers' Perspective. In Mura P, Khoo-Lattimore C.(eds) Asian Qualitative Research in Tourism. Perspectives on Asian Tourism. Springer, Singapore.

³⁶¹ Ibid

4.3 Research Site

For this study, the research site is referred to the area where the research had been undertaken. The researcher has therefore consider Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces for site to undertake the research on healing trajectories on selected megachurches within the South African religiosity space and the subsequence of government failing to regulate Churches or religions in South Africa.

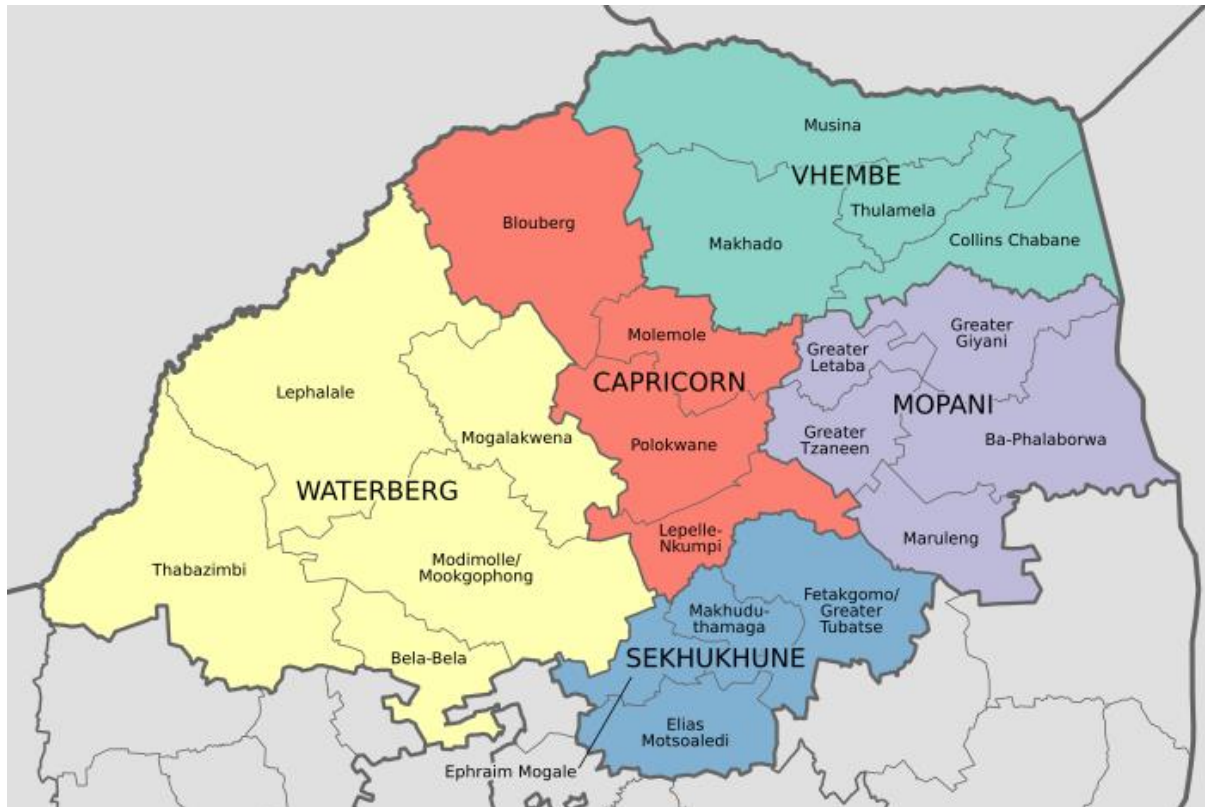


Figure 2.1 Map of Limpopo Province



Figure 2.2 Map of Gauteng Province

4.4 Population

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, population refers to ‘individual in the universe who possesses specific characteristics’ or a ‘set of ethics’ that represents all measurements of interest to the researcher.³⁶² In this study, population was comprised of women and men of diverse cultures from Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces. Thus, the population also included the African traditional healers in order to determine their experiences about healing within the African spectrum. Subsequent to government failing to regulate Churches or religions in South Africa two (2) of governmental officials was approached to participate and have an input on the research topic. An attempt to limit

³⁶² A.S De Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouche and C.S.L. Delpont, 2005, Research at grassroots level, Van Schaik. p. 209

extraneous variables as far as possible was done by minimising the participants' number in accordance with individual experience.

4.5 Sampling

Number of participants in a phenomenal design according to Creswell should be between 5 and 25.³⁶³ In this study, the researcher had accessibly and purposively selected three megachurches that are known a healing epicentre in both Gauteng and Limpopo Provinces with thirty nine (37) participants with inclusion of healers, and governmental officials to get a maximum variation of opinions and experiences on the time of consultation, with intention to perceived effectiveness and challenges of healing on selected megachurches within South African space.

On the basis of the said viewpoint, the numbers of participants for this study were determined within the sample as follows: three (03) church leaders (Bishop, Pastors and Prophets), thirty (30) congregants or members from three (03) megachurches and two (02) African Traditional healers from the Limpopo and Gauteng provinces were sampled to represent the population. This implies that the researcher had selected and interviewed ten (10) members or congregants from the three (03) selected megachurches to represent the population. In other words each megachurch was represented by one (01) church leader, e.g. the Bishop, Prophet and Pastor, and 10 (ten) members or congregants from each megachurch. Two (2) of governmental officials from the national level of the government were also sampled and interviewed in order for them to provide insight with regards to regulation of the religion in South Africa.

³⁶³ John W. Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 2013. In this Third Edition of his Book John W. Creswell explores the philosophical underpinnings, history, and key elements of each of five qualitative inquiry traditions: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. In his signature accessible writing style, the author relates research designs to each of the traditions of inquiry. He compares theoretical frameworks, ways to employ standards of quality, and strategies for writing introductions

4.6 Sampling procedure

The researcher had employed a purposive sampling procedure to select participants who were interviewed for this study. According to Parahoo, with this approach, a researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on the ability to provide necessary data.³⁶⁴

Babbie in this approach argues that purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher uses their own discretion to select the most useful or representative interviewees.³⁶⁵ In support of the said worldviews as argued by Parahoo and Babbie, the researcher had therefore established that the advantage of employing purposive sampling procedure was vital for flexibility as the researcher has focus on participants who met the study criteria.

Five core criteria were employed in the selection procedure:

- The megachurch advocating a healing model.
- Members or the participants who is of the age of 18 years old and above.
- Being a non-healing Church (mainline church) and in its existence should be more than five years.
- A Bishop, Prophet or Pastor being popular to the general population.
- Traditional healing epicentre respectively.

The aforesaid criteria were employed and the following procedures were used in the selection of the participants: The researcher had personally identified the three selected megachurches within Limpopo and Gauteng provinces. The researcher visited the identified megachurch with the purpose to participate in particular megachurch services and follow any service order therein. During participation, the researcher had at the same time identified the participants for the study contributions. Thus, the identified participants in a particular megachurch service were approached personally by the researcher and recruited accordingly after the church services.

The idea behind qualitative research was to purposefully select participants that would best help the researcher to understand the problem and the research questions.³⁶⁶ The above-

³⁶⁴ Kader Parahoo. Nursing Research: Principles, Process and Issue, 3rd Edition, RED Globe Press. 1997,p232

³⁶⁵ Earl R. Babbie, the practical of Social Research, 12th edition 2009. (Wadsworth: Canage Learning, 2010).p. 193. See also de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, Research at Grassroots, p. 202.

³⁶⁶ John W. Creswell. Research Design International Student Edition, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. 2014. p190

mentioned sampling design was applied to select a representative sample of the target population within the healing megachurches community that would be sufficient to enable qualitative analysis of results. Thus, this implies that the researcher had identified, selected and interviewed ten (10) members or congregants from each selected mega-churches to represent the population. In other words each megachurch was represented by one (01) church leader or pastor thereof.

It should be noted that the selection process further took into considerations nonprofessional individuals who had used or were holy water, relying on prayer of laying on of hands, anointing oil, ointment, medicinal plants and other methods of traditional medicines for healing, self-health care, self-treatment prescribed by a faith healers. In this study, healers were personalized as a professed Christian, Traditional spiritualist who heals by application of faith mostly through prayer, fasting, holy water, ointments and medicinal plants.

However, data saturation was resolute to the size of the sample. From this and other inputs, the researcher has used my own judgement to extend the sample size beyond data saturation by allowing most voices, for example, women, elders and youth also to be heard.

4.7 Data Collection Methods

In this study, the researcher had employed both observation and interview approach to collect the data.

4.7.1 Observation

The researcher had identified megachurches that practices healing during their church services in two provinces namely: Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces. The researcher himself had to make a visit to the identified churches and participated in the entire church service. The researcher had to make an appointment with the church leader and communicate with the leader thereof about the purpose of the visit. In three megachurches the leadership had no problem with the researcher visit for the purpose of the research study. On the basis of this agreement with church leadership, dates were also secured. During church services the researcher was allowed to take note, audio recorded, videotaped the service for the purpose of data collection.

4.7.2 Interview

The interview approach was a semi-structured interview strategy. Each selected member of the megachurch, traditional healers and member of the government sector were approached and requested to participate in the research through face-to-face interview process. The interviews were analytically conducted between a participant and an interviewer at the venue that was determined by the participant. The researcher had encouraged the participants to opt for church building. The purpose of opting for megachurch buildings was to comply with COVID 19 Regulations. All measures in this regards were adhered to in terms of COVID 19 Regulations Act. For instance, the participants and the interviewer had face mask on, sanitization of the interview room or venue as well as the interviewer and the participants were done prior the session could start. One meter apart was also considered. Prior the interview, consent was executed between the participants and me as interviewer. The participants consented during the interview proceedings with audio-recording and field notes taking. In particular instances, based on the consenting with the participants, interviews were also conducted over the phone, or by videoconference.

Interviewing process was interactive. This implies that an interviewing design according to Herbert and Rubin is characterised by flexibility, interactive and continuous, rather than prepare in advance and locked in stone.³⁶⁷

Hence, De Vos et al. regard interviews as a primary source of data collection. In this study interviews were used to collect information about individuals' experiences and knowledge, beliefs, opinions and feelings and also to get first-hand information with regards to healing trajectories on some selected mega-churches in South African religiosity space.

The following questions were regarded as the main for the study:

- The introductory question asked participants to provide details of their profile: names, age, gender, educational status and residential area.
- Participants were asked of experience about faith healing practice.

³⁶⁷ Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin. *Qualitative Interviews: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3rd Edition. 2004. Sage Publications (CA)
Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin have researched topics ranging from community redevelopment programs to the politics of budgeting and been energized by the depth, thoroughness, and credibility of what was revealed. They describe in-depth qualitative interviewing from beginning to end, from its underlying philosophy and assumptions to project design, analysis and write up.

- Participants were also asked to perceived efficiency of specific faith healing incident and to provide examples of situations in which they felt faith healing had negatively contributed to their lives.
- The healers like, pastors and Prophets were primary requested to offer a general description of their services.
- Particular pastors and prophets were also requested to offer the source of their healing powers.

The questions were established through a social constructionist standpoint taking into account the importance of the framework in understanding the trajectories during the course of healing procedure.

Interviews were conducted between October 2020 and December 2021. An approximately 60 minute's face to face interview was allocated and conducted on each participant. Each megachurch was represented by 10 (10) participants as selected accordingly out of three (3) selected megachurches. Seven (7) participants were mainly females and three (3) males from each megachurch. Three (3) pastors from three (3) megachurches were also interviewed through individual semi-structured interview questions until data was deemed to be saturated.

Megachurches that were included in this research were identified as prophetic or charismatic in their manner of worship. Hence, the pastors and prophets from these megachurches also needed to have worked as faith healers for at least five years. The researcher's participants were allocated numerically. In the results section below, the participants are designated in accordance with the titles which they used to pronounce themselves. Although the researcher had acknowledge that there may be different understandings of such titles, the researcher had use terms such as prophets, bishops, pastors, etc. as wished by the participants.

4.8 Data Collection Procedure and instruments

Following UNIZULU ethical clearance, the researcher had approached identified megachurches for permission to conduct the research and interviews. At the first two megachurches that the researcher had approached, the Apostles and Senior Pastor refused to participate and declined to provide consent for them to be interviewed either. They mentioned reasons such as inconsistent schedules for this refusal, but some mentioned outright that they were suspicious of the true intentions of the study. As a result of these initial difficulties, the

researcher had to go to other megachurches for proposal to conduct the study and interviews. The researcher approached the three megachurches and no problems were encountered to conduct the research study. The participants hereof were members of the desired megachurches whom I have identified beforehand. Both church leadership and the members were positive and willing to participate as participants for the study.

Prospective participants were approached, and the objectives of the research were explained to them prior interviews, as well as their rights as research participants. As indicated above, individual informed consent was obtained from each participant before any data were collected. All the interviews were audio-recorded, meaning tape recorder was used to record information from the participants and thereafter, the information was later transcribed verbatim. Field notes were also taken during proceedings.³⁶⁸

The interviews took the average of one hour and were conducted in English or African vernacular depending on the language that the participant was most comfortable with; in most cases, this involved a combination of English and one of the African languages.

4.9 Data processing

The Blanche, Durrheim and Painter's principle of processing the data was applied in this study and are the following: familiarisation, immersion, inducing themes, coding, elaborating, and interpretation and checking.³⁶⁹

4.10 Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis was to reduce, organise and provide structure to and elicit meaning from the research data.³⁷⁰ In this study the researcher had employed Interpretative Phenomenal Analysis approach and further applied model suggested by Laws et al. to analyse the collected data. This analytical approach in this study transcended on the impact of healing practices on selected megachurches and non-regulating religiosity in South Africa. The analysis further transcended on the crisis within the healing trajectories prospects on selected megachurches. However, this approach allowed for systematic analysis of the data to unearth emerging patterns and ideas

³⁶⁸ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research.*, 3rd Edition, Texas & M University, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, London New Delhi. 2005 p.3.

³⁶⁹ M.T. Blanche, K. Durrheim and D. Painter. *Research in Practice, Applied methods for Social Sciences.* University of Cape Town. 2011, p.34

³⁷⁰ Ibid see Polit and Beck, 2010

All interviews were transcribed verbatim in the language that they were conducted in. Where necessary, the African languages were interpreted into English, and then back translated into the particular African language by an independent linguist, to check for consistency and accuracy.

Creswell states that data analysis involves participant's information and the researcher typically employs general analysis steps as well as those steps found within specific design. The researcher had also employed the Creswell steps as followed: immersion, induction, coding, and interpretation.³⁷¹ Data was analysed and coded continuously in terms of units of meaning and lived experience.³⁷²

As the researcher had analysed the data and classify the themes and sub-themes by employing Tesh's open coding data analysis approach.³⁷³ In-depth interviews were conducted from 10th October 2020 to 05th of November 2021, hence data was reduced and categorised according to Laws et al. model as follows:

Step1. The researcher had read and re-read all the data collected. The data were collected from individuals through face to face interviews and observation. The aim was to acquire the essence of healing trajectories and the beliefs of individuals thereof. By this approach, the researcher had further pursued to comprehend the nature of the data and to search for the fundamental concepts which ran through the data.

Step2. The researcher had drawn up a list of themes and sub-themes from the data. During analysis, the researcher was able to detect major themes and sub-themes and was arranged in accordance with research questions and per study.

Step3. The researcher re-read the data. The purpose was to ensure that themes and sub-themes that the researcher established corresponded with what the participant's in the research had narrated and that the themes further correspond with research questions.

Step4. The researcher had also merged the themes with research questions and notes obtained during data collections. Themes emerged from the data linked to various scholarly views. Subsequently, the first author generated initial codes related to the Prophets' Pastors' and

³⁷¹ John W. Creswell. Research Design International Student Edition: 2014. p212.

³⁷² Lisa Lopez Levers. Traditional healing as indigenous knowledge: Its relevance to HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa and the implications for counsellors. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 16(1) 2006. p.87-100

³⁷³ Loc. cit.

Apostle's descriptions of their healing beliefs about and methods and rituals they employ during healing sessions.

Step5. Themes were categories and interpreted. The researcher was so cognisance of research questions during interpretation of the data. In the third step, the researcher categorized similar patterns and trends which had emerged from the data as faltering themes.

Step6. The researcher had to design a tool that will assist me to discern patterns during data analysis. Areas of disagreement or inconsistency were discussed during tentative themes establishment.

Step7. The researcher had interpreted the data and deriving meanings. These had assisted me to establish themes that became the sub-headings.

4.11 Trustworthiness

The researcher had applied the model of Lincoln and Guba in De Vos to ensure trustworthiness which will include the following principles: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability.³⁷⁴ The approach that was used to ensure trustworthiness in this research was to engage with participants through dialogic, one-on-one interviews as well through questionnaires. The researcher had explained each of the said principle to be in line with my research purposes.

4.11.1 Credibility

Denzin and Lincoln argue that credibility denotes the exactness of the data and translates more appropriately for natural enquiry.³⁷⁵ To ensure that credibility is achieved, the researcher employed face to face interviews with selected participants from selected megachurches from both Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces who were the church service attendance thereof. Thus, credibility was also enhanced through the data obtained during observations that the researcher conducted during the services of the said churches.

4.11.2 Transferability

Transferability is concerned with degree to which the outcomes of the research can be applied to other groups within the wider population or to other circumstances.³⁷⁶ The purpose of

³⁷⁴ A.S. De Vos, H.Fouche and C. Delport. Research at grassroots level. Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria. 2004
pg. 209

³⁷⁵ Ibid see Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 2013

³⁷⁶ Ibid

selecting diverse participants in this research was to provide rich in-depth descriptions of the research outcomes.

4.11.3 Dependability

According to Creswell, the dependability of the data is all about the same data could be recurring if the same research tools were replicated with similar respondents under similar situations.³⁷⁷ The researcher had used a defined guideline for the data and data analysis to ensure that any of the researchers can be able to evaluate the quality of my research. All the data collected during research process were stored in a database.

4.11.4 Conformability

Conformability is referred to the un-biasness of the research findings³⁷⁸. During the research process the researcher ensured that the researcher kept records for the collected data from personal point of views, emotions and behaviour. The records include field notes and what the researcher had observed during church service visits.

Audio records were transcribed into Tshivenda, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiZulu languages and English language of which those with four languages were later decoded into English for all the participants individually, and cross checked with the audio records and handwritten field notes to safeguard reliability, validity and quality control.

4.12 Validity and Reliability

During face to face interviews the researcher ensured that audio recordings and notes were captured with participants. The aim was to secure validity and reliability of the results from the data. The audios were audible so that the transcriber was able to capture the data accurately. The audio recordings were listened again and again to ensure that transcriber capture accurate data.

4.12.1 Validity

In qualitative study, the researcher must ensure that the information captured during data collection is authentic. So, for the validity purposes on this study, the researcher ensured that the instrument used was validated before the collection of the data. The researcher further ensured that he pre-tested the interview schedule prior interview proceedings. This was done

³⁷⁷ Ibid see John Creswell, 2013

³⁷⁸ Ibid see Denzil and Lincoln, 2013

through pseudo-interviews. The outcomes from the pseudo-interviews revealed that the instrumental questions were clear and rational.

4.12.2 Reliability

Reliability in this study was based on data capturing as the researcher had to rely on voice recorded and augmented by the notes taken during data collection proceedings. The researcher had even tried to reduce some of the interview scrips as accurately as possible. The interviews were unbiased hence the participants were free to express their own views and feelings.

The reviewed themes that emerged from the data are presented as results below.

4.13 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter four was to lead the research with research methodology that was appropriate for subject matter. As mention above, the research methodology in this research was qualitative and the research designs were ethnographic, exploratory and contextual.

In Chapter Five, the participants voluntarily participated in the research. Different views were provided by the participants based on questions to answer. Data were collected during both observation and interviews. COVID 19 regulations were observed and this has contributed on the limitation of the research.

Chapter Five

Data Presentation and Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyse the data obtained from the field work conducted at the case study of megachurches, spiritual healers namely: pastors and prophets, traditional healer domains and relevant state department and interviews were further conducted with individual participants. The main purpose of the study was an investigation into healing trajectories of selected mega-churches in South African religiosity space from 2010-2018. In this chapter, the researcher had defined the qualitative analysis of the data, containing Creswell steps³⁷⁹ inclusion of the analysis. A qualitative examination of the data follows in Chapter 6.

For the duration of the data collection process, the researcher had employed two methods to obtain the research materials. Firstly, data was collected by means of observation from selected megachurches in Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces. In this instance, the researcher personally visited three (03) megachurches in both Limpopo and Gauteng provinces for the purpose of case study through ethnographic approach. According to Fraenkel and Wallen a case study is an in-depth investigation of a phenomenal at a specific instance or location.³⁸⁰ Hence, a case assists as the key unit of analysis in a case study. In the same phase, Reeves argues that through the gathering of observations, interviews and documentary data, which are triangulated, ethnographic approach, suggest a qualitative method with the probable to yield full and comprehensive accounts of diverse social phenomenon with inclusion of actions, interactions, behaviour and beliefs.³⁸¹

Secondly, data was also collected by means of interviews. At this stage participants' were purposefully selected and the researcher personally conducted semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed both male and female participants with inclusion of both the youth and old-aged people. This data was collected by means of face to face interview and telephonic conversations as well as video conferencing, which was executed to some members of both mainline churches and megachurches.

³⁷⁹ John W. Creswell. Research Design International Student Edition: 2014. p212.

³⁸⁰ Fraenkel and Wallen 2003.

³⁸¹ Scott Reeves, Jennifer Peller, Joanne Goldman & Simon Kitto. Ethnography in qualitative educational research: AMEE Guide No. 80, Pages e1365-e1379 | Published online: 28 Jun 2013. <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2013.804977>

During data collection stages, notes and recordings were obtained during both observation and interviews and analysed as part of documentary evidence for the research. The purpose of documents analysis was to examine the data into the emerging generating themes, which will be defined separately. The researcher had defined how themes overlapped each other. Hence, sub-themes were also determined from the emerging themes. The researcher further related the findings of this study to the literature reviews in chapter 6.

The second part of the chapter presents data indicating the biographical information of the participants' and their responses to healing trajectories of megachurches that they completed. Data obtained from the interviews were utilised to validate the response to the research.

5.2 Interpretative Phenomenal Approach

Analysis of the data in this research was directed by interpretative phenomenal paradigm as was taken from interviews and observation. The aim was to gain opinions about the historical worldview on the context of the subject matter, in which it was set and subjective viewpoints of the participants. Participants in this study had demonstrated their experience, theories, conducts as based on their worldview regarding research topic, thus local knowledge which forms part of the oral and written cultural practices of the group as they matter to them and give meaning to their problematic experiences³⁸² was considered.

A qualitative research was conducted in three (3) purposively selected megachurches within two provinces namely Limpopo and Gauteng Province of South Africa. In Limpopo Province the researcher had selected the Vhembe District and in Gauteng Province he selected the Tshwane District Municipality. Participants did not only respond to peripheral social contracts, but their understanding and experience of matters differs from individual to individual. For a qualitative research which required understanding the experiences, sentiments and behaviour of participants in their own framework, the researcher had also employed three approaches to achieve the objective of the research and those are approaches are ethnographic, interpretivist and contextual approach. In line with this methodology, the participants were given the authority to construe, define and explain their sentiments and approaches about the theme under study in their own context. With this method, the inventive moods, knowledges and belief systems of participants were cherished.

³⁸² Norman K. Qualitative Research Methods Vol 17. 1989. 109

As the theoretical framework for this study was both social construction and religious functionalism theories, the researcher found interpretative phenomenal framework appropriate for the study. The said theoretical framework enabled the researcher to explore participants' perceptions in the context of their religious, faith and cultural beliefs milieu. The researcher was very much sensitive on what the participants narrated as their unfortunate experiences and the environment thereof included also the participants' credits of sense. The researcher further took into cognisance to the participants' my own cultural, and mainline church traditional belief system and as a result contextual approach was also considered. Thus, this had helped me in the clarification and reformulation of the data³⁸³. Moreover, these approaches generated rooms for both the interviewer and the interviewee to determine a good relationship and understanding which inspired our dialogue to create new thoughts to augment the study.

In the questionnaires, participants were requested to specify background information vis-à-vis gender, age, level of formal qualification and their employment status. The purpose of this section was to determine better understanding of participants' profiles. Following the analysis of the participants' profile, the researcher found that more participants were females than the male as they answered the questionnaires. Hence, majority of the respondents are between the age of twenty and forty five. The researcher had also found it strange that very few are highly qualified in which few at the age of twenty to forty obtained only metric qualifications. This implies that most of the participants who are youth are vulnerable to abuse by the healing figures in some megachurches.

³⁸³ Michael Quinn Patton. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Method*. SAGE Publisher, Thousand Oaks London New Delhi. 2002

5.3 Biographic Profile of Participants

All participants who consented to be interviewed provided the researcher with their biographic data. Table 5.1 illustrate the participants' biographic profile.

Table 5.1 Biographic profile of the participants

Participants	Gender		Personal profile			
	Female	Male	Married	Education	Working	SASSA grants
A=18-25	8	2	3	4	2	6
B=26-35	7	4	5	3	3	3
C=36-55	6	2	4	0	3	4
D=56-65	2	1	1	0	0	3
Total	24	9	13	7	8	16

It needs to be noted that the participants in this research met the required standard in terms of ethical principles and were full of experience in terms of healing practices in megachurches. The profile information is vital for analysing the data for better understanding as participants experience may influence relevant outcomes of the research. The participant profile is indicated in Table 5.2 was to explain the coding system the researcher had employed in analysing of the data.

5.3.1 Participants' Profile

In this chapter, the researcher had deliberated on the findings based on questions raised from interview sessions, face-to-face interviews, telephonic interviews, and visual information acquired during observation by means of ethnographic strategy. The participants in this study were regularly reported into three categories namely: Church members category, spiritual healers' categories and governmental officials' category; in which the coding system was also employed on each participant, e.g. participant 1, participant 2 participant 3. Each of the three megachurches participated in the research had healing practices elements from which the data was collected.

5.4 Generating Themes: Particulars, Generalizations and Condensation

During this process, the researcher had employed the Creswell steps of analysing the data. The researcher had read the data over the transcript to endeavour to advance general understanding of each session. The researcher had further re-read the data with a purpose to "immerse self in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts".³⁸⁴ The researcher had also identified repeated patterns that echoed what the participants felt most powerful about and what articulated the resilient emotional content which moved the participants as resembled what was typical of their communal life. The purpose was to ensure that themes and sub-themes that the researcher established corresponded with what the participant's in the research had narrated and that the themes further correspond with research questions.

Identifying main themes, recurring ideas, and patterns of beliefs that relate to the participants becomes "most intellectually challenging phase of the data analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavour".³⁸⁵ The researcher had therefore merged the themes with study questions and notes obtained during data collections. Themes emerged from the data linked to various scholarly views.

Falmagne³⁸⁶ advocate "a notion of generalization that preserves the richly particularised, socially constituted nature of concrete individuals while enabling social interpretation that transcend the particular case". Falmagne viewpoint validates the interpretative paradigm of this research as theme generation is concerned and steered the analysis process. Themes were

³⁸⁴ See de Vos et al. 2005, 337.

³⁸⁵ Ibid see de Vos et al., p.338

³⁸⁶ Jeanne-Claude Falmagne 2006, 172

categories and interpreted with awareness of participants' particularities and generalization. The researcher had been so cognisant of research questions during interpretation of the data.

The researcher had designed tools that backed me to determine patterns during data analysis. Through the analysis tools, the researcher was able to determine the meaning expressed by some participants, in which the process helped me to understand and make sense of what came next from another participant. The researcher was able to interpret the data and deriving meanings. These had assisted me to establish themes that became the sub-headings.

As discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, healing trajectories as the core theme in this research, the participants' contribution in this aspect determined that the situation in with regard to healing practices requires exigent intervention approach to address the existing problems. The researcher had attempted to acquire some insight in historical healing trajectories within some selected megachurches by employing ethnographic approach.

5.5 DATA ANALYSIS

5.5.1 Data analysis procedure

The researcher had employed qualitative method in this research in which Interpretative Phenomenal Analysis was used to identify and summarise data collected by means of observations, interviews and content analysis. The IPA on data analysis shaped the researcher's study approach and attempts to make sense of the data.

Participants' voices were recorded during face to face interviews and telephonic interviews. Categories of participants were coded as the researcher read and re-read my transcribed data, word by word, paragraph by paragraph and after that the data were divided into analytical units (Quote). The researcher had then transferred the response of the participants on researcher's scribe paper. This method helped the researcher to secure the participants' answers for each quotation as the researcher also grouped the answers together. This had further assisted the researcher to identify the themes, sub-themes and idea emerging. The researcher had colour coded participants' responses that were repetitive. The purpose of colour-coding was to identify which themes developed from each instrument.

In the light of the said process, the researcher had further considered inclusion and exclusion categories when deciding on themes and categories while taking into consideration the researcher's study subject in mind. All themes and sub-themes were tables on my scribe

paper. Comparison across the data was done. The process of categorising and comparing the data was done until saturation was reached.

Four broad foci surfaced and were: participants varied opinions, Participants culture and beliefs and participants’ worldviews on megachurch healing rituals practices and the source of healing. Challenges of healers and healing in megachurches were identified and discussed.

In the following units, applicable categories are presented within the theme. In Table 5.2 I offered a summary of the themes which surfaced from the data analysis and subsequent categorisation. The researcher had square bracketed the summary hereunder.

TABLE 5.2

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
Church Leadership and their role.	Faith Healing.	Faith Healing versus Scientific medicine.	The source of Clerics healing powers.	The dynamics of miracles.	Cleric sex for religious rituals
Theme 7					

5.5.2 The results of the theme analysis: Common Emerging Themes and Sub-themes

In the subsequent sections the researcher had present themes and their sub-themes as they emerged from the data analysis. The data was derived mainly from two categories of instruments namely: interviews and observations. The researcher had collected both the ethnographic and empirical data. In addition, the researcher had referred the data to relevant literature review that supported the research for data presentation. The researcher had therefore started presenting Theme 1 to theme 6 in which evidence for emergence of the sub-themes were also provided.

5.5.2.1 Theme 1: Church Leadership and the responsibilities

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis was participants’ opinion on church leadership and their roles. Theme 1 derived from question one which is phrased thus: You are a leader of this church and what is your role in this church?

From the data collected from the Church Leadership, namely: Bishops, Prophets, Apostles and Pastors, all participants pointed out that were the members and leaders of the Church, by

the virtue of being the founders and vision bearers of the said megachurches; however individuals outlined his or her role.

Majority of participants approved themselves as founders of the church with particular responsibility not limited to healing.

Participant 1 is the founder of the megachurch in Thohoyandou, Vhembe District and his response was thus:

“Yes, I am the member of this Church-MCB from the year 2008 and my membership is segmented by the fact that I am the founder of this church, in other words I am the leader, the manager of this church. You know what, God can do great things. I am saying this because your question is dual namely leadership and the role.

Eee-, allow me to give you my historical background before I became the leader of this church. I was born and groomed under this missionary church since 1972, what I have established was that the church that I am talking about underestimated the ministry of healing. Mmm, I cannot remember one of the Sundays or services the pastor called upon the sick to the fore to be prayed for. Mmm allow me to say this; mainline churches are really ignorant with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a gift like healing the sick. I remember one Sunday after the church service I saw one of the granny suffering from the physical pain and I decided to approach the granny in question and after having asked him about her health status, and make some biblical references, the Holy Spirit advised me to pray for her at her home. I did visit her and made a prayer. The Granny was healed instantly. I started to recognise that I am also gifted by the Holy Spirit and people should be helped both physically and spiritually.

The Granny went on testifying that I am the one who made a prayer for her and she was healed. From that day a number of church members started calling me “Vhafunzi” and some even came to me for healing prayer. I want to tell you that I never hesitated and I prayed for those who wanted a healing prayer.

This type of action became a problem to the church leadership as after some time I was called and reprimanded as I was instructed to stop what I was doing, “praying for the sick”. Mmm, the move or action taken by the church leadership that time was the one made me to decide to step out of the mainline church congregation and started my own place of worship. Some members from the very same church followed

me to support the ministry; here am I today, as you see the Church is big with a huge number of people and members.

As I have indicated that I am the leader of the church, my role is to preach the word of God and to pray for the needy in particular the sick so that when they go back to their respective places are free from their burdens”

Participant 2 is the prophet in one of the megachurches at Limpopo Province Vhembe District at Ha-Kutama Madodoga village and before answering on the question of leadership and his role, he started by laughing and he remarked as follows:

“Your question is too inquisitive, but let me summarise it like this, I am not a Member, I am the leader of this church; I am the founder of the MCC. In short that is my response on your question of leadership. On the response of my role I think is clear my role is to execute what God has imparted on me by his Holy Spirit, I mean my main role in this church is to prophesy and pray for the sick. That is my task and my gift from God.”

Participant 2 remarked further to respond on the question; what propelled him to be a Prophet and open the church? His response was:

“Ok you said what made me to be a Prophet?” the answer is straight forward, the calling is the one who made me to be a prophet. I started while I was in Grade 10 prophesying and most of my teachers could call me and asked me to prophesy for them and I did as God directed. Some people started coming to my home for help and I did assisted them as they requested. On the basis of the need I decided to open the Church from at this village. I am telling you we started with 15 people and today I am servicing + - 700 to 3000 members a day.”

Participant 3 holds the title of the Bishop in one of the megachurches in Gauteng, Soweto. His response to the question of leadership and his role was that:

“I was ordained as a pastor of one of the Pentecostal Churches and when my spiritual life grew I felt I should leave that church and started my own. I dedicated this church to the Glory of God on 2012 while I was an Apostle. As time goes on the church started growing because of both the prophetic and healing ministry in this church, I was elevated to the position of the Bishop. I have branches around South Africa. Here we are in the Centre or the Head-Quotas of the whole church in GP. You said during introduction that you are from LP in Venda, yes, I have the branch too in

Venda at LP. Thus my role have already outlined above as I indicated that I have a prophetic, miraculous and healing gifts”

In view of the above remarks and comments from participants 1,2 and 3, it is clear that all participants are leaders according to the category of their spiritual calls and the main role in their churches is healing and prophetic ministry.

5.5.2.2 Theme 2: Faith healing

The second theme of faith healing emerged during data analysis. Faith healing in this research was the core subject and understood by majority of participants across all the word-based data. It needs to be mentioned that faith healing was a critical concept to various participants who participated in the research including the leadership of the megachurch and mainline church thereof. Participants understood this concept as dynamic approach towards healing practices in some selected megachurches. Even though, participants expressed faith healing in different ways, each of the four participants expressed the significance of faith healing based on his or her cultural background and belief.

Participant 3 as indicated that his role was solely healing and prophecy in his church, he responded as follows with regard to healing:

“You must understand that healing is phenomenal and a spiritual. So when we talk of healing we talk of spiritual phenomenal happenings. In my church I use to call for the sick people to come and receive healing and they do come. But remember when we talk of healing as phenomenal, we must also talk of faith as instrument to activate healing to people. I must have faith that when I pray for the sick, the needy they will get healed or well by faith. Even a sick person when he wants prayer for healing he or she must have faith. So we cannot talk of healing with faith. People in my church are healed by faith. And that is called faith healing and nothing else.”

In support of the above remarks, participant 4 who holds a title of Apostle in his church, shares his views as follows:

“Healing is real, prophetic healing is happening. I use to execute prophetic healing during my church services and congregants are pleased of these services. Church without healing is dead. You must know that when people come to the church most of them are sick so you must heal them by both the prophetic word and physically so by prayers.”

One of the mainline church member, stated as participant 6 that:

“I have been sick for some times and I was invited by my friend to come to attend a healing service of his church. I came and during healing session the pastor came and pointed me out from a number of congregants and told me that I am sick and she even mentioned my name and my illness. She after that prayed for me and I am telling you I am healed. Healing at other churches like this one in Thohoyandou is happening. Look I am healed I am no longer taking medication from my Doctor.”

5.5.2.2.1 Sub-theme: 2.1. The dynamics of Faith Healing

The dynamics of faith healing emerged as the first sub-theme of the second theme. The dynamics of faith healing is established on the notion and belief that certain spiritual people and men of God like pastors and prophets of certain megachurches have the ability to cure and heal certain illness or pandemics. This notion was also remarked by Sarkar et al. who pointed out that:

“People from a variety of background approach faith healers for treatment. Individuals from both rural and urban residence seek services of faith healers”.³⁸⁷

In this research most of the participants view healing in the context of faith and that healing is the process activated by an individual. It is from this opinion that healing has no barriers is all about transforming power to the sick person. This opinion was also pointed out by Loxterkamp in Qiao who remarked that healing a patient means transforming the link between the patient and his/her community which had been destroyed by epidemic.³⁸⁸

Participant 5 narrates her miracle of healing transformation and the aspect of no healing barriers as thus:

“On the 03rd of November 2013 as Prophet TB Joshua was preaching he preached much about the benefit of faith. After preaching the prophet invited the viewers that they must touch the screen of their TV’S. I deed touched the screen as the man of God instructed and immediately something moved from my body from on top to downwards. After that movement the pain that was in me was no more and from that day of the prayer of healing by faith I recovered from my illness”.

³⁸⁷ Ibid see Siddharth Sarkar, Sreekanth and Shivanand Kattimani. p.1

³⁸⁸ Loxterkamp in Qiao 2013

In the light of the said perspective, Charlie Stack argues that faith healing is however immense in the Christian practice of religious conviction. Faith healing is all empirical evidence, which means that some people do keenly trust that it works.³⁸⁹ In view of this opinion, the issue of dynamics of faith healing as is significant in the current Christian community and secular society in South Africa; thus, healing should be viewed from deontological and utilitarian perspectives. From this approach, faith healing practices should not be endured if they are attested to be detrimental to society or individuals.

During data analysis, I have established a belief that someone like prophets or pastor has something special that can heal a sick person. Some participants further believe that spiritual healers like prophets and pastors have a close connection with God for healing powers.

“Participant 7 in this notion pointed out that:

“From my observation and belief, no person on earth can perform such miracles of healing like Prophet Kokao. The way this prophet prophesy and healing take place; I believe without that this man of God is used by God himself. Look at his followers. Most of the people come to this church with various type of problems but the man of God Prophet Kokao will deliver them and after the church service one attest that those who are sick are healed and those who have problems’ are freed.”

To augment the experience by participant 7, participant 8 adds:

“What, there is nothing like that, in these churches if you do not have money you cannot get any healing prayer. For you to get healed or prayer you must first pay a certain money or amount”.

On the basis of the comment by both participant 8 and 9, it is evident that some healing megachurches are money or profit making churches.

The data also revealed that faith healing method in some megachurches involves prayer; the use of healing tools like anointing oil; water; anointed cloths and some members have a strong belief in a pastor or prophet.

Participants 9 in this aspect expressed the following sentiments:

³⁸⁹ Charlie Stack. Faith Healing: The Psychology of Extraordinary Beliefs. 2018. p.1

“When one is in need of healing, he/she must know that our Saviour Jesus Christ used various methods to heal. Thus the use of prayer; anointing oils and water I think is proper because is part and parcel of faith healing. I have been using this type of anointing oils and water. The sickness that I had before is gone and my things are going well.”

However participant 10 adds that:

“faith is dynamic in a sense that any item any object that one can receive from these pastors and prophets work miracles in that you those oils or whatever it may be water has power of healing. Remember that these pastors and prophets have powers of miracles”.

In contrast, the existing scientific evidence disputes the claims that faith healing can heal or cure a patient or any other illness including the virus. Other scientists submit that the amount of people who point their cure to faith healing is less than the number projected by calculations based on the historical percentage of unstructured remissions seen among people with chronic illnesses. Nevertheless, to some people faith healing may, reduce stress, relieve pain promote peace of mind and anxiety.

In Gauteng Province Tshwane District Municipality, participant 3 who holds the position of Bishopric is one amongst other spiritual healers who claim to heal all diseases including chronic diseases. These are spiritual healers who claim that when one has faith, that faith can cure deafness, cancer, AIDS, mental disorders, stroke and any kind of injury. They further believe that illness is an illusion that can be healed through faith and prayer. Participant 3 expresses the said viewpoint thus:

“There is this notion that there is no cure for Aids. I agree with that, but through prayer and through faith water and any material branded my name, as God said prophetically, I believe in that. People can be healed of Aids,” said the Bishop.

In support of the above narrative, participant 11 pointed out that:

“Do you know Church X, this big church in Pretoria of Bishop X, miracles is happening in that church. I was HIV positive when I tested in 2014 and in 2017 I

visited that church of Bishop X. The man of God prayed for me and he told me to go and test again. When I tested I found that the results are negative”.

In contrast, participant 12 opposes the notion that pastors, Bishops and prophets have power to heal kinds of illness. In this aspect participant 12 differ with majority of participants who believe that perfect healing takes place in some selected megachurches. He expresses his opinion thus:

“Let me tell you brother, those are lies, any pastor or prophet who claims to heal or has power to cure any kind of sickness is a deceiver. This people do not heal, what they are doing is only business to cover-up their evil deeds. They claim that they are used by God or use Jesus Christ power. I am saying this because my sister as I am talking died in 2017 after she had visited this church in Pretoria. The pastors prayed for her and she told my sister that she is healed. My sister had cancer and she was told to throw away her medications. Because she believed much on this pastor she did as she was instructed and abandoned the medication. After two weeks after that healing service in Pretoria she became worse and dies on December 2017. I am telling you I do not believe in miraculous healing. Most of people who are sick do not survive due to faith and miraculous healing”.

In the light of what participant 12 remarked, the data also revealed that in some megachurches, church services are extremely a money-making issue over healing. Some prophets and pastors who are healers claim that some illnesses are caused by personal sins and a separation from God. However they claim to have power over all illnesses and personal problems.

The above opinion was clearly expressed by participant 2 who argues that:

“People are sick and most of the sick people are sick because of their sins, these sins make them to experience various social problems in their lives”.

Participant 13 shares her experience and augmented what some of participants and some members of the mainline remarked that healing services in some churches are money making issues and she narrates her views as follows:

“Yaah, things are happening in this world. When you ask me about my view regarding healing, you take me back to what I have experience. On 2018 April 18, I took my mother to church X for healing purposes. When I arrive there I was told that

for us to get into church services we have to pay out R200.00 each person. Because I needed a help I had to pay R400.00 for us two. Then after the pastor had finished preaching she announced that any person, who wanted to see her, should come to the office at the back. I had to take my mother there. On our arrival another lady told us that in order for us to see the pastor we have to pay R3000.00. I am telling you that had frustrated me. I spoke to my brother about this matter and he transferred the money into my account and we paid. When we got inside, the pastor asked us about the problems. I explained the situation of my mother. She started praying for her. I must tell you nothing had happened, we went back the way we came in in that service and the office of prayer. Hence the R3000.00 was paid out”.

Participant 12 as he opposes the healing ministry for megachurches argues as follows:

“Hy wena, there is nothing like healing in this churches. Watch the news about pastors who are arrested for criminal acts in the name of having power to heal. You must know that some pastors and prophets use the power of the devil or evil spirits to heal. Our people are being manipulated and abuse in the name of healing. There is no healing in this world. Those who say they there is healing are liars”.

The message Peter gave to the then church, as he preached under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit support the practice of healing during church services. That scripture clearly demonstrates that disease and some negative conditions are not from God, hence disciples executed faith healing to the need.

In the light of the biblical observations one of Traditional healers, participant 5 also expressed her views as follows:

“Look my brother....I must express that faith actually heals, in fact, no medicine in this planet will ever heal more than faith. I am the traditional healer and discern a numeral people with different health problems that I have healed. You must note that, as people we have various means that sicknesses and mischievous things access the human body. It might be socially, physical or spiritual and at times amalgamation of trio. For the physical one, both indigenious and medical medicine and treatments can cure the person but for the spiritual ailments one needs to confront them through his or her faith and believe that the ancestors can heal”.

5.5.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Healing deliverance and exorcism

Healing deliverance also emerged as one of the subthemes under theme 2 of faith healing. It surfaced during data analysis that deliverance also forms part of prophetic healing in some selected megachurches. Participant 04 narrates the service of healing deliverance as follows:

“I have learnt that majority of people who attend to my healing services are demon possess. During the healing service, it happens that the Holy Spirit reveals to me some members who are demon possessed and it is my responsibility to execute healing deliverance to such people so that they can be healed”

In support of the said viewpoint participant 20 share her experience and says:

“In 2013 August 17 something bad happened in my life. I was working at Gauteng in one of the Security Company and it happened that I was called by management and was informed that I am retrenched. And in deed I lost my job that year. One day my friend invited me to his church service in Pretoria to attend. After the pastor had finished preaching, he came and pointed me to come to the fore. I went and I did not know what was happening. The man of God told me that I had a demon that always destroys my future. He then told me that I was retrenched by the year 2013 without any course in Security Company. He made mention that all that was because of the demon spirit deposited in me. He then payed for me and said I am delivered from that demon. I am saying I did not spend 7 month before I received a call from my company and the boss told me that I must come back to work. Since 2014 I have been on duty and every Sunday I really attend the church in Pretoria”.

5.5.2.3 Theme 3: faith healing versus scientific medicine

The third theme that emerged from that data analysis was about the discourse between faith healing and scientific medicine. Pastors and Prophets and church members were interviewed at Gauteng and Limpopo Province. Two traditional healers were also interviewed at Limpopo Province Vhembe District. The data revealed that healing is a construct theme running across religious streams.³⁹⁰ It should be bear in mind that majority of participants in this research are Africans with Afro-Christian culture and they mostly interpret healing within the context of

³⁹⁰ Lethabo Mabuza. Thesis: 2018. p73

Afrocentric opinions. Yet in some cases faith healing with exception of scientific medicine and indigenous medicine appears to be not working.

In most of megachurches, faith and medicine have not been officially practiced together that much, hence the use of medicine was discouraged by the healers (pastors and prophets).

Participant 3 (prophet) had an input on the use of scientific medicine and he made mentioned as follows:

“Look when one or a person believes in Christ should not mix believe. I mean I cannot believe in Christ at the same time doubt his powers of healing. I have seen several people and my members discharged from medical Centre’s and hospitals without having recovered and they come to my healing services. I prayed for those people and they get healed. I have seen and overheard number of people that they no longer use of medicine from their medical Doctors after having received prayer of healing from my church. My God whom I worship is powerful and can heal. Therefore there is no need for the person to use medicine after having attended my healing serving. I believe that faith is sufficient for the sick person to receive healing from Christ our Lord”.

The above views of participant 3, augments the notion that some pastors and prophets even request their worshipers to discontinue medical treatments and give themselves over to God entirely as an act of faith that may induce God to heal them.

In this perspective participant 17 remarks as follows:

“Before I experience what I experience in this church, I really believed much on our prophet. I started hating this person after he advised me to disuse my chronic medication. He told me that by using medical medicine is a symbol of lack of faith. He inspired me to have faith in Christ. Look, I did as he advised me. I want to tell you I did not finish a week. My illness attacked me like I never experience before. Fake pastors and prophets really are problems as they put people on problems”.

In the light of the data above, it is apparent to mention that various faith healers like and various prophets and pastors in megachurches exploit the gift of healing by discouraging members from utilizing the medicine and herbs treatments for healing purposes.

One of the participants of Gauteng Pretoria megachurch was annoyed by the instruction given to the congregants as the pastor discouraged his members from utilizing medicine.

Participant 18 reiterated as follows:

“You know what; I am deeply hurt by the teaching of our pastor. How can a pastor teach of preach that people who uses medicine do not have faith. This is nonsense, because the pastor is really putting his people into medical predicament”. I love this church but the pastor is going too far by discouraging us from using medicine. Remember some congregants here are under Doctors supervision and that is why are physically coping. I really dislike what this pastor has said regarding medicine and healing. He is misleading people really”.

In view of the said discourse, it is clear from the data that some pastors, prophets and bishops misunderstand the notion that the application of medicine and indigenous medicine with faith towards healing augment each other for the purpose of holistic wellness.

One Participant who is well known traditional healer “inyanga” while interviewed became angry and states as participant 19 that:

“What make me angry is that people are dying in the hands of the so-called pastors and prophets who claim to have power of healing. People are told not to go to the Traditional Healers for healing and remedy. After a person has realized that he did not get any help from his church is then that he runs to us Traditional Healers for assistance. There are some illnesses that need our attention as Traditional healers. Other sicknesses not need prayers but indigenous medicine so that a person can get well. I have assisted a number of Christian who came to me very sick, today are well after having given them our traditional medicine”.

On the basis of the above sentiments by participant 19, it needs to be remarked that ever since God is the creator of life and universe, belief in medical discipline will never contradict with individual faith. Thus, if God doesn't exist, then faith and the use of medicine will contradict each other since science is the search for facts about the universe. For those with faith, however, the use of medicine forms part of healing. The use of any type of medicine is mankind's attempt to understand how the healing works in a holistic approach.

Participant 20 expressed his views as follows:

“it does not matter any medicine, it may be from our inyangas, Doctors or any anointed oil or water is ok as long as the sick person uses it and get healed. Those who discourage sick people to take other medicine are not doing well to us. We are sick and we need to get recovered.

However, some participants do not believe in holistic approach of applying any means of healing to individuals. In the light of the said aspect, participant 31 from Gauteng Province in Pretoria narrates her experience thus:

“In 2015, 2016 I often grumbled of backache and severe headache. I consulted a number of medical practitioners around Gauteng Province but it was in vain. One of my friends told me of the healing service of Pastor B and due to my health problems, I started visiting this church X in Pretoria. During prayer time, the Prophet prayed for me and I applied my faith for healing. By then I was seriously sick. Previously I was using the traditional herbs as prescribed by my traditional healer. Those herbs did not work. I even went to my medical Doctor but his treatments failed. He would prescribe medicine for me and I would buy medicines as prescribed by my medical doctors for healing. I must tell you that those medicines could not cure me until I found this church as told by my friend. I got healed after having prayed for by my Pastor. This pastor has faith, that is why he prayed for people and they get healed, I am one of them who by faith I am healed. Now I can declare that my health condition is good compared to prior using faith healing.

Participant 29 similarly noted that:

“I can say my health condition is very well. I must attest to the fact that my health condition was not well when I was using medicines from my medical Doctor for the sickness treatment. Now look, through prayers, anointing oil and anointing water prescribed by my Prophet, my health condition has developed and is very good”.

The data further revealed that the application of faith leading people to default or abandon any form of medical treatment puts the patients at very high risk which may lead to death if not attended to on time.

Participant 21 opined that;

“I do not understand, I am HIV positive. While I visited this church X in Soweto, the prophet prayed for me and told me that I am healed in Jesus name. but now I have lapse because he told me to discontinue with my HIV-AIDS medicine. When I was

taken to Hospital in 2009, the Doctors were angry about me because my CD counts were very low and they had to redo my medical programs so that I can regain my health status. I am not lying, before I went to this church for prayer service, I was really ok. No one could identify that I was sick. Look today things are tough but I will be ok”.

It needs to be mentioned that such church leaders, prophets and pastors who discouraged their members from using medical treatments were ignorance. ART is key to sustained HIV suppression, reduced risk of drug resistance, improved overall health, quality of life, and survival, as well as decreased risk of HIV transmission. Achieving adherence to ART is a critical determinant of long-term outcome in HIV infected patients. For many chronic diseases, such as diabetes or hypertension, drug regimens remain effective even after treatment is resumed following a period of interruption.

In the light of the said conduct by the pastors and prophets, in June 2014 budget vote speech, the then Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi stated that 37% of patients starting antiretroviral treatment are lost to follow-up three years after initiation. Information recently released by SANAC shows that 25% of patients on treatment drop out during the first 12 months. This drop-out rate is much higher than had been thought previously.

In order to combat this loss to follow-up an integrated medico-pastoral approach to adherence is needed. Megachurches and faith healers should lead a grassroots approach that will mobilise society and church members and church leadership to ensure they have the information and understanding about chronic diseases’ treatment to ensure better and long-term treatment adherence.

5.5.2.4 Theme 4: The source of clerics healing powers

The fourth theme that emerged from the data analysis was the source of the clerics healing powers. The theme derived from participants’ interrogation of the source of healing powers in some selected megachurches. Minority of participants raised a concern of fundamental source power used by the prophets and pastors in some healing services.

In the light of the above perspective, participants had different views about the source of healing powers. Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 were all asked where and how did they get powers for healing miracles? Participant 1 responds thus:

“What are you trying to say, what a question, we get powers from God, God is the healer and no one else”.

Participant 2 has different view and he says:

*“After having realized that God has called me to serve his people I started my own church. The numbers of the attendees were very much minimal and when times went on I realized that I have a gift of healing the sick. In order for me to attest with this calling and the gift, I took a decision to visit Nigeria for T.B Joshua services. This visit was done on July 2017. It was during this visit whereby Prophet T.B Joshua imparted unto me his power of healing and Prophecy”.*³⁹¹

Participant 3 shares similar sentiments with participant 1 as participant 3 opines that:

“Power for healing is from God. You know what, before I go to the service I first talk to my God to reveal himself through the word and acts. One of the acts is healing, God heals”.

The Bishop, participant 3 was also encouraged by John 14:12 that says,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father”.

In contrast, data revealed that some mainline churches in both provinces; Limpopo and Gauteng oppose to the act of faith healing. Most of the church leaders in the mainline churches opined that deeds of healing in some megachurches are the act of the devil, but this opinion is in contrast with the biblical worldview regarding healing.

In the light of the above notion, participant 29 expresses his opinion as follows:

“Oh, mmm, healing, miracles and some other spiritual act that take place in these churches like church A and B are just the act of devil. The bible in timothy states clearly that towards the end of the world lot of prophets will surface and rob people

³⁹¹ Participant 1 - Bishop Mutlali. (not real name)

in the name of Jesus. Also Jesus stated in the bible that miracles will take place in his name. Devil is working, people today they follow those miracles and healing. The healers are fake, they pretend as if they are of God whereas not”.

Other perspective that emerged was that there is a secret, evil forces and power that have infiltrated the Church of God.³⁹² Some of the newly established churches including the megachurches turned to the occult movement institutions for miracles and healing powers. In support of the above notion, Participant 7 remarked as follows:

“What I have discovered is that most of the prophets and pastors belong to occults society. That is where most of them are empowered to perform strange miracles and wonders”.

This view was also supported by participant 25 who remarks that:

“These churches and their leadership belong to the occults that is why the do tremendous miracles. Wena when you think, where do they get their powers. Remember others get their powers from Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Zambia and Malawi”.

As well-defined in *Webster's New International Dictionary*, the occult embraces whatever “beyond the scope of plain understanding; mysterious, supernormal or supernatural.” The concept occult is pragmatic to numerous religious practices, many of which purport to prophesy forthcoming events.³⁹³

From the basis of the understanding of the concept “occult”, one of the megachurch members in Gauteng Province, holds the view that supports the views of participant 25 as participant 26 remarks as follows:

“When we interrogate the source of healing powers of this prophets and pastors who are mushrooming in our country, one will find that some of them receive their powers from the foreigners, and some of the pastors fly to places like Nigeria, Mozambique and Malawi to buy such powers. Thus such things are occults related”.

Another participant shared his opinion as participant 26 and states:

³⁹² Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana. *Church Mafia: Captured by Secret powers: An untold African Narrative*. 2019

³⁹³ *The Occult versus the Churches*. CQ Researchers In-depth reports of today's issues. 1970.

“You know, I am telling you these pastors and prophets go to neighbouring states like Zimbabwe others go to Nigeria and buy African idols that will assist them to come and perform the miracles in their churches. That is why you will find a church started with very few people and all of a sudden the church had majority of membership and surpass the older church like church X”.

In the same vein participant 27 shares the same sentiments with participants 25 and 26 when he (participant 27) points out that:

“Yes, some pastors and prophets are the members of occults family, however the issue of occults derived from Genesis 6, there you will established that after the angels had made intimate relationship with human-beings, people started to learn witchcraft from those fallen angels. This is a recurring thing. When these people are under the cult or occult, is difficult for one to establish their religious status because they mostly use the name of God to perform miracles whereas they do not have power from God but from certain occults movements”.

Thus most of the megachurch members had positive view about the source of healing powers. They understand that the source of healing is God and their pastors or Prophets are just middle men. Participant 30 commented and pointed out that:

“From my spiritual understanding and belief, God is the only source of healing. No person has power to perform miraculous healing”.

It needs to be mentioned that most of mainline churches have been opposing to all such systems of prophecy and healing practices. However, the Bible condemns occult practices but in contrast the New Testament describes various miracles, including the raising of the dead persons.

This notion was also pointed out by McJury who views parapsychology as a direct link to demons, which the church teaches are actual creatures, not mere metaphors. On this view she further argues that:

“By saying ‘yes’ to the occult, by saying ‘yes’ to New Age, I’m turning against God,” she explained. “It’s a deliberate choice from my free will. I’m choosing not to go with

*God, but to go with man's ability, man's superiority, man's ego – that I can do things with my mind that other people can't*³⁹⁴.”

McJury further opined that in that “*turning away,*” a person gives demons permission to influence them. “*You're inviting them in, basically*”.³⁹⁵ Such ignorance's and individual decision has caused a lot of confusion and chaos in South Africa as several churches including mainline churches disagree with some practices and doctrines and methods of executing miracles and healing.

In the light of the above perspective, Participant 31 attests to the observation of participants 24, 25 and 26 as participant 31 believes and attests that pastors with healing powers acquire their powers from other African states as he observed from his church and he points out that:

“Our pastor has no power of healing and prophecy from the establishment of this church. In 2012 our pastor went to Nigeria for three weeks and on his return, he started prophesying during the church service and further pray for the sick people. What surprised me is that during healing session congregants starts screaming and others will fall away before he could arrive to them. This happening happens after his visit to and from Nigeria”.

In support of the mainline churches concern and the claim of some prophets and pastors with regard to healing and miracles, there are occultists who have narrated how mighty miracles and healing can be done through spirits forces. The CRL Commission has heard that some church leaders fly to West Africa to get initiated purporting to acquire supernatural powers³⁹⁶. Apostle Makhado Ramabulana has told the Commission that he also did this and has now turned his back on the secret society that he was part of. Apparently, he wrote two books divulging what the occult do in their spiritual domain.

Apostle Makhado Ramabulana was called by CRL Commission to explain a number of practices and phenomena that form part of miracles and rituals in some churches. The Apostle narrates thus;

³⁹⁴ Ibid see Maria Wiering

³⁹⁵ Ibid see Maria Wiering

³⁹⁶ CRL Commission

“So when I came back, I came with the head of a pig that was meant to attract crowds, because part of this occult power is to attract crowds.”³⁹⁷

Ramabulana further told the CRL Commission that he was taken to Nigeria for his initiation. He came back with the head of a pig, which he buried at his church. He also came back with a horn. As a result of these practices, his church in Soshanguve prospered. He also gave a version about his experience in the DRC, where he was introduced to the occult god, he says:

“They told me they are going to call their god this thing came at extreme speed, it came and held me I could sense that it was big and the claws and the hands were not of a human being. It baptised me and gave me something like an egg, I had to swallow it with the shell then the man did some incantations and it went away.”

In support of what Ramabulana narrated to the CRL Commission, Jay Israel also testified and made mention that he was also initiated in a diverse secret society and had a flourishing church in East London. He told the Commission that he was initiated in Benin, which he says is well-known for the occult and that is where he was introduced to a god called above. He opines:

“We got into the room they say kneel down take your clothes off they gave me the words to speak and they said this is communication with your god, then they said it’s done, we are going to give you a horn, which you are going to take to your country. It was a big horn; I kept it in my bag for some time.”³⁹⁸

Jay Israel further states that before delivering a sermon to the congregants, he would first make a sacrifice of either a chicken or a pigeon to this horn. He indicated that sometimes he had to do this five times a day and as a result chicken traders got to know him. He tried to buy from other people so as not to raise suspicion but he ran out of stock.³⁹⁹

The material objects used for miracles powers according to Jay Israel are:

“... the rings come with stones, red, blue, white, there are necklaces with big crosses. They put the cross in the pocket; there is a sign of victory where they put two hands like this.”

³⁹⁷ Angela Bolowana. SABC News. 16 November 2020

³⁹⁸ Ibid see Angela Bolowana

³⁹⁹ Loc cit.

To augment the narratives by both Ramabulana Sinthumule and Jay Israel, Raphael Gasson wrote in his book “The Challenging Counterfeit” about how he came from spiritualism to Christianity. He writes about how the blind received their sight, the deaf heard and the lame walked at spiritualistic meetings in England (Raphael Gasson in Torbjorn Swartling).⁴⁰⁰ Thus, spiritualists used various healing methods to create healings. Some of them would even quote examples of healing from bible and practice laying on of hands as written in Mark 16:18.⁴⁰¹

The modus operandi of healing in this regards are that the healer will lay his hands on the sick and the sick person will feel how power is transferred to his or her body. Later on, those who have been healed will testify and crutches and other things will be lifted behind on the premises and signs that healing has really taken place.⁴⁰² It needs to be mentioned that these healing practices have lured many into occults and drawn a massive to the megachurches.

In the light of Ramabulana and Israel’s narratives, Mwanse views the entire activities of both the prophets and pastors as witchcraft as he remarks that:

*“Witches are therefore people who appear to possess magical skills or powers that are supernatural and as such are able to control or influence things, to bring about certain results such as healing, killing, predicting the future, control events, ect”.*⁴⁰³

According to Mwanse, witchcraft refers to the utilisation of powers by magical abilities or some supernatural resources to control and influence things.⁴⁰⁴ From Africa perspective witchcraft embraces a typology of belief, behaviour that reinforces mysterious actions.

The reinforcement of mysterious action in this regard is embodied on ritualism. One of the prophets who minister megachurch in Gauteng, Pretoria narrates as participant 3 also as follows:

“The conditions of growing in these powers were continual animals’ sacrifices before the altars. These sacrifices assist in attracting crowd to the church. I must tell you that without doing what the occult principles dictate you will never succeed in this

⁴⁰⁰ Torbjorn Swartling. From Spiritual Powers to Liberating Grace, Occult Healings. Retrieved date: 11/23/2020

⁴⁰¹ Ibid

⁴⁰² Ibid

⁴⁰³ Pardon Mwanse. What Attracts People to Occults and Witchescraft Practices. 2017. p2

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid

ministry and your church will never grow. The African cultural practices plays a vital role in the growth of the church today.”.

Participant 6 disputed the notion that the powers that manifest from the prophets and pastors are God gifts hence she argues that:

“I do not believe in what is happening in these churches. There is nothing like healing is just a scam for making money. Tell me where these prophets and pastors get such powers to prophesy and heal the sick”.

South Africa before Christian religion believed and practised African Traditional religion that has derived from the indigenous knowledge system of ancient native community, which some still practice even today. They have always believed in supernatural powers, right from ancient periods. There is no doubt that some missionary preached about the miracles and powers of God and that doctrine made sense to Africans in that times and as were sparked by some miracle and testimonies, Africans embraced Christianity and denounce their African religion.

The data revealed that from 2008 to 2010, most of South Africans have reset their belief for Christianity to be a religion where miracles and wonders must materialise. That great wish for miracles and prophecies in the church have awoken a great evil practices as most of traditional healers now leave their healing practices and rituals and suit-up with bibles in their hands, and perform unprecedented miracles under the pretext of divine power and God manifestations.

5.5.2.4.1 Sub-Theme: 4.1 African Traditional Powers Attract Clerics and members

The first sub-theme that emerged from the data analysis of the fourth theme was the African Traditional powers attract clerics and members. The data in this aspect reveals that most of the pastors and prophets flee from the country to Western Africa, in particular Nigeria and Malawi to acquire powers to perform healing miracles for their megachurches. However some acquire their pastors from the local Traditional Healers. Majority of participants attested to the said notion as Participant 15 believes that pastors with healing powers acquire their powers from other African states as he observed from his church and he argued that:

“Our pastor has no power of healing and prophecy from the establishment of this church. In 2012 our pastor went to Nigeria for three weeks and on his return, he

started prophesying during the church service and further pray for the sick people. What surprised me is that during healing session congregants starts screaming and others will fall away before he could arrive to them. This happening happens after his visit to and from Nigeria”.

Participant 15 viewpoints were also echoed by participant 16 who pointed out that:

“This pastors and prophets are not different from what the Traditional Healers do when they treat a sick person. When one go to the traditional healer he would be given some kind of medicine to use at home. When you check, most of the pastors and prophets use the very same strategy with the traditional healers. My mother was very ill from 2015 and in 2018 I had to take her to one of the prophets in Vhembe District and after the pastor had prayed for her, she had to buy some of items that she will use at home so that she could be healed further. This had reminded me of what my friend told me that this pastors and prophets get their powers from the African Traditional Healers that is why their practices are more the same. Well she used those items like anointing oil and water and she is recovered.”

The said perspective was augmented by participant 5 who is one of the traditional healers in Vhembe District and he revealed that:

“When you see this small churches becoming big in terms of population, is because their leaders come to me as “nanga”⁴⁰⁵ to empower them and to get “mushonga” to use to their members so that the church can get full. I have a special “mushonga”⁴⁰⁶ that I give to pastors so that they can have more members in the church and other “mushonga” is for power of healing. We got this from our ancestors. You know pastors Muloko of Mamba village, look at his church today, he was assisted by me to grow his church”.

This impression has become so common among mainline churches that most of members have begun to feel that the mainline Churches do not have the “miracle-powers” as compared to megachurches and newly established churches.

⁴⁰⁵ Nanga is a Venda terminology referring to Traditional Healer.

⁴⁰⁶ Mushonga is also a Venda terminology referring to indigenous medicine.

Participant 10 who is the member of the mainline churches in Limpopo Province Vhembe District Thohoyandou narrates as follows:

“I love my church X but the problem is that pastors of this mainline churches do not take the holy Spirit serious. It appears that they underestimate the power of God in terms of healing. Look at this mushrooming churches with prophets and pastors from other countries, they perform types of miracles and people are prayed for healing. I have been in this church X, I cannot remember any of the Sundays where my pastor called upon the sick to the fore for prayers. This has made me to go to this Church Z of prophet Maake in Thohoyandou. The prophets prayed for me on the first day and I was healed and I experienced the power of God that indeed God can use his servants to heal us. This type of practice is not done in my Church (referring to mainline church). That is why most of members flock from mainline church to this newly established or charismatic churches for prophecy, miracles and healing”.

In this perspective one of the mainline church members; participant 11 in Limpopo Province in Vhembe District at Nzhelele area, further pointed out that:

“our church (referring to one mainline churches) are really cold and they do not take healing serious, that is why most of the members leave this church and go to these healing churches like church C (referring to one of the local megachurch)”.

In view of the above viewpoints, most of the mainline church members are now find themselves joining mushroom megachurches, not with the aim of serving God but to seek healing, miracles and wonders.

In support of this notion, Participant 10 remarks thus:

“There is no need for me to suffer in the church whereas there is a church that can solve my problems. I am sick and in this church “B” no help. I have joint Church ‘DD’ the pastor prayed for me and I am healed and healthy now”.

In the same vain participant 13 also states that:

“I have been in this church for so many years, no changes in my social life, my friends who are in Church “FF” are prospering and on that note I had leave the church and join church FF. let me tell you what happened, one Sunday the pastor

prophesied me and after that he prayed for me to get the job, I did not spend two weeks I was called by company XX and here am I working”.

Another participant 18 also remarked that:

“As I was watching TV in 2017 September 15, I observed people being healed by this healer (prophet Lalumba) and the evidence had made to take a decision to attend for such healing services in Pretoria for the treatment for my menstrual pains. I went there on 2017 October 03 and the prophet located me and after he prophesied, he prayed for me and I got healed. As I testify no more pains during my period circle”.

In the light of the said practices, the data further reveals that megachurch healing practices are inspired by members and followers who always contribute and donate huge sum of currency to pastors or prophets for miracles and healing prayers.

In this view, participants 15 made remarks as follows:

“This prophets and pastors get their powers through money as there is a proverb that says money is power. Look when the pastors during church services realise that members do not contribute to the satisfactory, usually that pastor starts insulting the congregants. The reason is that, the pastors or the prophet know very well that his powers for miracles are also based on currency. Thus there is a say that suggest that money is evil”.

To augment this viewpoint participant 13 further argues that:

“Remember when I say money is part of power for healing practices, the pastor or the prophet has to pay some of the rituals to his provider. It is also known that this miracle pastors and prophets used to travel across borders to acquire powers from Western African states”.

The above views suggest that money also plays a vital role in setting up a church in a form of business sector. In support of this view, one can also point out that establishing a church has become one of the easiest businesses in South Africa, only money matters. Almost anyone who has studied the Bible well can venture into this business. Thus this notion supports the views that any person including the foreigners who have some biblical knowledge coupled

with claims of miracle-performing and prophetic powers, are free to set churches for business purposes.

This viewpoint was also reiterated by one of the pastor in Gauteng who remarks as follows:

“You know what? In South Africa things are easy to be done, if one is able to read and interpret the bible is simple for a person to make money through the church. Money is power and a person who has money is able to buy anything that can make him to survive for the future, hence manipulating members thereof”.

Sub-Theme 4.2: African traditional discourse

The second sub-theme that emerged from the data analysis of the fourth theme was African traditional discourse. During data analysis it was also revealed that some megachurches were established and grounded under African Traditional practices. One megachurch in Limpopo in Vhembe District was found to have been founded by Traditional healers. There is one megachurch in Vhembe District which I know very well that that particular church has been founded by a prophet whom I know well as a traditional healer. He was never been in any church before. But far from where he is well-known, he made a huge impact. This concedes with the viewpoint made by Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana that before he could run a church he was first initiated into secret society.⁴⁰⁷

He started with 15 members from the local village. All he did was to prophesy tremendously and pray for the sick during church services. The following Sunday those who were prayed for purported to have been healed by the said prophet. In the light of the said practices the next Sunday he had a crowd of over 1700. Today he draws crowds of over 5000 to 15000 in his headquarter-church building.

Several participants agree that some prophets and pastors have established their churches under the precept of African Traditional Religious. With this viewpoint participant 15 and 18 has shared same sentiments with participant 5 on the notion that some pastors and prophets execute their healing practices that originate from their African cultural experiences. Participant 15 in this regard view out that:

⁴⁰⁷ Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana. Church Mafia, Captured by Secret Powers: Untold African Narrative. 2018

“Prophet XX is the son to Mr. ZZ who is well known “naka” (traditional healer) in this region of Vhembe. So I do not get surprise when I hear and see Prophet XX being a prophet today. It is clear that he acquired the powers of healing from his father “naka” ZZ. This prophet has never been a member of any church. All of a sudden he is a prophet, where do he get power to prophesy and to heal, think twice the power I believe are from his father as I indicated earlier.

However participant 18 reiterates that:

“South Africa has freedom of religion as enshrined in the constitution, so there’s nothing anyone can really do about some traditional healers who turn overnight to be called prophets and man of God. This people employ their African Traditional practices to attract people through miracles. South African people like miracles and wonders. They run after this pastors and prophets whom others are known to be “nanga” from their backgrounds. It needs person’s strength to open the eyes of these Christian members to know the true in the essence of their faith”.

In support of the above notion, I have also heard of three popular and prominent megachurch leaders of different church ministries one from Limpopo province and the two are of Gauteng province who still visit Nigeria and spend quality time there with the well-known prophet for power and impartation. These popular pastors and prophets would appear in an exclusive television channels to preach and also prophesy to the viewers hence and purport to pray for the sick people. They usually encourage viewers that if they seek miracles, they must visit their church services on distinguished dates.

This viewpoint was also attested by S. O. Abogunrin during his research as he made a similar observation by stating that “people appear in their thousands in churches and crusade grounds (both Christians and non-Christians), not seriously seeking after Christ or spiritual food, but for miracles . . . healing miracles have actually become the ‘real thing’ or the most current issue in African Christianity today”⁴⁰⁸

5.5.2.5 Theme 5: The dynamics of miracles

The fifth theme also surfaced as the dynamics of healing. In South Africa particularly in Limpopo and Gauteng provinces, I have samples of megachurch leaders like prophets and

⁴⁰⁸ S.O Abogunrin

pastors and Apostles who “claim abilities to perform miracles and wonders in the name of God. This method has led to syncretism, which is “the fusion of different religious doctrines or a reconciliation of conflicting religious beliefs.” In this circumstance; the mixture of miracles power with Christian “faith and rituals” surfaces. John Ogu in this aspect stresses that various miracles today “are fabrications intended to attract crowds and make money.”⁴⁰⁹ According to the ENC Broadcasters, the majority of the so-called miracles are used to “lure people to the various churches.”⁴¹⁰

Sub-theme 5.1: Fake miracles

The first sub-theme that emerged from the data analysis of the fifth theme was fake miracles. Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana made mentioned that he crossed the South African border and travelled to a small town called Chipinge in the Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe for to receive miraculous powers. He narrated further of how fake miracles are performed in some miraculous churches⁴¹¹

Participant 20 shares his views regarding miracles as follows:

“look, you must be wise. There is nothing like miracles, most of the pastors cross the boarders to African countries so that they can be able to perform miracles. These miracles are done to attract members or to induce people to the services. Pastors and prophets of today are for money in other words are the profits making churches”.

In similar vein, Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana also adds that some people are paid to perform fake miracles⁴¹² in some churches and crusades.

At some megachurch services, strange events have been witnessed. It is reported that one of the foreign self-proclaimed prophet in Gauteng Province shakes his hand toward the people attending service, and instantly a corresponding reaction follows. During this shakes, number of congregants manifest evil spirits. The prophet will ascend the stage, and shout that “some people will vomit things today”.⁴¹³ There are also circumstances of healing in which the healer apply anointing oil in his hands and subsequently touches the part of the body to effect

⁴⁰⁹ John Ogu

⁴¹⁰ ENC Broadcasters

⁴¹¹ Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana. 2018

⁴¹² Ibid

⁴¹³ Ibid – Ramabulana Sinthumule

healing in the corresponding part of the sufferer. Participant 15 describes the incident as follows:

“I had sore in my entire body and I used to rub the sore over and over when it started aching. I will put on ectoplasm and when I take it out will be out with blood comes from the sour. Due to this problem that was escalating, I went to Church BB for healing service. The pastor prayed for me. He applied anointing oil on his hands and touched my private parts to execute healing. Oh God, My Jesus, at the same time the pastor declared me to be healed instantly in Jesus name. From that day I never get well and that has made me to conclude that what this pastor is doing is not Bible healing but sorcery.”

To supplement the aforesaid notion, participant 16 remarks that:

“This Prophets and Pastors around Gauteng Province are crooks, they deceive people in the name of God and claim to have power to heal or cure people. My sister is a disable person, she uses wheelchair to walk around. In 2018 I took her to Prophet D who advertised that he is a healer of any illness and cure all illness. I took my sister there for healing prayer. I even bought anointing water and oil to be applied on her. I must tell you no changes; she is still on wheelchair even today. I do not trust anymore this pastors and prophets who claim healing in their churches”.

Sub-theme 5.2: The use of objects

The use of objects as a source of healing power also emerged as a second sub-theme of the fifth theme. It emerged that aspect of magical power is linked with the use of ritual symbols. It should be noted that rituals make use of physical material and employ traditional and customs based in cultural practices and further apply worldviews in order to signify and point to spiritual realities.⁴¹⁴

The data in this aspect reveals that some of the powers for healing in some megachurches are linked with objects that are embodied with the healing rituals. Such ritual symbols may appear normal but are essential parts of the recipes for effective magical results. If certain ritual conditions are met, people believe that “power” would be released for the anticipated

⁴¹⁴ Cas Weper. Water rituals as a sources of life in an African Independent Church: To be healed and (re) connected. 2013.

objectives. This viewpoint supports the notion that some rituals are powerful as they point from ordinary to spiritual space.⁴¹⁵

Participant 17 augmented this notion by points out that:

“Some pastors use objects with powers for healing that they acquired from their suppliers. You understand that when people are asleep other people do not. They go by night to their suppliers like “inyangas” and others to the spiritualists to be empowered so that when they come to the church they can be able to execute healing and become popular through performing miracles. So I know of one pastor who is good in performing miracles and healing, he once visited the traditional healer and when I researched why he was there, the traditional healer laughed at me and said this person is a pastor now he is looking for power for healing. I gave him a traditional object that would assist him to perform any kind of miracles”.

In the light of the evidence tendered by participant 15, participant 17 added that:

“What you must know is that these prophets and pastors who perform these amazing miracles and healing, they do get powers from in particular the African Traditional Healers. I am saying this because I have a friend of mine who’s his father is a traditional healer. In 2017, this friend of mine once showed me a very gentle man whom he said that a man is a pastor in one of the near villages. I knew this pastor as powerful men of God who can even perform miracles. The friend of mine told me that this pastor frequent his home to consult with his father (an ATH) to be spiritually empowered in the sense that always he has to go out from the consultative room with a parcel of “muti” concealed in a plastic. ”.

The data in this regards reveals that objects that used as fetishes are worn by the healers to activate supernatural powers during healing services. Participant 18 reiterated that:

“I have realised that most of the pastors and prophets who perform miracles in one way or the other, mostly of them they wear belts or rings that they were offered from the West African countries. Those are the fetishes to enable them to perform such

⁴¹⁵ Ibid

miracles and healing. Should you visit one of these healing churches, you must check properly; you will see a prophet with a big ring in his fingers or a belt of some kind”.

Most of people in South Africa erroneously believe that the spiritual object have the power to protect life, provide good luck and brings healing to mankind. However, fetishes are an important and form part of traditional African Religion. In most of megachurches members thereof often use fetishes for healing, protection and to get prosperous life. The data further revealed that members and church leaders like pastors and prophets who use fetishes believe physical objects represent God’s power.

Participant 30 in this perspective, remarks as follows:

“Since I bought my anointing oil from church B, my things are going well than before. Also my children are doing well in their studies. I started using the anointing oil from 2015 and look now I am also promoted at my workplace. I must tell you anointing oil works and it works for me”.

Participant 32 support the above perspective and she narrates as follows:

“Mmm, let me respond to your question like this, I use to criticise those who buy and make use of anointing oils and water from their churches. I was ill and the Doctor told me that I am about to develop a cancer in my womb. One Sunday in 2017 I went to attend a healing service at Thohoyandou. The prophet prophesied me about my illness. After the church I bought both the anointing oil and anointing water as per the instruction of the prophet that day. I started using them and they have healed me from my illness”.

In contrast another participants from the mainline churches in Limpopo Province; Vhembe District at Thohoyandou as was interviewed, she was against the use of fetishes by Christians. She however warned any person, a believer or a prophet using the fetishes that such person is against God words. Participant 18 remarks as follows:

“The word of God instructs us not to use fetishes. Hezekiel 13:20 warns as follows “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against all your magic charms... I will tear them from your arms”. Remember using of fetishes intrude upon the second

commandment. Persons who use fetishes believe physical objects represent God's or gods' power. Such people usually put their trust in fetishes than in God".

Participant 18 was also supported by participant 33 who argues thus:

"I do not believe in those things like anointing water, anointing oil. Those are the things sold to make money by the pastors and prophets. People are being robbed through those things. You want to tell me that those who do not use water and oils from those churches are suffering. It is not true. Our people like things. Some do not want to work they only believe that those oils and water will make them rich. It cannot be".

However other participants are of the view that there are some other reasons that make faith healers to be seen as people who are positively contributing to the society. One of the participants was of the opinion that prophets are considered positively because most of politicians believe in faith healers and this notion was remarked by Mamabolo a Member of Parliament of South Africa who states that:

"I am a member of parliament because Prophets Bushiri prayed for me prior the national election dates".⁴¹⁶

This implies that the reason why most of the faith healers are being positively recognised is because of their association with the powerful political allies.

5.5.2.6 Theme 6: cleric sex for religious rituals

The sixth theme that emerged from the data analysis was the cleric sex for religious rituals. The data revealed that sex in some megachurch is ritual related to empower the pastor or prophet for healing miracles purposes. In the light of this notion, Apostle Ramabulana revealed during an exclusive interview with Radio Phalaphala on Sunday the 13th of December 2020 that, those pastors and prophets who are entitled and called 'papa' and 'daddy' by their congregants have to be initiated into spiritual space by means of sexual rituals with women with a purpose to revitalise their powers that they received from their foreign spiritual leaders.

⁴¹⁶ Mamabolo Member of Parliament of South Africa

A South African lady, spoke on a televised interview hosted by journalist Solomon Ashoms and Pastor Jay Israel. In the interview monitored by Nyasa Times, the lady said Prophet Banda--who has a church in Johannesburg but was trained by the Prophet in Nigeria runs a parallel mission house where young girls are kept allegedly to be prepared for ministry. According to her, she was taken to the Mission House at the age of 16, went through an HIV/Aids test and was promised that she will get married at 27.

In elaborating on the extent to which women are abused in some megachurches; Dayiman and Ntshobane in Dube argue thus:

"the women have been brainwashed. They are just walking dead. That thing that has captured their minds is not a church, but is a Satanist place of witchcraft".⁴¹⁷

As she narrates she viewed out thus:

"I came to church and the Prophet told me that I had a special calling for ministry, as such, I need to stay at the mission house for spiritual grooming," she said.

She added that the Prophet further told her that she had to stay in the Mission House to stay away from demonic influences outside because she was a special child. She further said:

"When I got inside, I found several other girls. My phone was confiscated; to communicate with family, you had to write a letter that went through the Prophet."

She narrated that while she was serving in the choir; she experienced and witnessed heinous things that had nothing to with God.

"I had sex with several guys in church and I was surprised that I never got reprimanded for it. In fact, you will find out, each day, that the guys you have sex with are the ones they get promoted to senior pastoral duties."

She further said that she knows several guys who went through several abortions and, to her, things got normalized because it just became part of life.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁷ Bekithemba Dube. The condrum of religion Mafia and legislation in South Africa. When does religion become a national threat? Reference to Seven Angels Ministry. 2019

⁴¹⁸ Nyasa Times. Malawi: Prophet Banda Accused of Running Sex-Driven Religious Cult in South Africa. 2020

This incident was asserted by participant 17 who alleged that she was also abused sexually by the prophet. According to participant 17, she visited one of megachurch in Gauteng Province, Thembisa because she was ill all of a sudden she became the victim of circumstances. She narrates her incident as follows:

“I went to Church xxxx because I was sick. I discovered prophet David Ngwashe on Gau TV. The way he preached and when I saw number of people healed and others giving testimonies that they were prayed for a healed, I was convinced and took a decision to go to the services. I went to this church on 2009. I must tell you I have enjoyed being a member of the church.

One Sunday in the mid of September 2009, Prophet David Ngwashe prophesied me and mentioned my sickness. He prayed for me. After the service I was told to go and see the prophet. I was one on one consultation. He told me to start with healing prayer sessions. Of cause the prophet told me my background and further told be where and how I got the illness. His prophesy made me to believe in him. As he told me to join the healing services I had no problem. I had to move from Pretoria on Thursdays at 15h00 and the services will take 3 hours.

One day the prophet told me not to go but to see him and I did as he requested me. I was disturbed that day when the prophet during consultation told me that for me to get healed I had to do as he is instructed by the Spirit. I cannot tell what really happened but I found myself having sex with the prophet. This sexual practice took some times with the prophet and I could not tell anyone as he told me not to say what transpired during this healing sessions. I became a sex slave of the prophet hence I did not know the reason behind this kind of act by the prophet. What surprised me was the he became more powerful after having sex with me. People were prophesied and prayed for.”

According to Jay Israel and Apostle Ramabulana Sinthumule, sex is done to fulfil the rituals for a particular cult. Jay Israel claims that he was exposed to deceiving his congregants with fake miracles while leaving a flamboyant lifestyle, hacking and charming girls and women.

He further claims that he would sleep with women promising them marriages while paying for them after sex as he would be running cults in the church.⁴¹⁹

It is purported that the pastor or prophet is the one with the power either to command female congregants to come to church without their underwear so that they can ‘more easily receive the spirit of Jesus Christ.’

Accommodating the church as fleshly space, it provides a view that the pulpit and the altar should be regarded as a special stage repurposed, if not in fact designed, for the pastor’s hypersexual posturing. The data in this aspect reveals disgraceful acts that the altar has become the ritualistic space of worship in many mega churches, the sexualized prophets and pastor channels feminine acts that bristle with sexy indications. This was also observed by Zorodzai Dube who pointed out in his research that some preachers even engage in kissing female adherents- a ritual aimed at extracting demons from them.⁴²⁰ In support of this aspect, participant 13 commented thus:

“I have been a member of this church for six years now. I know my prophets will appears before the pulpit wearing sexy trousers and shirts, and that type of clothing attract a number of female to attend to the healing services. The manner he dances is very sexual attractive, I really dislike it, I mean his dressing and dancing”.

In contrast participant 33 had different views and she says:

“I really like the way our prophets wear. He is sexy. Those who says is abusing us sexually are mad, if are ladies who says they dislike the actions of our prophet they have a problem with themselves. Yes I know that he has some of ladies who he loves in the church, but that should not be a problem of us. We need not to judge him; I do not know the reason behind of our prophet making love with some women in the church. I am saying this because I know my elder sister is also in love with the problem but to me is not a problem. What I know is that this man of God is too gifted with Holy Spirit gifts of healing and performing kinds of miracles. The issue of sleeping with women in the church is not an issue to me”.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid see Nyasa Times

⁴²⁰ Zorodzai Dube. Ritual Healing Theory and Mark’s Healing Jesus: Implications for healing Rituals within African Pentecostal Churches. 2019. P479

The said prevailing trends were also remarked by Mookgo Kgatle and Kelebogile Resane and as a result Mookgo Kgatle, criticized these practices as untheological and unorthodox erroneous.⁴²¹ Thus when one has to criticize these unusual practices as Resane defines them as “anti-institutionalism, anti-intellectualism, antinomianism, and anti-sacramentalism,”⁴²² one can place pastors and prophets at the centre of libidinal economy and plea for government intervention to control and monitor such unrestrained behaviour.

This suffice to point out that, the backdrop to this trends is tremendously complex. Church and congregational leaders occupy positions of authority and power are expected to exercise their authority and power and responsibly. Those leaders should perform spiritual tasks in the interests of their congregational welfare and spiritual care. As remarked somewhere in this research it further suffice to point out that some highly dishonest megachurch leaders totally misrepresent their churches to sexuality by exploiting their members and congregants.

Thus it is in the light of the data that revealed that under the pretext of church these wicked pastors and prophets sexually indoctrinate, groom and also psychologically manipulate and compel female congregants, who are often young, naïve and vulnerable persons to sexual activity. The cleric and church leaders use the “quasi-mystical force” of foreign religious rituals to sexually abuse members by wearing away any meaningful consent to sexual activity.

The data further revealed that when some prophets and pastors are criminally charged with aggravated indecent of assault or rape upon a female congregant, it is however sometimes purported that a member in question voluntarily consented to such sexual acts. Participant 3 in this aspect reiterates as follows:

“I have been in this mission as spiritual father of the Church in Mamelodi. When the time is ripe that religiously I should have sex with ladies I would go and check for any young lady that I believed she will fulfil my religious rituals. On that aspect I will propose the lady and promise to pay her a certain amount as long as she agrees to have sex with me for the purpose of religious rituals. Of cause the lady will agree with me and we have sex on those aspects”.

⁴²¹ Ibid see Zorodzai Dube. p.480

⁴²² Kelebogile .T. Resane. “And They Shall Make You Eat Grass Like Oxen” (Daniel 4:24): Reflections on Recent Practices in Some New Charismatic Churches. *Pharos Journal of Theology* 98:1–17. 2017b.

In response to why sex with female members in the church, participant 3b further pointed out that:

“Having sex with members around is one of religious requirement with the purpose to be empowered spiritually so”.

During data analysis it was determined that consent to sexual intercourse is null and void after having established that a prophet or a pastor attempted to bribe an under – age and young member even a reasonable member. These girls were indoctrinated not to discuss with other person the church matters in particular the said rituals as they were instilled with fear that anyone to discuss this will not survive.

With this crisis in the church participants 19 stated as follows:

“I was forced to have sex by my pastor and the pastors promised to pay me an amount of R3000.00 after sex. I never consented with him he forced me and told me not to tell anyone”.

The sexual acts in this regard, according to Ramabulana Sinthumule are regarded as religious rituals, purporting to maintain spiritual powers.⁴²³ Hence the data further revealed that most of complainants in these incidents were all sexually inexperienced females whose ages ranged from 12 to 25 years, hence most of them were virgins when they were sexually abused by the prophets or pastors. Most of female members were from villages and others from locations nearby the main towns or cities. The girls could be kept in various houses and were under the care of the pastors or prophets in question. Their place of inhabitant is security tide.

Participant 23 also narrates her incident thus:

“I was selected by the pastor to take care of the wellbeing of the men of God after the service. My mother knew very well about this and she could not divulge this information because myself and my mother were paid every month for sexual activities. Every Thursday from 2009 to 2017 I was a slave of sex as I had to satisfy my pastor sexually so. I had no problems with performing such things because I was not alone. It became a hobby for my life and I could be paid every month for having sex with the men of God.”

⁴²³ Ibid see Ramabulana Sinthumule

Most pastor and prophets become complacent by intimidating congregants by telling them that he could curse them should they reveal what is taking place in his spiritual ritual space.

Participant 25 observed the incidents of cursing and he remarks as follows:

“This prophets and pastors with powers are cruel. In one service I observed the prophet insulting and cursing a female member who was suspected to be abused by the prophet. He told the member that he is to report her to his angels and she must watch the space. I am telling you this is terrifying, the lady started getting sick and as I am talking she looks mentally not well”.

The above incident, augment the notion that some prophets and pastors abuse some female congregants as they treat them as their sex objects. The data revealed that one participant was obliged to undertake an HIV test before she could be sexually abused.

Participant 29 narrates her incident thus:

“One day in 2015, I was called by the pastor and he told me that the Holy Spirit revealed to him that I have a spiritual gift that I should perform for the sake of the work of God. I asked the pastor what type of the gift he was referring to. The pastor laughed and he told me that he will divulge the gift after I have taken an HIV testing. This statement has shocked me but because I respected him (pastor) I had to go to my Doctor for a test. The result came out negative and I submitted them to the pastor. Let me tell you that from 2015 August to 2018 January I was a sex slave of that pastor. Of course the pastor was able to buy whatever I needed in my life let it be food or clothes he could buy, but it was really a sex object of this pastor”.

In contrast another congregant when proposed by the very same pastor, she purported to be HIV positive. She disclosed her bogus status aiming to discourage the pastor from abusing her sexually as he did to other female congregants.

Participant 16 remarks thus:

“As I was aware that our pastor is abusing female congregants sexually, I recall the day he came and proposed me, I told him that if he not afraid with being positive then is ok. He asked me what I mean by positive; I claimed that “I am HIV positive”. You cannot believe the pastor did not come back to me for further proposal”.

The data further determined that the pastor made sentimental advances towards the female congregants and employed various strategies to convince and induce those female congregants to succumb to his sexual proposals. He would offer to “reward” them materially and financially on condition the proposed congregants submit themselves to sexual dealings. In some instances he showed the girls pornographic materials and demanded to have photos against them when they were stripped. In some incidents the pastor put female members into a trap and forcibly raped them under duress.

To justify themselves, some prophets or pastors would quote the Bible scriptures which they call for them as clergy the right to have sexual intercourse with all the female members in the church who were not married. Some pastors and prophets attempted to normalise their sexual exploitations under the pretext that they were acts of worship.

A latest Sunday newspaper report of a court case demonstrating the extent of destructive influence a pastor can potentially have over congregants. In this case a Bishop has been accused of raping a 25-year-old girl. The female member claims that she is so under the evil manipulation of the bishop that she had been turned into a sex object whenever she sees the Bishop. I, as a researcher manage to reach one of the victims in Pretoria through virtual interview, and Participant 20 states her incident thus:

“It appears that this Bishop uses muti or something that can attract me to him. You cannot believe what I tell you, when the Bishop touches me on the forehead during prayers sessions, I lose control and started moving close to him. I joined this Church at Pretoria due to marital problems. This bishop had convinced me that he was cleansing me to rid her of evil spirits dumped into my womb by my ant. He further told me that I had a spiritual husband and needed to be taken out. I used the opportunity to make more money after every sexual encounter. The Bishop instructed me not to have sex with my boyfriend. One day the Bishop forced me to have sex with him and I refused and as results he raped me in his office. The Bishop just touched my forehead and I became weak. After that I was surprised that I was wet underneath on my private part. Hence I was told not to tell any person about the happenings”

5.5.2.7 Theme 7 Healing Megachurches and Pandemics

Theme seven also surfaced from the question regarding participants' opinion on the emergence of pandemic or the global outbreak of illness. The question persuaded Church Leaders to offer their perspectives on how do they address pandemic and its resurgence as relate to their model of healing in the church.

Participant 3 remarks as follows:

“you know what? You have to understand that at times church had to swallow its pride that is not the jeck of all trades when coming to healing. God has given the church leadership wisdom to discern things that it cannot manage. So in the light of the outbreak of any time of illness as part of global crisis that should not be our problems. As the church for those who need healing, must be provided with healing but we have to follow all precautions of health management, so that we should not infect the congregation or to put the community into health problems. I for one, I pray for the sick people in my church, but I also observe health related regulations. I must tell you this we have been dealing with this for past years.”

Majority of participants indicated that they do not have a problem with the model of laying on of hands by the pastors or the prophet in the period of pandemic outbreak.

Participant 13 argued as follows:

“When I go to church what I expect is the word of God and to get healing from the “Man of God”. When a pastor lay hands upon me who is in need of healing is not a problem. Remember, the “Man of God is the anointed one” and he has healing gift, so he has to execute the power of healing in accordance with God directives. I really do not have problem with my pastor praying for me putting his hands on me. This is biblical, what is needed is faith only not fear.”

In contrast, most of the participants are of the view that pastors and prophets should observe health related regulations by observing protocols rather than putting the nation into chaos of pandemic. In the light of the said opinion, participant 24 remarked that:

“It is important for pastors and prophets to observe health related regulations by promoting health awareness. This will mean new approach of healing not by means of touching the members. The pastor can pray for his or her members from the distance,

he can request members who are ill to raise their hands and him too and pray for them. They will receive healing though the pastor did not touch any of them. I am saying this because I visited one of the healing services and the Bishop instructed his members to raise their hands so that he could pray and heal them. I did as the pastor instructed and I was healed.”

One pastor from megachurch in Gauteng pointed out that he does not believe that he can be infected by any illness during illness outbreak and that he prays for his members to be free from any kind of illness. In this aspect, participant 2 put his version as thus:

“Look I do not believe in this demonic illness. The devil just wanted to destroy God’s ministry of healing. In every church service I do call my members who are ill at the fore and pray for them. Yes I do touch them without hesitation. I believe that by laying on of hand on the sick person, the act will do him or her well and as such they recover from their illness. I do not remember of any case reported that one member was positive due to attending my healing services or that after I have prayed for the member was found COVID 19 positive. No such.”

In the light of the said version majority of the participants had different views that distance healing can save the South African society to curb the spread of any type of illness. Participant 22 argues that:

“I will encourage those churches who believe much on healing like my church to practice distance healing model. A pastor or a prophet can utilise cell phone to pray for the sick people. They can even buy a slot from GAU TV and conduct healing service from that channel. The issue of laying on of hand cannot work this time of Coronavirus. People are dying almost every day. Let us be serious and not take things for granted, pastors must save life for their members.”

5.6 Conclusion

Participants in chapter five were free to articulate their viewpoints regarding the historical trajectories of healing in some megachurches. Seven themes emerged as participants view out their perception on faith healing practices. During interviews mixed feelings surfaced in particular for those participants who revealed how pastors and prophets abused them and members therein. The data were collected from face to face interviews, telephonically and virtually.

The upcoming chapter is based mainly on discussions and of the findings and literature control. Recommendations for further research and study are proposed in chapter six

Chapter Six

Discussions of the findings and Literature Control

6.1 Introduction

In the preceding Chapter the findings of the research were presented as the data collected that emerged from observation and the interviews. However, seven themes emerged from the data that motivate the theme under research. This Chapter integrates the findings with relevant literature and theory concerning the discourses that emerged in order to provide a broader understanding of the various dialogues in terms of healing in some megachurches.

In line with the theoretical approach this research aimed at understanding how the participants view healing trajectories in a particular religious and social context to construct their believe system. The research focused on historical trajectories of healing in megachurches in between 2010-2018. As mentioned above, the outcomes of this research would agree with the literature review and the data collected from the participants. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, areas for future research, and a brief summary.

6.1.1 The Findings and discussions of the data on miracles

One of the most prominent claims of the megachurches in South Africa in the era of 2010-2018 is the performance of miracles, in particular miraculous healings which in fact take place during church services. Such healing claims in such services appear to be uncomfortably as other participants who do not belong to these types of churches disregard it. Most of the mainline churches members in both Limpopo and Gauteng Province have problems with the exuberance and what they observe as craziness in the large healing gatherings where miracles are purported to take place.

The criticism surfaced from the narrative of sick people who went and attend healing services to some megachurches with great hopes to be healed and such miracles did not happen. The searcher in this perspective found that most of the members and participants were discouraged as they did not get or to receive what they wanted and anticipated during prophetic and healing sessions. Those members became despondent as they declare that their faith and hope have been betrayed by the prophets and pastors who claim to be the miraculous healers.

In the light of the above perspective, it is clear that the hope and faith of such disappointments may be severely affected the victims. Subsequently, other members intuitively had withdrawn themselves from attending any of healing services in some megachurches. They just felt that to trust in the Lord is sufficient rather than putting trust on pastors and prophets who cannot provide any better life for them.

In contrast, there are those participants and members in particular from the mainline churches, claiming that miracle healings in their churches do not take place hence they flock to other megachurches to experience and understand what might transpire in occasions of such healing services. The researcher observed that on the privileged side of those members, there was also little interest in interpreting miraculous services to response to some of the questions that examine some of megachurches healing strategies. Most of people and some members believe and argue that miracles manifested at the first century and have now ceased. It needs to be argued that this apparent denunciation of the present-day healing practices by many newly established churches and megachurches is known as 'Cessationist'⁴²⁴.

During interviews, I found some of participants thinking to a certain degree being strange or even alien on the matter of miraculous healing; some of them were a power-seeking impostor. It is also true from my observation that when one converges a group of people together who are motivated by certain emotions of hope, expectation and longing, extraordinary things can happen.

What the researcher had observed is a notion that a crowd of people generates power is an irony. Power, as other scholars observed, is a neutral phenomenon. Thus, the notion that people sometimes recover from illness in a large crowd environment should not be surprising, however is phenomenal. Some Pastors and prophets have learnt or stumbled across techniques for healing which seem to tap the power of the large crowd for these ends. Healing like the

⁴²⁴ Kellen Creswell. Drawn from Tom Pennington, and Dr. John MacArthur, to define Cessationist. In his 2013 article, "A Case for Cessationism," Pennington offers this helpful summary of the position and states "So what do we mean by cessationism? We mean that the Spirit no longer sovereignly gives individual believers the miraculous spiritual gifts that are listed in the Scripture and that were present in the first century church. It is neither the Spirit's plan, nor His normal pattern to distribute miraculous spiritual gifts to Christians and churches today as He did in the times of the Apostles. Those gifts ceased as normative with the apostles." 2019

crowds themselves is not necessarily spiritual in nature. Healing becomes spiritual and ‘gospel’ when the New Testament realities of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace with God through Christ are brought into the process.

The researcher also established that what passes miraculous healing is at one level a learned skill or technique. In this aspect some pastors and prophets learn to manipulate, even control, a congregation through a variety of methods. It needs to be mentioned that the possibility for the abuses of members in this perspective is phenomenal.

Most of the pastors and prophets claim to have special spiritual gift to perform miracles and healing in the name of Jesus. This strategy has led to syncretism, which has mixed application of religious beliefs. In this circumstance; it was found that prophets and pastors employ both African Traditional and Christian religious practices to execute healing to their followers or members.

It cannot be disputed that a number of miracles and healing nowadays are fabricated with intent to attract people and to make money. In addition, the majority of the so-called prophets, bishops and pastors used to lure people to their churches by means of performing miracles. Some of the miracles were found to be fake.

What the researcher found lacking in the literature is a deep wisdom which can discern all sides of what is going in the business of healing of megachurches, whether good or bad. The researcher had also established that some miracles appear to take place in conjunction with trickery and outright exploitation. One can also argue that as society, we could be influenced by people who assert of viewpoint to consider the notion that healing never takes place today however is the thing of the past. To support this notion would be to undermine the integrity of the whole megachurch healing impulse. It needs to be mentioned that without these miracle and healing strategies some megachurches in South Africa would be exceptionally impoverished.

6.1.2 The Findings and discussions of the data on the source for clergy power for healing miracles

The findings of this research reveal numeral strategies and means by clergy to acquire powers for healing purposes. Aspects such as authority, power, money, rituals were established as some major means to gain healing and miracles power.

During data collection the researcher found that some Pastors, Prophets and Church leaders who attempt to manage the levels of spiritual miraculous powers are tremendously vulnerable to many temptations. The findings determined that some church pastors and prophets perform sought of unusual rituals in order to obtain spiritual powers which make them more powerful within their church domains. In the light of the said notion, Rannditsheni in his Thesis for Ritual Murders recorded that “a participant has revealed that some community members, especially pastors, commit ritual murders to prevent opposition from their church members.”⁴²⁵

It needs to be mentioned that power is addictive and seductive. On the basis of these findings, the researcher remained critical in miraculous healing and the entire charismatic healing strategies that exist in some megachurches. The important word to the reseracher is ‘critical’ because the researcher never simply accept the interpretations and explanation of other researchers. All need to be examined and scrutinised with the application of reason but also with humility and wisdom for miraculous power.

Findings further indicate that some pastors, prophets and bishops go and consult with local African Traditional Healers or fly to West African states like Nigeria and Ghana for the purpose to acquire miracle and healing powers. The working of miracles in some megachurches has been identified as one of the characteristics of the megachurches in both Gauteng; Tshwane District and Limpopo Provinces; Vhembe District.⁴²⁶

The researcher established that for those pastors and prophets who go and consult with local African Traditional Healers or fly to West Africa to acquire powers for healing, most of them

⁴²⁵ Rannditsheni A.E Thesis University of Venda.

⁴²⁶ Rufus. O. Adebayo and Sylvia. P. Zulu. Miracle as a spiritual event and as a marketing tactic among neo-Charismatic churches: a comparative study. Durban University of Technology, Department of Media. Journal for Christian Scholarship. 2019. p.108

are provided with fetishes and icons of spiritual powers like rings, belts and others spiritual related objects with symbols of wild birds like eagles and also go to an extend of given animals like snakes that would assist them in miracles performance and luring member to the church.

In the light of the above findings, the researcher established that some of the clergy belong to the occult society or movements.

In view of the above finding, the Bible condemns occult practices but in contrast the New Testament describes various miracles, including the raising of the dead persons. The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* records that the Roman Catholic Church “does not deny that, with a special permission of God, the souls of the departed may appear to the living.”⁴²⁷ In the light of Catholic Encyclopaedia worldview regarding the occults, The position of Catholic Church is thus, “All forms of divination are to be rejected,” and lists various efforts to unveil the future, including astrology, palm reading and the “phenomena of clairvoyance.” It also states that “all practices of magic or sorcery, by which one attempts to tame occult powers ... are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion”.⁴²⁸

Despite the Catholic position on occults, numerous individuals flock into these churches and participate into healing services without asking any questions. The spiritual movement under the banner of prophecy operates with powers from hell to attract crowds.⁴²⁹

In the light of the above perspective, it needs to be pointed out that before the emergence of Christian religion in South Africa, the African community believed and practised African Traditional religion that has derived from the indigenous knowledge system of ancient native community, which some still practice even today. They have always believed in supernatural powers, right from ancient periods. There is no doubt that some missionary preached about the miracles and powers of God and that doctrine made sense to Africans in that times and as were sparked by some miracle and testimonies, Africans embraced Christianity and denounce their African religion.

One can argue that acquiring of power by the clergy links with African religious belief and the rituals are done under the auspices of culture and African religious practices.

⁴²⁷ Ibid

⁴²⁸ Maria Wiering. Occult practices frightened lapse Catholic back into church.p1. Retrieved 11/23/2020

⁴²⁹ Ibid see Church Mafia

6.1.3 The Findings and discussions of the of data on strategies to attract members

The findings of this research suggest that social and economic aspects are the major contributing factors that propel people to move from one church to another for solutions. Poverty, unemployment, sickness and family chaos contribute much on some members migrate from their church to some megachurches for healing and deliverance.

In the light of the above perspective, the researcher found that in year 2010-2018 megachurches leaders in both Gauteng and Limpopo provinces at times use of magazine, postures and pamphlets to attract the attention of the community. Such postures and pamphlets show evidence of the kind of services that are offered to the public by indicating miracles as feature of the services. In this aspect Resane remarks that pamphlets are mostly from churches that are charismatic with Pentecostal features such as casting out of demons, healing the sick marital problems, work related problems bareness and bewitchment.⁴³⁰

In the said viewpoint, advertisement of miracles on media, pamphlets by some megachurches are the marketing strategies to attract people to attend the miraculous healing services. Some megachurch in this aspect, go to extend of advertising themselves on special channels of televisions by means of staging people to give testimonies about their miraculous healing process.

On such advertisements, people or community are promised that their needs e.g. employments, marriages, bareness, sicknesses like HIV/AIDS, exorcism or deliverance and other critical personal matters will be solved during miraculous healing services.

6.1.4 The Findings and discussions of data on the dynamics of faith healers and healing strategy.

The findings of the research reflect the perspective of the participants on the attitude towards faith healers, perceived effectiveness of faith healing and problems associated with faith healing within the megachurch context.

⁴³⁰ Resane, K.T. 2017b. Miracles in the neo-charismatic movement: historical and theological critique, *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38(1), a1736. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v38i1.1736>. p2

Most of the participants have understanding and knowledge about faith healing. However, very few participants had no knowledge about the perspective of faith healing. It surfaced that most of the participant view faith healing with trusting unto the healers like the prophet and the pastor, this include the use of healing instruments like anointing oil and water. Very few participants link faith healing with believing in God as the healer. In the same fashion, faith healers perceive their own as anointed individuals who can help people to deal with social, economic, spiritual and health related problems over the application of faith.

To augment the said worldview, majority of the participants are of the view that their pastors or prophets use faith to execute healing to the attendees or congregants. However, to those who fail to receive miraculous healing, they are perceived as people with no faith. In the light of the said notion, it is clear that faith is the core tool of miraculous healing in most of megachurches. Most of the healers namely pastors and prophets encourage their congregants to demonstrate faith during healing sessions. It is from this viewpoint that most of the prophets and pastors encourage their members to neglect or discontinue with their medical treatments after healing prayers.

The researcher had also identified two comprehensive views regarding to the dynamics of faith healers in religiosity space. Two categories of faith healers who were identified in this research are the pastors and prophets of Christian religion and African healers who belong under African Traditional Religion. The research dwelt much on pastors and prophets of megachurches as faith healers.

In the light of the above categories of faith healers, majority of the participants were of the view that, some faith healers like pastors and prophets are regarded as people who contribute positively to the civic matters whereas others are regarded as people who have criminal intent by robbing the society. The researcher had established that participants in this aspect have got different worldviews on how miraculous pastors and prophets operate. It was found that most of faith healers encourage their followers, the sick and the needy people to have trust and faith on them (faith healers). Some encourage their members, followers, the sick people and needy to have trust and faith unto Christ or God.

However the majority of the participants were of the opinion that faith healers receive positive support from the community because they are regarded as “man of God” who have

been sent by God to assist the local community and society at large with regard to people sufferings and needs and as a result they assist much with solving spiritual, physical and social related problems.

In the light of the above opinion, the researcher found that the purpose of faith healing is to attract people to newly established churches and healing is a devise that is utilised to draw members further and further away from their original churches and religions. This brings to a notion that any megachurch or newly established charismatic church, through healing such churches are being determined to make their churches superior same as Ani echoes the opinions of Europeans when she remarks:

“Christianity is superior because it is universal but indigenous religions of the world are inferior”.⁴³¹

6.1.5 The Findings and discussions of the data on megachurch as business sectors

With regard to megachurch as business sectors, the researcher had noted during data collection that, another viewpoint that surfaced from the participants was that faith healers are negatively represented as people who have turned gospel and churches into businesses and making the church a platform to generate or make quick money. Most of the faith healers encourage their members and followers to buy and use healing objects like anointing oil, anointing water, anointing face cloth and other related healing tools. For those who buy and use such objects, they believe much that there is power over such objects or element.

It is for this reason that most of them would buy stickers with the face of the pastor or prophet and paste them behind their house doors; some are placed on the sides or at the back of the cars. Most of the users believe that those stickers have power to protect them from witchcrafts, some from accident and other turmoil related matters.

The researcher had also established that some faith healers in some megachurches are people who are after celebrity status and fashion, and as a result other members questioned their miracles healing strategies thereof. The data revealed out the story about the miracle money. Majority of the participants were of the opinion that faith healers have mixed demonstration

⁴³¹ Ani: 1994

in term of performing healing and miracles. Some pastors and prophets promise their members of miracle money hence they have to pay a certain amount to consult with the pastor or prophet.

The researcher had found that the formations of some emerging churches in South Africa from 2010 to 2018 to date are measured to be one of rapidest means to accumulate wealth. Subsequent to this, questionable megachurches, pastors and prophets are springing up. As “many of these prophets . . . want to make names, they want their voice to be heard, and they want to create awareness and recognition at all cost so they abandoned the real purpose of evangelization which is preaching to prophesy” and started with fake miracles and wonders. As indicated above, in some megachurch, to see or consult the pastor or the prophet one has to pay a certain amount and such activity amount to abuse of power and manipulation of the valuables members hence to turn a church a business sector.

6.1.6 The Findings and discussions of the data on prophetic ministry

The researcher found that prophesy plays a vital role in healing space of South African community and in some megachurches. The findings of this study reveal that prophetic ministry form part of church liturgical order in some churches. Prophecy is the ministry to be executed in every church service.

In similar fashion, prophets are of two classes namely: the prophets who belong to the class of “major” and the other class that form the “white collar” class. The “major” class surfaced during prophetic ministry of Prophet Bushiri who was operating from Gauteng in Pretoria and Prophet Lukau. The researcher had established that the said two prophets constitute one class of healing “major” prophets. Most members who follow these types of prophets believe that their prophecy are accurate and cannot be disputed.

Other prophets are classified on a different class of the “white collar” prophets. These white collar prophets receive completely different representations. The researcher had further found that most of the followers doubt the prophetic ministry of this class. The members believe that white collar prophets are mainly after money for profit and they have criminal elements in them.

To substantiate the said notion, the researcher had drawn from one of the participant as she described the situation from a capitalist dimension; she failed to recognise that the reason why “major” and “white collar” prophets receive different respected recognition as compared to African traditional.

In the same vein, it surfaced that this group of prophets is a compromise between African traditional religion and Christianity as Bourdillon remarks thus:

*“The attraction of the gift of prophecy in these churches can be understood in terms of the parallels between prophets and traditional spirit mediums. Some prophets borrow much from traditional rituals of spirit possession, speaking in the lilting voice typical of lion spirit mediums and uttering groans, sighs and other sounds associated with lion spirits”.*⁴³²

Findings also indicate that there are no distinctions between “major” and white collar” prophets. Their (prophets) actions are similar. Both classes of prophets are after money and they both display criminal acts to their members. A numbers of sexual abuse on female followers and congregants were reported as others are still under SAPS investigations.

To substantiate the said findings, Penwell Dlamini reported an incident of sexual abuse after one of the well-known prophet from Malawi was charged with money laundering and flew the country. Hence the report was thus:

*“One of the women who opened rape cases against fugitive prophet X says she has lost hope that the preacher will ever answer for his alleged crime after fleeing to Malawi”.*⁴³³

In the same fashion, Karabo Ledwaba reported in the same newspaper with the headlines:

*“Even if you can catch a preacher with his pants down they will say it’s the devil”.*⁴³⁴

The said reported incidents support the data presented as evident that some pastors and prophets in some megachurches manipulate the spiritual system and abuse the vulnerable.

⁴³² Bourdillon (1976:295)

⁴³³ Penwell Dlamini. Sowetan, November 17, 2020. p.2

⁴³⁴ Ibid p.2

6.1.7 The Findings and discussions of the data on the abuse through deliverance healing

The data revealed that deliverance healing have offered some pastors and prophets with strategy of manipulating and exploiting their congregants in particular girls and women in their churches and healing sessions. In several reported incidents, the female congregants and members approach the prophets or pastors with intend to get healing. Members were told that they have to be delivered from evil spirits. Such healing sessions often ended in most of female being sexually abused.

It should be noted that deliverance is one of the very important practice in the healing ministry of megachurches. It is often difficult for the members of the church to recognize the real practice in this regard, yet deliverance in most megachurches were found to be a continuous theme running throughout the healing ministry.

It should be further noted that the findings revealed that most of the prophets and pastors in some megachurches stand by the scripture in Ephesian. 6:12 as it states:

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms".⁴³⁵

In the early history of the church, a lay person could pray for deliverance. In this perspective, this is what some contemporary pastors and prophets teach and execute deliverance healing in most of the megachurches. They view deliverance as a practice of liberating an individual from the influence of an evil spirit and bad practices. The word "exorcism," means "casting out" in Greek. The data revealed that deliverance and exorcism is performed on a person who is spiritually possessed, and he or she must be delivered.

In the light of the said practices, as mention above, most of the congregants are manipulated and elements of abuse surface. The data reveals that some pastors and prophets physically touch the private parts of the female members during deliverance process, claiming that they are casting out the demons. Some members were kicked on the body, some are sprayed with water on the face claiming to deliver such members from the attacks of the evil spirits and witchcrafts.

⁴³⁵ Holly Bible

Drawn from the data, as narrated by one of the participants, participant 29 was informed by his prophets that she was bewitched with a spirit that affecting her not to be flourishing and that is why she could not bear children. She was then told that she needed a special prayer to cast out demons that have been deposited unto her. Participant 29 was told special Vaseline needed to be applied unto her, on the womb's potion. She narrates as follows:

“The Prophet told me to lie down, applied the Vaseline on my private parts and all of a sudden the prophets inserted his manhood unto my vagina claiming that is one of the method to heal me from the evil spirits. He used his penis to use it to apply the Vaseline in my womb”, she said.

From this incident, participant 29 alleged that the prophet told him not to tell anyone after the alleged rape for the sacrifice he had done to deliver her.

Another incident is thus as narrated by one of the participant that another prophet in Gauteng took out a bottle of anointing oil and told her (female member) to conform with his (prophet) commands. The prophet claiming that her spiritual attacks would return if she did not comply with his orders. During the process of deliverance healing the woman was raped by the prophet. After the act, the woman was given another bottle of anointing oil and told not to disclose the mischievous to any person otherwise her spiritual attacks would return. The said prophet is alleged to have used the same modus operandi and raped the woman on three more occasions in March 2018.

It is evident enough that physical and sexual abuse as indicated above, has kept numerous female congregants and followers of the miraculous pastors and prophets under resolute ill-treatment whereby sexual abuse by the so called “man of God” appears to be phenomenal in some churches. I have also established that some abuse are followed by threats with spiritual elements that includes God will punish the victims should she or he divulge such mischievous. However, some female victims have been brainwashed into believing that there is nothing wrong with what the man of God is doing to them hence manipulated.

6.1.8 The Findings and discussions of the data on faith healing and medicine

The discourse between faith healing and scientific medicine is phenomenal. Pastors and Prophets and members were interviewed at Gauteng and Limpopo Province regarding the application of biomedical in healing strategy. Two traditional healers were also interviewed at Limpopo Province Vhembe District. The data revealed that healing is a construct theme running across religious streams.⁴³⁶ It should be bear in mind that majority of participants in this research are Africans with Afro-Christian culture and they mostly interpret healing within the context of Afrocentric opinions. Yet in some cases faith healing with exception of scientific medicine and indigenous medicine appears to be not working.

The researcher had found that in most of megachurches, faith and medicine have not been officially practiced together that much, hence the use of medicine was discouraged by the healers (pastors and prophets).

It needs to be noted that medicine and the application of faith towards healing are both the tools to be utilized by individuals to achieve the purpose of healing strategies. There is nothing mischievous or even unbiblical about praying and taking medicine. God is the initiator of medicine by creating plants, light, matter, water, animals, and humans. Medical science is all about elements of healing the human or physical body alone. Faith, however, is the basis for ethics. Faith tells individuals that humans have value far above fact. Individuals, also utilize the tools of medical history, individual experience, and similar related approaches for the purpose of healing.

In the light of the said perspective, the researcher established during data collection that most of the Prophets and Pastors in some megachurches in both Gauteng and Limpopo Province have been traders and bogus healers who claim to cure sicknesses like HIV and AIDS and chronic illnesses since 2010-2018. It was for this reason that some people in the community and churches stigmatized people who were diagnosed HIV positive or had chronic diseases. Some megachurches in response to this crisis encouraged their members and converts to abandon medical treatments like ARV treatment.

⁴³⁶ Lethabo Mabuza. An Analysis of Current Healing Practices in some selected Megachurches in South Africa. Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. Thesis: 2018. p73

Thus, faith without good course and action is calamity. Pastors and prophets who discourage their members from considering biomedicine are genocidal. In the light of the said remarks, Medical, Church and Cleric leadership need to find one another and ways to develop the model that will address healing strategies that will embrace mankind believes and cultures. The approach in this regard must try to involve the members of community and congregations in various aspects of this development of healing ministry. This integrated medico-pastoral approach to healing should be practiced and enforced in South Africa because; this is a very interfaith and religious country. In support of this worldview, Carol Glatz once said:

“Science and faith need each other for the benefit of all of creation”⁴³⁷.

6.1.9 The Findings and discussions of the data on Health perception of faith healing participants

The research findings had shown the health observation health status of some members of faith healing believers. In this aspect, it was found that majority of participants alleged their health status to be good after having undergone healing services in some megachurches. Participants in this regard perceived their status of well-being to be very upright and attributed it to the application of faith healing. Some of the participants alleged their health status as unfortunate before the application of faith healing. Yet, most of the participants had witnessed substantial progress in their health status since they undergone using faith healing services for therapeutic and preventing illness. In similar vein, participants who were once admitted at formal healthcare centres before visiting megachurch for healing purposes considered their healing process as faster compared to when they were at the medical health care centres. As a result, some of the participants who were receiving treatment at the health care facilities narrate their well-being status as good compared to before using faith healing strategy.

The findings further reveal that very few participants are of the opinion that it is good to utilise both the faith healing process and medical process. They opined that, not all illness needed prayer but can be healed through medical process. In the same vein other participants are of the view that an individual can utilised either, faith healing approach through his or her pastor or prophet or approach medical treatment and if need be they can even opt for African

⁴³⁷ Carol Glatz

Traditional healing process. They further argued that all these healing process are meant for healing the society so individuals must utilise them.

6.1.10 The Findings and discussions of the data on why members consult the clergy prior medical consultation

The main motive accounted for why most of megachurch members first consult faith healers like prophets and their miraculous pastors before medical care was the notion by most of the participants that those prophets and pastors are the anointed ones for the purpose of miracles and that God use them to execute healing to members.

It is important to state that the abovementioned notion was, however, common among the Megachurch members who participated in the research. Subsequently, the majority of participants narrated that consulting a healer like prophet or pastor who is “a man of God” on social and health related matters in the first place is proper and is a proof that indeed one believes that this “man of God” is spiritually gifted and can heal.

In the light of the above finding, the researcher established that, most of the participants and megachurch members believed in consulting their prophets and pastors to be told of the causes of sicknesses and mischievous of life, before they could go and consult the medical practitioner and use of medicine. This approach is Afrocentric related, in the sense that majority of Africans are of the view that when they visit their African Traditional Healers must be told of what causes the mischievous or illness within their health space. However, knowledge about the causes of diseases in an indigenous knowledge practice and it offers suitable solutions. This approach is also applied by the medical practitioners through diagnostic approach prior treatment of disease.

The researcher further found that since church members believe in consulting with their miraculous pastors and prophets for healing prior consulting with medical practitioners for treatment, some pastors and prophets refer their members to Health care centres for treatments. It needs to be stated that such referrals usually are considered when the member is seriously ill hence most of the prophets and pastors believe that they will pray and heal the patient.

This finding is certainly in line with Campion and Bhangra's finding that "faith healers are consulted globally for nearly all kinds of ailments including social and psychological issues but mostly refer cases to formal healthcare providers in emergency situations".⁴³⁸

6.1.11 The Findings and discussions of the data on the use of healing instruments

Throughout this research, it has become clear that most of the megachurches make use of healing instruments as the primary sources. In the light of this notion, pastors and prophets are perceived as the key facilitators of the healing process. Unlike in the Rivers of the Living Waters Church, Ach-Bishop is perceived as the main instrument of healing. Through him; healing accountabilities are diverted to pastors called shepherds who by means of their spiritual status also become healing facilitators in their respective congregations.

Most of people and megachurch community believe that Faith healers like prophets and miraculous pastors operates as the significant port of power to heal illness and further prevent them. On the healing strategies, the researcher had observed numerous things that go through the process from the clergy domain. Specifically, at the Megachurch spaces, the researcher had also observed that, apart the assurance of faith through prayers and performance of miracles, some participants and members were offered healing objects by the prophets or pastors who were themselves claimed to be healers. Healing objects have to be applied by the member on the body part that was in pain or not healthy. I will now discuss the instruments of healing used in some selected megachurches.

6.1.11.1 Anointed oil and water

The findings reveal that most of the pastors and prophets believe in the application of anointed oil for healing purposes. The application of these anointed oil and water, were not only to heal the existing sicknesses but similarly to prevent for forthcoming diseases and other mischievous things in life.

On the other hand, at the African Traditional healing space, the researcher further observed that African healers were assisting their patients in curing health problems mostly through the

⁴³⁸ Campion and Bhangra

prescription of traditional herbal medicines. Unlike in Christian healing centres, prayer and healing objects like water and oil were mostly used by the miraculous pastors and prophets.

In the same vein, the findings were that the application of anointed oil and water in African Traditional centres were common like in the Christian faith healing centres. Members or participants believed that these anointed oil and water as prescribed by the prophets or pastors can heal them.

In similar fashion, members and participant of megachurches also believe that the use of anointed oil and anointed water protect them from mischievous of life.

The findings also indicate that those instruments of healing are not free; however the member or the patient has to pay a certain amount for him or her to possess such healing object. This notion was also pointed out by Agazue who remarked that churches also peddle with spiritual materials, such as olive oil, as well as souvenirs, such as stickers, pamphlets, key-holders, handkerchiefs, video and audio discs/cassettes, T-shirts and scarves⁴³⁹. Agazue further stresses that the most utilised product is a bottle of olive oil which is considered as ‘anointing oil’⁴⁴⁰.

6.1.11.2 Anointed cloth

The findings reveal that some pastors and prophets sell the so-called anointed cloth to the members. Those anointed cloth are purported to have healing powers. Furthermore, the cloth is also purported to have protection authorities over the users. Before the members can take away the cloth, the pastor prays for the cloth. In other words the pastor or prophets by means of prayer activate the cloth for spiritual operations. Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana in this perspective reveals that during initiation into dark forces, he was instructed by the spiritualist to buy three different cloths with the following colours: blue, red and white. These cloths belonged to the marine spirit that provides miraculous powers for healing. The cloth could be covered with calabash for the purpose to acquire strange powers.⁴⁴¹ In the light of the said

⁴³⁹ Agazue, C., ‘He told me that my waist and private parts have been ravaged by demons: Sexual exploitation of female church members by prophets in Nigeria’, *Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence* 1(1), <https://doi.org/10.23860/dignity.2021.04.17.10>. p6

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴⁴¹ Makhado Sinthumule Ramabulana. *Church Mafia: Captured by Secret Powers, An Untold African Narrative*. 2018.

perspective, it was found that the users of the anointed cloth believe to carry on the cloth wherever they travel. The users of the anointed cloth have the notion that should they live the cloth behind; along the way something bad might happen to them.

In some instance, during prophetic session some attendees are encouraged to buy and use the anointed cloth for the purpose of preventing bad things to come in life. When one is ill he or she can put an anointed cloth on the suffering part and by doing that it is purported that the patient will however experience instant healing.

This experience was similarly observed at the African Traditional healing centre. Patients and participants were only consulting Traditionalist for healing and the healer will provide the patient with some traditional objects to use in the absence of the healer for healing and protective purposes.

6.1.11.3 Miracle candles

The findings also indicate that in some megachurches; prophets and pastors sell miracle candles to the members. It was found that the purpose of using miracles candles is for dispersing evil spirits around the household and yard. The users of the miracle candles, they too believe that by lighting such candle nothing bad will ever come into the house or yard in particular overnights. It was noted that those candles are utilised in accordance with their colours. For example, the red candle is perceived to have more spiritual powers and that no evil person, a witch will ever attempt to approach the users' home-yard. Hence the white candle depicts to attract blessings within the family at the same time execute the same purposes as the red candle.

6.1.12 The Findings and discussions of the data on sexual abuse by the clerics

The findings revealed that majority of participants felt that sexual abuse in some megachurches is a serious problem that constitutes unethical conduct by some prophets and pastors. Similarly adding that is a serious issue which is difficult to solve rather is a public concern.

The findings further found that the overwhelming cause of sexual abuse in some churches as committed by the church leadership like pastors and prophets is that some female members are vulnerable socially and economically. Majority of female congregants do not have any means of income as some of them are even unemployed. The data revealed that for the vulnerable members to survive they submit themselves for sexual abuse as pointed out above in exchange of money.

The other cause of sexual abuse is the notion of the members belief that whatever prophets or the pastor as called with the “Man of God” or “Daddy” instruct to be done, must be done without hesitation or questioning.

In the light of the said dismay acts, the researcher established that some parents and guardians become aware of the situation but opted to remain silence and become complacent by condoning the abuse. It is clear that in some churches and megachurch sexual abuse to some members and congregants is perpetrated by the parents and elderly people.

This implies that some parents, who are also members of the church, implicitly condone sexual abuse against their daughters by pastors and prophets of the church. It was also found that the perpetrators provide financial support to the victim family. It is for this reason that the family of the victim opt to cover up the alleged abuse incidents. Hence this action makes it difficult for the victim to report the matter to the law agencies like SAPS. The concern of continuous ill-treatment is however difficult to clarify from the data at my disposal.

The question to answer is why some pastors and prophets abuse female members sexually in their churches. The findings show that the key cause of the sexual abuse to the members is a one of sacrificial requirement of sexual rituals. Pastors and prophets who belong to certain cults are by occult culture required to perform sexual ritual as surfaced above. The purpose of performing such rituals is for healing power revitalisation. In other words some clergy do perform sexual intercourse with their female members to re-charge their spiritual powers. This finding suggests that some powers of healing and miracles in some megachurches are not activated by means of prayers and fasting as inscribed in the bible, but by means of performing sought of rituals.

It is clear that the vulnerability of female members is directly related to social and economic problems which are influenced mostly by poverty status of the victims. The fact that female youth and children are common sexual abuse targets in some church including megachurches is a tormenting factor. Various reasons for their vulnerability surfaced as discussed above. The findings further establish that family members also play a risky role of covering up sexual abuse against their female members and female youth.

6.1.13 The Findings and discussions of the data on general perception of miraculous healers and prophets

The findings from the data revealed that some prophets and miraculous pastors perceive themselves as God's people who can assist individuals and community to deal with all aspects of life inclusive of social, economic and spiritual related issues through the application of prayer and faith.

In the same fashion, the choice to consult with prophets or the pastor firstly before seeking medical cure at the clinics, hospital medical practitioners was premised two core dynamics: respect for their "man of God", who is mostly perceived as the best healers and the belief that those are the anointed ones for healing ministry. The participants' notion enlightened that circumventing their pastors or prophets and pursue for medical treatment demonstrates disrespect to "man of God" or "Daddy", hence they opt to get spiritual healing advices in the first place prior any attempts. It is for this view that some prophets and pastors encourage their members to consult them first before seeking medical care upon their recommendations and instructions.

Fundamentally due to this, the researcher had established that some pastors and prophets are executing the role of prescribed healthcare professionals in health delivery process. For example, it surfaced from the interviews that, as most church members' initial visit their pastors or prophets for numerous health related aspects, some pastors and prophets administer cross-referrals of patients. It was further observed that the strategic model approach of healers to administer referrals centred on both theoretical and philosophical sustaining the healing modality system. For example, both healers and members of the church shared the sentiments that most sicknesses are strictly spiritual, which is difficult to illuminate and cure in scientifically. Similarly, most of the pastors and prophets articulated that opting for medical

care prior approaching God, indicates lack of faith to the believers and this delays individual healing process, because faith heals faster than scientific applications.

Furthermore, the research findings also show that majority of the megachurch members regard their faith healers namely Pastors, Prophets, Bishops and Apostles as their “Spiritual fathers” who mediate for them concerning a several of issues including social, economic and health related matters. Some of the church members buy healing objects as their source of spiritual protections. It was established that faith healers offer to church members a healing objects such as water, anointed oil, anointed cloths and other related objects for healing and preventing of diseases that originate from both physical and spiritual realms. It needs to be noted that it is for this reasons that megachurch pastors and prophets were not only consulted on health related aspects only but individual problems as well.

Hence, members of megachurch maintained that prophets and miraculous pastors are solution to them and further regarded as sources of healing. The research found among other things that faith healers of megachurches have the extreme respect of their church members and vice versa.

Remarkably, the researcher found that most of the megachurch members articulate good attitudes toward their prophets or miraculous pastors more than medicine practitioners. Various reasons were reported by the study participants to account for the members’ good attitude towards pastors and prophets. The holistic handling method of faith healing was the main reason for seeking health advices and service from faith healers.

In addition, dynamics such as good interpersonal interactions between religiosity and cultural tolerance were generally emphasized by the research participants to account for the good attitudes toward healing and faith healer.

6.1.14 The Findings and discussions of the data on Health perception by church members

It has been observed in the research that majority of participants perceived their health status to be very good and attributed it after having applied faith for healing purposes. Participants in this regard perceived their health status as not in good condition before they consult with their pastors or prophets for healing prayer. However, majority of the participants gave

testimonies of progress about their health condition since they started believing in faith healing services for healing and social protections. It has been revealed that some participants who were once admitted at medical centres before visiting megachurches considered their healing process as faster compared to when they were at health care centres.

The research noted that most of the members to megachurches attained information and knowledge about miraculous pastors and prophets mainly through the testimonies narrated by relatives, friends, the social media and television healing channels. It was apparent that for those who had been healed from those churches, they most often endorse to their relatives and friends who suffering from similar conditions to go and attend miraculous healing services. This finding seemingly is in accord with other preceding research findings that friends, the media and family members are the sources of information on the promotion of megachurch healing services.

In contrast, the finding also reveal that most members who believe in faith healing often experienced deterioration in their well-being and health status after they had visited healing services and taken the advice from pastors or prophets to discontinue with the medical treatments as prescribed by their medical practitioners. This also clarifies why some members of faith healing churches view the value of consulting with medical practitioners as upright in most times.

6.1.15 The Findings and discussions of the data of sources to promote miraculous pastors and prophets

In this aspect, the findings are that most of the megachurch Pastors, Bishops and Prophets own a numeral of the media outlets with the purpose of projecting events of healing and other cases at their a various healing epicentres. This finding suggests that, such awareness of faith healing and information modality is more likely to spread across the county of South Africa and worldwide. Thus, more people are also likely to get to know about prophets and miraculous pastors and thereby flock and attend their services as healing epicentres.

In the light of the above findings probing the authenticity of faith healing modalities needs medical evidence, hence some participants argued and further testify before other congregational members that they have been healed from their health related problems such

as non-communicable illness and communicable diseases due to applying faith for healing purposes.

By inference, the application of faith for healing purposes is based on the nature of epidemic and pandemic. This opinion suggests that any kind of epidemic and pandemic must be treated through the exact ways by which they developed and this is rooted in faith healing practices. This finding validates the findings of Osamor and Owumi of Nigeria who found that “belief in supernatural causes of illness strongly predicts traditional medicine such as faith healing application”.⁴⁴²

The study further established that a church member who utilized healing services by visiting traditional healer and prophets who are outside the scope of Christianity are often criticized and framed as sinners and non-Christians. This notion, however, opposes with the findings of Kar who opined that “faith healing services should be modified and integrated into the mainstream health care services because patients who received services from faith healing rated it better than treatment from a psychiatric hospital”.⁴⁴³

6.1.16 The Findings and discussions of the data on healing megachurches and pandemic - Covid 19

The finding reveal that majority of members who attend the healing services in some megachurches do not have a problem with the model of laying on of hands by the pastors or the prophet in this period of pandemic global outbreak.

In contrast, other participants were of the opinion that pastors and prophets should observe COVID 19 regulations by observing social distance protocol rather than putting the nation into chaos of pandemic.

Some church leaders are of the view that they do not believe that they can be infected by any of pandemic global outbreak

In the light of the said findings, some of church leadership had different views that distance healing can save the South African society to curb any of pandemic global outbreak so the regulation must be observed.

⁴⁴² Osamor and Owumi

⁴⁴³ Kar

6.1.17 The Findings and discussions of the data on the Regulation of Religions and churches

On the basis of the above outlined findings and derived themes, the findings show that the regulation of religion and church practices in South Africa is imperative. It is for this reason that Dube argue that the regulation of religion in South Africa is now a topical issue, which is becoming desirable yet cognisant for the need to respect the constitution, especially on freedom of worship.⁴⁴⁴ The way healing in some megachurch and newly established church is executed I would argue that government ignorance on some religious practices can be risky to society, especially when some churches are demonstrating unethical and questionable practices that, at least in the lens of decoloniality, need to be challenged for the protection of followers.

The findings further establish the need of religious dialogue with regard to questionable healing practices in some churches. To augment this findings also Reginald in his writings remarked that there is a need for a dialogue by religious leaders with sober minded people to fight and contest against the evil influences.⁴⁴⁵

The findings further reveal that there is a need to regulate the security of the religious followers; especially children and women, with inference of the incident of clergy abusing female members in their church healing services.

The findings further found that the regulation of churches and religion may control and prevent various healing trajectories that take place in some megachurch. Thus, this implies that freedom of religion and churches must be contained. In the light of the said notion, Donald and Howard opine that “in some countries, the regulation has become a source of unending conflict between religious adherents and the state or among religious adherents”.⁴⁴⁶ This finding infers that as relevant stakeholders attempt to solve the crisis of abusive pastors and prophets in some selected churches, this might be an opportunity where new and challenging religious problems surface.

⁴⁴⁴ **Dube et al. 2017**

⁴⁴⁵ **Reginald (2017)**

⁴⁴⁶ Donald, Alice, and Erica Howard. 2015. The Right to Freedom of Belief and Its Intersection with Other Rights. Available online: accessed on 2021/03/22

6.2 Direction of future research

The succeeding recommendations were submitted to lead additional research studies in historical healing practices of some churches and religious sectors.

The study focused on historical trajectories of healing in some selected megachurches and the findings were outlined above. Further research can be conducted to focus on the trajectories of abuse of church members and followers by either the pastor or the prophets in some churches and megachurches, to be able to have true picture on what transpires during healing consultations and healing services. This research will be able to determine the forces behind abuse of church members and clergy followers by the clergy and prophets.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

This study had a few limitations which are important to acknowledge:

- The study was undertaken from the church domains that were limited to megachurches, even though participants in this regards were preferred due to their population healing undertakings. The researcher however concedes that other churches might have provided diverse views on healing trajectories.
- The second limitation was that due to the nature of the topic, this study was conducted on two provinces namely: Limpopo province in Vhembe District and Gauteng Province in Tshwane District.
- The third limitation was that that due to COVID 19 regulations and level of restrictions imposed by the South African Government, were was necessary the researcher considered to collect the data through interviews by means of visuals, telephone interviews and were the condition of restrictions were relaxed and conducive as gatherings were permitted, both face to face interviews and observation were employed.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made under the following headings:

6.4.1 Regulation of the churches

Regulation of the churches is vital to control some healing and ritual practices which appear to be dubious to some churches. The regulations will enforce all churches to register on database. This will enable the government to have access and control over church and religious ethics. Furthermore the regulation will enforce any person who claims to be called and ordained into pastoral ministry to register on pastoral council.

6.4.2 Ethics and professional standard of Church Leadership

Competence on clerics and religious prophets is vital in a sense that one should be mindful of both professional standards and ethics that must be observed at all times when one leads people. The researcher therefore recommend this viewpoint because several clerics and prophets in some churches and megachurches have been reported for promoting healing practices and rituals that are controversial to society and religious sectors. The abuse of members and followers in one way or another is phenomenon in some churches and megachurches. Due to some unethical behaviour of pastors and prophets against their members, the researcher would like to state that such unprofessionalism of clerics and religious prophets has resulted on other stakeholders to contest and view a “church” as much-contested phenomenon in South Africa. Enforcing proficiency of clerics will go a long way to discourse other encounters that made churches an epicentre of criminality rather than a healing centre to the South African society.

6.4.3 Awareness programme of religious leaders on health aspects

To minimise the abuse of members on health related aspects, the researcher is of the view that there is a need for church leadership to be provided with awareness programme regarding health related matter. If need be, these should be scheduled by the government as essential and prerogatives for church leaders or any person willing to commence a religious programme to undergo such programme. Thus, the project of cautioning religious leaders, pastors and prophets inclusively in terms of health aspects will minimise any attempt to put the society into health catastrophe.

The researcher is advocating this viewpoint because during analysis, the data shows that some of clerics and prophets do not consider health related aspects as their priority to save lives. Some of pastors and prophets pray for their sick members without bearing in mind COVID 19 regulations. As pointed out in the findings, at some point, some members were even advised to discard biomedical prescriptions and were made to believe that were healed by faith.

6.5 Conclusion

This study has investigated a historical healing on some selected megachurches within religiosity space for the period 2010-2018. The study further explored the perceptions of megachurch members with regard to health and spiritual perspectives. The study has provided empirical evidence to determine that majority of faith healing believers have good attitudes toward faith healers namely pastors and prophets.

As a result, some miraculous pastors and prophets are recognised by their followers and members as “man of God’ who can heal any kind of disease and further prevent any kind of mischiefs in their life circle.

Findings have revealed that believers in faith healing perceived their optimal health status largely due to the apparent value of faith healing modalities. Nevertheless, the study revealed some challenges faced by followers and members of megachurch are physical, sexual and psychological abuse. These include victimisation of some female members by their clergy which are mostly associated with the member defiance of the pastors or prophets unethical instructions.

The question of biomedical cognisance is very crucial to some megachurch members. The coexistence of current healing disorder in some megachurches with biomedical ignorance is surfaced as biopsy-social challenge to some churches with megachurch inclusively. This biopsy-social is a concern to various health related sectors and religious bodies like CRL Commission. The complementary of biomedical modalities are therapeutic as it embraces holistic healing practices.

Spiritual and physical healing dimension of individuals needs to be recognised by both the clergy and health professionals. It has been noted that modern medical doctors are not competent of treating spiritual related illnesses hence society of Christian religion should not be made to exclusively depend on their pastors and prophets for healing, reference of the sick

person is crucial that pastors and prophets should give an alternative to biomedical practitioners. This implies that there are those illnesses that need the intervention of the clerics like pastors and religious prophets and at the same vein there are those illnesses that will need the attention of biomedical practitioners.

Some megachurches were found to be also ignorance on psychological related trauma hence put emphasis much on spirituality and faith healing. It needs to be mentioned that, trauma is related to comprehensive variety of human problems and the role of healing in this aspect should be the recovery of holistic personality.

The psychotherapy also play a vital role on spiritual healing as it protect factors against trauma experiences and further contribute much on resilience of healing rituals and practices. By spiritual healing in some megachurches and newly established churches refers mostly on a kind of laying on of hands and that suggest being biomedical kind of therapy. Therefore, spirituality and health are important elements to measure the value of individual therapy. Such elements give dominant value in terms of emotional, psycho-social and spiritual healing dimensions.

Lack of professional training on some clerics and religious prophets is a problem. In the same manner, lack of ability to deal with treatment of sick people in some churches lead towards abuse of some members and lack of professional intervention for healing purposes. The code of ethics and good conduct requires that professionals may refer the client to another competent professional. In this perspective, the clergy and religious prophets should consider referral as part of healing in other health related aspect that seems to be beyond their control. Faith healing should not be the end-product of healing in church domain, hence referral approach should be considered for enabling biomedical treatment to play its role to the bio ill persons.

Some pastors and prophets are not relevant in contemporary spiritual community. They are business oriented and do whatever they can for their personal gains. The analysis in this regards made both the theological and medical merits of diverse healing measures. Miraculous pastors and prophets needs to understand and address the needs of individuals from trio-dimensions namely: physical, psychological and spiritual perspectives. In the light of the said trio-dimensions, the church will be able to deter and address some of abuse elements that prevail within the clergy community.

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Annexure 1

Candidate's declaration

I Mabuza Lethabo Stanley hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's policies and rules applicable to postgraduate research, and I certify that I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with their requirements.

I declare that this proposal, save for the supervisory guidance received, is the product of my own work and effort. I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, acknowledged all sources of information in line with normal academic conventions.

I further certify that the proposed research will be original, and that the material to be submitted for examination has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I have subjected this document to the University's text-matching and/or similarity-checking procedures and I consider it to be free of any form of plagiarism.

Candidate Signature:.....

Date:

9 Supervisor's declaration

I am satisfied that I have given the candidate the necessary supervision in respect of this proposal and that it meets the University's requirements in respect of postgraduate research proposals.

I have read and approved the final version of this proposal and it is submitted with my consent.

Signature:

Print Name: Prof. Masoga M.A

Date:

Annexure 2

Participant Informed Declaration

Participant

Research Title: **A Historical Investigation into Healing Trajectories of Selected Mega-churches in the South African Religiosity Space from 2010-2018.**

The nature and the purpose of the research and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research is to investigate into healing trajectories of selected mega-churches in the South African religiosity space from 2010-2018.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards **PROVIDING A COMPREHENSIVE CONTRIBUTION ON THE SUBJECT.**
4. I will participate in this research by being one of the informants in generating the data for the research.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I, at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. There may be risk associated with my participation in this project. I am fully aware that:
 - The following risks are associated with my participation. The only risk I foresee is spending time on the interview **MISINTERPRETED.**
 - The following steps have been taken to prevent the risk: providing direct answer.
8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of **CONFERENCE PAPERS AND MONOGRAPH** articles in peer review journals. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

9. I will receive feedback in the form of a PhD Thesis accessible from university libraries regarding the results obtained during the study.
10. Any further questions concerning the research or my participation will be answered by Professor Masoga M.A, University of Zululand, History Department.
11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

Ihave read the above information/confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wish to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurized in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above mentioned project.

Participant:

Signature:

Date:.....

ANNEXURE 3 (A)

The participants' questions (**Church Leadership**)

Question 1

Just narrate to me, what is your role in this church?

Question 2

What is your opinion about healing?

Question 3

Where do you get these healing powers? Have you ever pay a visit to one of the Western African Countries and what was the purpose of visit. You answered me; now tell me where do these other pastors and prophets acquire their powers?

Question 4

What do you say about faith healing and the application of biomedicine?

Question 5

There is this allegation of abuse during healing services or healing consultations on one to one session. May you please explain to me what is happening?

ANNEXURE 3 (B)

The participants' questions (**Church Member**)

Question 1

Are you a member in this Church? If not why are you attending the service here?

Question 2

In brief tell me your opinion about healing and faith healing.

Question 3

According to you, the pastor prays for the sick and some alleged to be healing, where do the pastor get the power of healing from?

Question 4

What are your views about faith healing and the use of doctors' medication or treatments?

Question 5

Why do you believe in healing instruments like anointed oil, water and candles?

Can you explain to me how this elements works, anointed oil and water do.

Question 6

There is this allegation of abuse during healing services or healing consultations on one to one session. May you please explain to me what is happening in the church with regard to abuse of members like you?

ANNEXURE 3 (C)

The participants' questions (**Traditional Healer**)

Question 1

Tell me, you are a traditional healer, why most of Christians in particular pastors and prophets come to you or visit the traditional healers

Question 2

May you please explain to me, your views about healing and what is your take on Christians or pastors and prophets who come to you for healing purposes?

How do you help those pastors and prophets who come to you for powers?

Question 3

There is this allegation of abuse during healing services or healing consultations on one to one session. May you please explain to me what is happening?

ANNEXURE 3 (D)

The participants' Questions (**Departmental Official**)

Question 1

There are a number of queries from the community regarding the operation of the churches in South Africa. May you please in brief tell me what is happening in some churches around?

Question 2

As member of the government, how are you going to address the issue of megachurches that does not comply with Human Rights obligations in terms of ethical conduct?


Question 3

As the representative of the government what is your view about the regulating of churches and religions in South Africa?

ANNEXURE 4

Per ardua ad astra
Through difficulties to the stars

Mahabees@notinfo.com
awh@notinfo.com



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ACADEMY OF WISDOM HOLDINGS

Reg. No. 2007/ 005105/ 07

15 November 2021
Mabuza L.S.
Department of History
University of Zululand
P/Bag X1001
Kwa-Dlangezwa
3886
EMPANGENI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: DOCTORAL THESIS EDITING

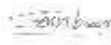
The above matter refers.

We are pleased to report that the Doctoral Thesis titled: *“An historical investigation into healing trajectories of selected megachurches in the South African religiosity space, 2010-2018”* by Mr Lethabo Stanley Mabuza whose student number is 201974691, has been edited for the use of language. The following areas have accurately been attended to: Correction of typographical errors; Correction of names and non-English terms according to a specific reference source (style guide/dictionary); Correction of punctuation errors such as mislaid commas, incorrect dash use; Omission of inconsistent queries in the text.; Elimination of widows and orphans, other inappropriate typographical results; and Identification of errors that result from the use of computers, such as garbled tables, passages/chapters in the wrong font, use of homonyms, etc.

Our expert team has contributed by giving your Thesis that stylistic shine which will ablaze your marker’s eyes by determining suitable style and rearranging the material into proper structure/order for the targeted destination (external examiners); eliminating slang, redundancies, wordiness and clarification of vague vocabulary; establishing a steady style, language and point of view according to the intended audience maintaining the author’s voice; improving the associations, transitions, parallelisms, and paragraphing and insurance of persistent style in headings, captions, figures, and illustrations; and suggesting additions, erasures, or re-structuring of data. We did all this at no additional costs at all.

Your comments to this report will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,



S. Mahabeer
Senior Editor

Directors : Dr M Naidoo; Mr S Mahabeer; Dr M Lotter

ANNEXURE 5

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6731
Fax: 035 902 6222
Email: LundalJN@unizulu.ac.za

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGD 2020/34		
Project Title	An Historical Investigation into Healing Trajectories of Selected Mega-Churches in the South African Religiosity Space, 2010-2018		
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	L.S Mabuza		
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Prof M.A Masoga	Dr M.Z Shamase	
Department	History		
Faculty	Arts		
Type of Risk	Medium Risk – Data collection from people		
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year	Master's	Doctoral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Departmental <input type="checkbox"/>

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:**
- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format (due date-06 October 2021)
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
 - (4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.


Professor Mashupye R. Kgaphola
University Research Ethics Committee
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation

06 October 2020

<p>CHAIRPERSON UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC) REG NO: UZREC 171110-30</p> <p>06 -10- 2020</p> <p>RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE</p>

ANNEXURE 6

Mabuza

ORIGINALITY REPORT

05%	11%	05%	0%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

- 1** M. Chaza, and L. Dube, Research Associates, Research Institute for theology and Religion, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa. Article: Resistance of many African women struggling with the question of church mission in Africa today.
Publication
-

EXCLUDE QUOTES ON
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EXCLUDE MATCHES < 5%