

**THE INTERCHANGE, EXCHANGE AND APPROPRIATION OF
TRADITIONAL HEALING, MODERN MEDICINE AND CHRISTIAN
HEALING IN AFRICA TODAY**

by

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DECLARATION

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DECLARES THAT THE TOPIC *THE INTERCHANGE, EXCHANGE AND APPROPRIATION OF TRADITIONAL HEALING, MODERN MEDICINE AND CHRISTIAN HEALING IN AFRICA TODAY* IS MY OWN WORK AND THAT ALL SOURCES OR QUOTATIONS HAVE BEEN INDICATED OR ACKNOWLEDGED AND A LIST OF COMPLETE REFFERENCES.

SIGNATURE

ABSTRACT

This research work is set out to investigate healing practised in Africa today. There are many ways of healing in African; others are classified as foreign because they came out of Africa especially from European influence while others are considered local or traditional. The research

shall dig out the influence of what is known as foreign methods or approaches of healing in Africa today and what African healing can learn from other methods of healing practised today.

There shall be contemporary stories and facts about the situation of healing today and relevant statistics where necessary. The research also comes out with appropriate suggestions on how to combat contemporary illnesses of today. This includes what should be improved and how. This work covers the whole of Africa.

KEY TERMS

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION, CHRISTIAN HEALING, MODERN MEDICINE, DOCTORS, DIVINERS, HERBALISTS, WITCHCRAFT, SUPREME GOD, SPIRIT POSSESSION, CHRISTIAN FAITH, MAIN LINE CHURCHES, AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES, CHARISMATIC CHURCHES, PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES, HIV/AIDS, THEOLOGY AND HEALING.

SUMMARY

The three approaches of healing, i.e. modern medicine, traditional and Christian healing are used together today in Africa. There is an exchange and interchange going on within these approaches. This has strengthened both, the spiritual and physical healing of humanity. African people seek healing at traditional practitioners and also go to medical hospitals and at the same time they go to Church. There are situations where people do not know where to seek help within these approaches. This sometimes cost many people's lives. The mixing of all the three methods also cost some people lives because there is no common understanding within them.

The bottom of the matter is that each of the methods has its own way of treating and healing an illness or sickness.

The challenges of HIV/AIDS in Africa have led to a confusion situation for all three methods. For instance, modern medicine claims that HIV/AIDS cannot be cured. Some Christians argue that it is a punishment from God and only God can cure. There are other traditional healers who claim that they can cure it. The fact is that people in Africa are desperately looking for healing and cure. They flock to everybody who claims to help. The disadvantage of this situation is negative to human life.

To confront the healing crisis in Africa today there should be common understanding, cordial cooperation and working hand in hand of modern medicine, traditional and Christian healing. There is a call for contemporary theologies which can help to reflect critically the challenges of healing in Africa today. In other words, Christians should look for a relevant theology of healing which will take into consideration the three methods of healing today. HIV/AIDS is seen as an urgent crisis in Africa and should be confronted by all methods of healing. The differences on the approach on HIV/AIDS should be put aside and the focus should be on the crisis alone.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	
Acknowledgements	
1. Introduction	1
2. African Traditional Healing	5
2.1 African Traditional Religion	5
2.1.1 Belief in God, the Supreme Being	7
a) What is a Supreme Being?	7
b) Attributes of the Supreme Being	8
2.1.2 Belief in the Ancestral Spirits	9
a) Spirits	10
b) Mediatory role	14
2.2 African Traditional Understanding of Healing	15
2.2.1 Healers and their training	15
2.2.2 Healing an illness or disease	18
2.2.3 Illness caused by witchcraft and sorcery	19
2.2.4 Traditional practitioners, diviners or herbalists	20

2.2.5	Spirit and possession	23
3.	Christian Healing in Africa	28
3.1	The Christian understanding of health	29
3.2	The causes of sickness or illness	30
3.3	Jesus Christ the healer	35
3.3.1	Jesus Christ's way of healing	35
3.4	The Church healing ministry today	36
3.4.1	Health facilities	37
3.4.2	Pastoral care and counseling	39
3.4.3	Theology of counseling	42
3.4.4	Healing through Prayer and Psychiatry	44
3.4.5	Healing through sacraments	45
a)	Holy Communion	46
b)	Baptism	50
c)	The Anointment	51
d)	Confirmation	53
e)	Other sacraments	54
3.4.6	Faith and Miracles of healing	55
3.5	Healing in the African Independent Churches	59

3.5.1	Baptism in the African Independent Churches	61
a)	Treatment of disease and illness through baptism	62
3.6	The Charismatic and Pentecostal movements	66
3.6.1	Healing in the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements	68
4.	Modern Medicine	69
4.1	Health facilities	70
	The African Traditional Healing and Christian healing (exchange and interchange)	71
4.2	Traditional Healing mixed with Christian Healing	72
4.2.1	Jesus Christ, the great healer	73
4.2.2	Healing Equipment	77
a)	Prayer	78
b)	Water	78
c)	Muti	79
d)	Healing vestments	80
e)	Healing by wool strings	80
f)	Counselling sessions	83
5.	The Modern medicine and the Traditional Healing	85
5.1	Lack of cooperation	87
5.2	Consultation rooms	88

5.3	The costs of healing	89
5.4	Healing equipment	93
5.5	Marketing places	95
5.6	Training	97
5.7	Good service	106
6.	The Modern medicine with Christian healing	110
6.1	Integration of modern medicine into the Scripture	112
7.	The Challenges of HIV/AIDS Today	114
7.1	Factual errors about HIV/AIDS	115
7.2	Challenges of HIV/AIDS in the Christian Church	116
7.2.1	The use of condoms	119
7.2.2	The New Kairos	122
8.	Traditional Healing Approach on HIV/AIDS	125
9.	Appropriate measures to be taken	129
10.	The acceptance and common understanding	132
10.2	Standardization	138
10.3	Theology of healing in Africa	141
10.4	Mediating theology on healing	146
10.5	Conclusion	152
11.	Glossary	157

PREFACE

Healing methods keep on changing according to situations. Healing in Africa went through different integrations until today. This dissertation analyses three methods of healing practised in Africa today. These methods include modern medicine, traditional healing and Christian healing. Each approach of healing is discussed including its historical use and the current situation.

The three approaches in healing are used together today. That is why I was fascinated to write about this topic. The interchange and exchange in healing happening today has got advantages, and of course some short comings.

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x

1. Introduction

Healing plays a vital role in the life of a human being. Life in African understanding needs to be preserved from any harm. The lack of proper healing has negative effects on life. In other words we can say that where there is no healing there is no life. Healing in Africa has gone under different changes and influences for many years, which are foreign. These influences have caused proliferation of many religious groups or sects in Africa claiming to possess the powers of healing. This proliferation consequently resulted in an amazing competition among the methods of healing found in Africa.

There is an interchange and exchange among these methods or approaches. We are going to find out the impact of these methods in compacting illness, sickness, and diseases in Africa.

The methods which we are going to concentrate on are as follows:

- a) African Traditional Healing
- b) Modern Medicine
- c) Christian Healing

These methods of healing are very common in Africa today and very influential. The modern medicine and Christian healing are considered foreign in Africa. Nevertheless their impact and capabilities are tremendously amazing and this challenged the traditional healing which was commonly practiced before the colonization of Africa. People in Africa have now the opportunity to choose any kind of healing suitable to them. People today are either mixing two or three of them at the same time to acquire healing. There are rare situations where only one of

these methods is used. There are many reasons why people in Africa find themselves interchanging those methods. This shall be the most important part of this dissertation.

African healing is concerned with the whole human being. That includes the physical, spiritual, economic and social stability. It is strongly believed that if a person has a physical illness, his/her spirituality will be affected too. This affects a person both, economically and socially. This is said to be a holistic approach.

Healing in Africa goes together with faiths or beliefs of people. This means we have to discuss the African Traditional Religion view on healing and also the Christian understanding of healing. The modern medicine was brought alone by Christianity to most parts of Africa. It was later common in many African societies, even though traditional healing is still favoured.

The majority of African people understand healing as part of their religion, culture and tradition. It is not only practised during illness, but it is part of their living. It is very difficult for African people to live without using this kind of healing. Healing is taken as a process along with the stages of life. The healing ceremony begins from the birth, continues through childhood, initiation school, marriage, adulthood, up to death. We are going to find out how traditional healing is used in all those stages and the interchange between the modern medicine and Christianity.

Methods of healing found in Africa need to be preserved. During colonization and imperialism, traditional healing was discouraged by the foreign settlers. They compelled people who accepted their religion, mostly Christianity, to distance themselves from traditional healing. They condemned it to be evil or satanic. Instead modern healing was encouraged together with Christian spiritual healing and other religious spiritualities like Islam. In this thesis I am going to

see how African traditional healing is appropriate for Africans and how the other healing methods can work hand in hand to combat illness attacking African people today.

Traditional healing borrows some ways of healing from modern medicine and Christian healing. There are many reasons for this exchange and interchange. We are going to discuss advantages and disadvantages of such interchange and exchange. The misuse of this process of exchange and interchange of healing methods found in Africa led to the proliferation of many healing churches, many traditional practitioners and healing prophets etc.

The challenges facing Africa today includes healing. For instance the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a disaster causing a concern to many African people. This catastrophic disease has caused the world to panic. People question themselves about the capabilities of traditional practitioners and medical doctors. On the other hand religious people are trying to answer questions such as: why does God allowed this deadly disease?

Countries economies depend on the production. Production needs healthy people i.e. mentally, physically and spiritually. Healing becomes the important subject for many states in Africa. We shall discuss such impact of healing on the economy and the stability of the countries in Africa.

African people want healing from diseases, illness and sickness. The high demand of healing makes it very costly. Healing is turned into business. In Southern Africa you will find that many people are claiming to be healing prophets, traditional practitioners and even modern medical doctors, while they are not. People flock to them but they do not get help. There are many claims from such healers that they can cure incurable diseases e.g. HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS is one of the deadly diseases challenging the world today at a high rate. This has left many issues

unanswered. There are many approaches used today to combat this disease. This has compelled modern medicine, Christian healing and traditional healing to debate. Each of them has got valid reasons on how to approach this disease. We are going to analyse and discuss this in detail and find a way which could be appropriate for African people today.

It is important to see whether there are possibilities to use some theologies especially modern theologies like the Cultural Theology of Paul Tillich and the Mediating Theology of Jurgen Moltmann. Healing is a historical thing and it keeps on changing. We can find out how Existential theology can help us today to understand the historical methods of healing in African Traditional Religion. We shall use Rudolf Bultmann at this point with what is known as the problem of history.

2. African Traditional Healing

African traditional healing is a method of healing and curing illness, sickness, and diseases found in the African Traditional Religion (ATR). The African Traditional Healing recognizes various ways to deal with afflictions, and has different religious experts whose task is to discover the reasons for disharmony in the universe. They are not only expected to know the causes but also to prescribe antidotes or cures for these problems. Their main task is to look for measures to be taken to restore the force of life.¹

Healing has been practised in Africa for many centuries before imperialism and colonization. It is still proving to be the best and most popular method among African people today. In order to understand this method we need to look at some key themes in African Traditional Religion. This shall help us to analyse traditional healing from its perspective of origins.

2.1 African Traditional Religion

Religion has been given many explanations. These explanations describe religions from different perspectives. Many scholars have come to the conclusion that religion has no single definition. There are many explanations which can be given to religion. Nevertheless there is always the main point among those descriptions. We can say that

*the central issue is that religion is an encounter with something
outside or above human beings.*²

This means religion is something extra ordinary and has more influence on the human existence. It governs the life of a human being e.g. worship, rituals, morals etc. It is understood in terms of beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and religious officiates. The key elements in human existence are traditions and culture. Schleiermacher emphasis on religion is that man should let

¹ Magesa 1997,193

² Van Niekerk 1980,35

God be God and accept his own creatureliness.³In his proposal of the meaning of religion, Idowu emphasises that

*religion results man's spontaneous awareness of, and spontaneous reaction to, his immediate awareness of a living power, wholly other' and infinitely greater than himself; a power mysterious because unseen, yet a present and urgent reality, seeking to bring man into communion with himself.*⁴

African Traditional Religion is a religion that is practised in Africa by African people. It is concerned about African people within their environment, culture and traditions. African Traditional Religion is referred to as traditional in the sense that it is indigenous and defined by language, culture and territory of the adherents. African Traditional Religion is very much concerned with the realities of daily activities of normal life, and healing is one of the most important elements.

There is still confusion among many scholars whether to refer to African Traditional Religion in plural form or not. Mbiti prefers to use the plural form. His argument is that there are about three thousand African people (tribes), and each has its own religious system.⁵ Nevertheless some theologians argue that the plural is not needed because there are more close similarities of practises than differences among those tribes. There is no need to use the plural. If we talk about Christianity or Islam, we do not put them in plural form. We know that Christianity which is practised in Europe is different from the one in Asia or Africa. It sounds better if we omit the plural.

³ Idowu 1973,71

⁴ *ibid.*,p75.

⁵ Mbiti 1998,1

There are major themes in the ATR which are playing an important role in the theology of healing. Most of those major themes and conceptions are closely related. Those themes include the belief in a Supreme Being, belief in spirits (especially ancestral) and in a unity of being. The belief in a Supreme Being and spirits pertains primarily to an invisible realm, while the belief in a unity manifests in circumstances which affect the visible community.

2.1.1 Belief in a Supreme Being

a) what is a Supreme Being?

It has been asserted that there are, seemingly, neither people nor tribes in Africa which do not believe in a Supreme Being with one or more names to describe him either in terms of his activities or his place of abode.⁶ Other names given to this deity is obviously indicative of opinions held regarding him or of attributes which he is understood to possess. African people strongly believe that there is something outside or above human beings and that thing is the Supreme Being or God.⁷

The Supreme Being is understood as the origin and sustenance of all things and is older than time. This God is outside and beyond creation, of course is the creator.⁸ According to the ATR, God is the source of life. Life is provided and taken by this God whenever certain things are done. In case where people are misbehaving they may be punished in many ways. The Supreme Being is the one who is very high in this religion.

b) Attributes of the Supreme Being

⁶ Mbiti 1991,47

⁷ Amanze 1998,3

⁸ Mbiti 1989,29

The names given to the Supreme Being obviously indicate some attributes associated with this God. It is believed that God is good. This belief is very essential to African people. The goodness of God in many African tribes is seen in averting calamities, supplying rain, providing fertility to people, cattle and fields.⁹ God is also attributed in human terms by Africans e.g. fatherhood and motherhood, friend. Those human attributes of God provide us with descriptions of God in African terms.

This God provides vital forces to human beings. Therefore we can describe this God as providence and sustenance. For instance the Ovimbundu name for God means, *He who supplies the needs of His creatures.*¹⁰ Those needs include life, health and other necessities needed to sustain creation. It is the God who takes care of what He created. The health of people is very important for this God, because suffering causes people to do evils things out of frustrations and pain. It is strongly believed that this God is the one who provides healing of any kind of illness or sickness.

Nevertheless these vital forces can be stopped if people do not follow the traditional norms and values of the society. In most cases the stopping of the supply of vital forces is a punishment from God against the people. They are punished with illness or sickness. In other words, God can bring misfortunes to people. That is when healing has to come into the scene. For the Sotho/Tswana people, Modimo, *Supreme God*, provides daily needs and is the protector of his people as Creator, Provider of daily needs and Protector of people against evil powers. It is strongly believed that wrong doings can cause a breach of the relationship between God and man, between man and the ancestral spirits and between man and his fellow man. The only way

⁹ Mbiti 1989,36

¹⁰ *ibid.*,p.41

to resolve this breach of relationship is by means of rituals of sacrifices and offerings.¹¹ These rituals are methods of healing.

We can see that the belief in the Supreme Being among the African people is a very essential element which cannot be overlooked since this God is the source of everything. The Supreme Being also plays an important role in healing. In most societies it is believed that whenever there is illness or suffering caused by diseases, God has abandoned such people and those people have to find where they went wrong and restore their relationship with God.¹² Of course sometimes God is said to have caused such suffering as a way of punishment to the people's wrong doings.

Healing without the interference of the Supreme God cannot be so effective according to the minds of African people. That is the reason why today's modern medicine is underestimated by some African people who are still traditionalists.

2.1.2 Belief in spirits or ancestral spirits

One of the strong practices in the African Traditional Religion is the ancestral veneration. Almost all African tribes are found keeping this traditional belief.¹³

This belief is a central concept in people's lives and it is very influential. Some people in Africa, especially young people today, are convinced that the idea of ancestral veneration has no meaning. On the other hand, for the older African men and women in the backland villages, life from day to day or, we might legitimately say, from moment to moment, has no meaning at

¹¹ Amanze 1998,9

¹² Mbiti 1989,44

¹³ Amanze 2002,62

all apart from ancestral presence and ancestral power. Ancestors are part of their daily activities.¹⁴

a) Spirits

Spirit possessions determine the cultures and traditions of people. In Madagascar ancestors are central to indigenous concepts of collective and local identity.¹⁵ In Sotho/Tswana tribes, ancestors known as *Badimo*, are believed to be dead people who are now living in a different world of spirits. Nevertheless not everybody can be an ancestor. If a person does wrong during her/his life, the spirit of this person shall be rejected at the ancestral world. The spirit of such a person shall remain behind and continues with evil doings, threatening the living in the form of ghosts. In some tribes like Hambukushu of Ngamiland, evil people spirits becomes messengers of death. They work hard in the sun and eat bad food and drink bad beer.¹⁶

In the Zulu religion, ancestors are the spirits of the departed *idlozi*, plur. *amadlozi*.¹⁷ According to their beliefs the *Idlozi* becomes a guarding spirit of their descendants. This means the spirits of the dead still play a vital role in the life of the living. African tribes belief in life after death. The Ibo people in Nigeria believe that their lives are profoundly influenced by their ancestors, and this belief has far-reaching sociological consequences.

People have to perform sacrifices to them at regular intervals or when a diviner indicates. This belief is also found in the southern part of Ghana where everyday life of *Ga`* (the dead) is

¹⁴ Parrinder 1962,57

¹⁵ Sharp 1999,3

¹⁶ Amanze 2002,2002

¹⁷ Sundkler 1961,21

very present. It is a habit for these people to throw a small portion of what they are drinking or eating on the ground for their forefathers.¹⁸

We can see that Africans take the existence of ancestral spirits very seriously.¹⁹ The ancestors are part of their social group and there is no doubt that Africans fear them. There is absolutely no question that African people as a whole are much aware of the realities of spirits, or at least realities besides God, which fall in the spiritual realm.²⁰

In some traditions the dead or the departed are believed that they are in the neighborhood of their earthly homesteads and retain their personal identity and are still part of their human families. It is thought that the land of the departed is in rivers, trees, hills, banks or somewhere in the same land.²¹ Others believe that ancestors live under the soil. That is why they are buried alone with their domestic utensils like food, weapons, tools, clothing and ornaments. They are actually the living dead. They are watching the living everyday.²²

Mbiti is one of the writers who strongly emphasises the realities of spirits especially in his collections of prayers in African Religion. It is clear that there is virtually no barrier between the realm of man and the spiritual realm. The dual depend from on each other and cannot be ignored. The spiritual realm is part of the existence of man. The virtue of life is the consequence of good relationship between man and the ancestral world. Some Africans think that

if I have a good relationship with the ancestors, perform the customs regularly, keep them alive and viable by acts of remembrance, they

¹⁸ Parrinder 1962, 57

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 57

²⁰ Buhrmann 1988, 28

²¹ Amanze 2002, 63

²² Parrinder 1962, 58-59

*will do their share, that of protecting me and ensuring that I enjoy a good life.*²³

The relationship is very important. In his research Buhrmann argues that ancestors can be divided into two categories in some other tribes. There are those clan-linked deceased forebears and the unrelated ancestors of the river, and ancestors of the forest.²⁴ The role of these groups of ancestors is different. The clan-linked deceased forebears are conceived of as being omnipresent and nearly omniscient.

Their main duty is to protect and wisely guide human beings. It is strongly believed that when they are annoyed, they withdraw their protection. People will be exposed to the evil powers of witchcraft, and this consequently will cause illness, sickness, and misfortunes.

Evil is caused by spirits which are rejected at the ancestral world. It is believed that after death the spirit shall be judged according to its deeds during life. If a person had lived a life that satisfied the ancestral world, such a person is worthy to join the ancestral world. This means that the person had lived according to norms and values of the community and had performed all necessary rites and rituals traditionally.²⁵ The person who did not fulfill the requirements to get a space at the ancestral world is rejected. Those are people who have broken norms, values and traditional customs of the society.

In other words they are evil doers. Their spirits after death are not allowed and consequently sent back to the world of the living.

²³ Buhrmann 1988, 29

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 29

²⁵ Amanze 2002, 65

People are terrorized by evil spirits during nights in the form of ghosts. It is also believed that such evil spirits get inside certain animals. Most of those are animals or birds and they do their activities during the night. They are seldom seen during the day. These animals or birds are avoided by people, because if it happens that when a person sees it, something evil or bad luck is going to happen to that person or close relatives. Those animals and birds include hyenas, owls and *senonnori*. The evil spirits cause illness, sickness, natural disasters and conflicts among people. Some spirits becomes bothersome to people²⁶. These spirits are chased away from people.

This does not mean that evil things can only be done by those evil spirits. Also the good ancestors can cause or allow evil to happen where necessary. Nevertheless, if people perform certain rituals, there is always room for reconciliation with their ancestors.

The other group of the ancestral family has a different role according to Buhrmann. The river and forest ancestors are distant, awesome and very numerous and powerful. They can also cause danger. This can happen only if somebody encounters them without having taken special precautions.²⁷ These ancestors are very important in the lives of people. Whenever a tragedy arises within a community, it is associated with their dissatisfaction. The only way to put things in a stable position whenever a tragedy arises is through the performance of rites, rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices as required. This restores the broken relationship between the ancestors and the living.

b) Mediatory role

In the African Traditional Religion ancestors are believed to be the mediators

²⁶ Mbiti 1991,80

²⁷ Buhrmann1988,30

between the Supreme Being and the living people. They are the transporters of vital forces from the Supreme Being to the living people.²⁸ In Sotho/Tswana religion ancestors *badimo* have always assumed the role of mediators, intermediaries, intercessors and they go between God in heaven and people here on earth, and no one can approach the Supreme Being *Modimo* except through the ancestors *Badimo*.²⁹ They are considered the living dead. They connect human beings with the Supreme Being.

There are also persons playing a mediatory role between human beings and ancestors. Those are traditional healers or practitioners, kings, or elderly people. The traditional practitioners communicate with ancestors using bones, dreams etc. For instance if there is a crisis like drought, the king and elderly people in the community shall consult the traditional practitioners to reveal to them why the ancestors are not satisfied and what should be done. The traditional practitioner can tell why ancestors stopped vital forces.³⁰

In most cases rituals are done under the guidance of a traditional doctor in order to heal the curse so that vital forces can be released. The king works hand in hand with traditional doctors on spiritual issues in the community. It is believed that rulers are chosen by the Supreme Being.³¹ People in the community also believed that communication with ancestors is done through visions, dreams etc. They also help the tribe to analyze ethical issues and give advice on what to do with certain problems in order to satisfy the ancestors.

2.2 The African Understanding of Healing

²⁸ Kabasele 1991,117

²⁹ Amanze1998,110

³⁰ Mbiti 1975,62-63

³¹ *ibid.*, p.161.

Africans understand health as a state of balance between the human world and the spirit world. Whenever there is imbalance between the two, there is no good health. This means that if a person falls sick, it is believed that the balance between the two is affected. In other words health is not only a physical condition, but concerns the whole person. It is believed that lack of good health is a result from a disturbance in the wholeness which depends on man's relationship with the source of life.³² This kind of imbalance needs a religious explanation. Health is understood as the fulfillment of all the roles expected of a human being.

2.2.1 Healers and their training

Traditional healing is performed by men and women who have been trained by healers. Those trainees can go and stay with a traditional healer for a certain period of time. Others are trained on hills which are scarring. They are also trained at big rivers and lakes where big snakes are staying. The training places also determine the specific strength or powers of the traditional healer.

The ancestors can also choose a person to become a traditional healer. They choose according to the moral behavior of an individual in the community and sometimes the person had the gift of traditional healing from birth.³³ There is a sophisticated way of communication between that person and the ancestors. Other people are born with the gift of healing.³⁴ In other words they are naturally skilled in the traditional healing. Other people inherit these skills from their parents and relatives who were healers.³⁵ A person who is destined to become a traditional practitioner will become sick in form of a mental disorder or chronic ailment from which the

³² Dube1988,12

³³ Mbiti1989,163

³⁴ Amanze 2002,89

³⁵ Amanze 2002,89

person fails to recover. The traditional practitioner shall diagnose the true cause, and later the person shall start dreaming about herbal remedies. They also need to acquire more from the experienced practitioners.³⁶We can see that the traditional healing is not an open field to everybody. There are certain people who can join the field, not everybody.

There are fields of specialization in traditional healing. This means that others are talented in different fields. There are practitioners who use bones to enquire about the problems of their clients. These are kept as a set of stones, shells and engraved bones which are mostly carried in small animal-skin bag. These bones are thrown on the ground and certain words are said during the throwing. The bones will reveal to the practitioner the problems of the client, what caused them and why and also how to treat or heal the client.³⁷

The stones and bones play an important role in revealing something on spiritual matters, illness, sickness and diseases.³⁸Without these stones, shells and divine bones nothing can be done. There are other healers who use water in order to reveal the problems of the client. This water is mixed with certain medicines. They understand that water is the source of life.

There are those who specialize in herbs. They are good in revealing the illness by only asking the patient where she/he feels pains. This herbalist will tell what kind of pain is and what kind of medicine or herbs are needed. Nevertheless those ones who use bones also use herbs for treatment. The bones or stones will tell what kind of herbs should be used to cease the pain.³⁹

³⁶ *ibid.*,p.89

³⁷ *ibid.*,p.91

³⁸ Mbiti 1975,155

³⁹ Mbiti 1975,91

There are those healers who are specialists in smelling out, *senoge*, in order to reveal the problem of the client. The healer just touches the client, or in the latter's absence, a piece of his/her clothing. Then it shall be revealed to the client what the problem is and how can the client be helped.⁴⁰ Today most of such kinds of healers are believed to be prophesizing. They get visions and dreams from ancestors or even directly from God. For instance, in Zimbabwe the *Nanga traditional medical practitioners* are believed to be spiritually endowed and have the gift of healing and divining.⁴¹ They can tell the person's problems only by looking at him/her without using anything. Dreams and visions they receive from ancestors are important.

It is important to mention that in many cases you will find that these practitioners are using or practising all these kinds of healing. We can also see that there are not big differences between them. Most of their materials are the same. For instance also herbalists believe in dreams and visions. We can describe the traditional healers as an easily available health resource within the community at risk and at no expense to the government.⁴²

Rain making is also one of the rituals practiced by some tribes in Africa. Lack of rain is a disaster. It can cause poverty which may result in unnecessary ill. There are those traditional healers who are good in rain making. In other words they have specialized on rain making.

*There are rain makers in all parts of Africa, but they are particularly prominent in the drier eastern and southern regions.*⁴³

Those are some of the capabilities found in African Traditional Healing.

2.2.2 Healing an illness (disease)

⁴⁰ Setiloane1977,46

⁴¹ Ter Haar1992,179

⁴² Gumede1988,327

⁴³ Parrinder1967,79

Health is a very important thing for the life of an African. In other words health means wholeness for an African. Health is approached in a holistic way. Africans see illness and calamity as breaking up the wholeness of life and that illness is experienced as a disturbance in the social whole.⁴⁴ What is very important in the traditional healing is to enquire the question ‘why?’.

People are eager to know why certain things which are evil happened to them. The traditional practitioner ought to tell why a person is sick and what kind of treatment can be given. The ‘why?’ question is common because for any kind of evil happening there should be somebody responsible and reasons are needed. The search for such metaphysical cause of illness is very important. In other words, it is not enough to limit the treatment to the manifest symptoms of an illness or the disease. People are eager to put blame on something or somebody.

They believe that there are two different causes of an illness or disease. There are illnesses caused by man and others which are natural. The natural illness is seen as emanating from the realm of God, and the one caused by man emanate from the spiritual world instigated by human intentions.⁴⁵ It is believed that those natural illnesses can be healed or treated by western medicine practitioners because there are some herbal therapies. Of course, the traditional practitioners also are able to treat such kind of illness. For those illnesses which are caused by man, an alternative therapy is considered. Those involve reasoned efforts at conflict resolution and ritual purification for healing. It is the main task of the traditional doctors to perform such ritual purification. Traditional doctors are key people during such ritual.

⁴⁴ Ter Haar 1992, 168

⁴⁵ Ter Haar 1992, 192

2.2.3 Illness caused by witchcraft or sorcery

Those who practise sorcery give instructions and illustrate the agenda of the day to the client. These illnesses are believed to be caused by evil doers. There are people who are believed to be practising witchcraft and sorceries within the community. They are believed to be possessing evil spirits which have got powers to perform and cause atrocities to the community. People should be on their guard against such illness caused by witchcraft. Modern medicine is believed to be very weak to treat an illness caused by witchcraft and sorcery.⁴⁶

If ancestors are playing the guarding role for the people, why do they allow evil? The issue is that people used go to astray by breaking the norms and values of the community. That is transgression against them. The ancestors will then punish people, but they do not directly inflict harm. In other words, they temporarily relinquish their role as guarding, leaving their wards defenseless against attack, from a witch or sorcerer.⁴⁷ In that case it will be easier for the enemies to attack a person. In most cases people are attacked by illness which may lead to disability or even death. This gives us clear information about the existence of misfortunes and evil powers in a society.

Witches and sorcerers are the ones blamed for evil atrocities within the community. There is a difference between witches and sorcerers. This distinction is quite useful. Those who strongly believe in them do not see any differences. They consider them similar because their objective is the same. In his writings Kiernan distinguishes them as follows:

there are witches who, with or without animal accomplices, unleash their inherent potency without conscious efforts, and those who can switch it on and off at will. Sorcerers, on the other hand, generate this power externally for specific purpose,

⁴⁶ Amanze 2002,224

⁴⁷ Kiernan 1995,23

*by collecting and mixing substances 'medicine' which they arm with incantation. Most witches are women, as if their position in society alone disposes them towards witchcraft, whereas everyone has more or less equal access to harmful medicines.*⁴⁸

In some African societies people used to blame those who practise witchcraft and even killed them. In most cases old people are accused of practising witchcraft. Witches and sorcerers do not have a place at the ancestral world after death. They are totally rejected in ancestral world.

2.2.4 Traditional practitioners, diviners and herbalists

Ancestors have somebody to communicate vital forces to people through her/him. This person is known as diviner and traditional healer. In some tribes a diviner is commonly a woman. The diviner reveals the cause and treatment of an illness to a certain person. She/He tells the demand of the ancestors and the reasons for their dissatisfaction. In other words, diviners are directing the public on religious matters or issues.⁴⁹

Traditional healers or diviners are spiritual leaders of the community. They are much respected by the people. The reason for that is because of their abilities to orchestrate a religious matter, to respond to a crisis and adversities which are conducive to that restoration of normality. They were considered extra-ordinary people within the community. Diviners are given the skill of interpreting

⁴⁸ Ibid.,p.23

⁴⁹ Mbiti 1962,62,63

*the meaning of dreams by means of which ancestors imperfectly communicate with the living; she can diagnose the cause of misfortunes, determine in what measures it has its origin in the ancestral relationship or in disturbed living relationships expressed as sorcery or witchcraft, and in each case indicate the particular relationship concerned.*⁵⁰

There is also a traditional doctor who specializes in herbs. This doctor knows what kind of medicine should be given for an illness or disease. They are known as medicine men. In some communities they are used to promote harmony, fertility and prosperity in the community and to protect property of all kinds, to settle interpersonal conflict, to stimulate sexual attraction and restore health and well being.⁵¹

Herbal practitioners mostly depend on spirits for their knowledge and they make sacrifices and offerings to those spirits. There is still specialization among herbal practitioners. In his writings Alden Almquist noted that among the Pagibeti of Zaire

*one person may know the medicine for healing broken bones,...another for relieving neck-stiffness, another for giving an enemy sickness, and another for seizing thieves of garden crops or trapped forest animals.*⁵²

There are also a lot of medicines which herbalist practitioners use. Those include medicine for good fortunes, love affairs success, security of a person and property, medicine against witchcraft.

⁵⁰ Kiernan 1995,24

⁵¹ *ibid.*,pp.24

⁵² Magesa 1997,210

Many people today associate African traditional practitioners with witchcraft or sorcery. They refer to every traditional practitioner as witch. Nevertheless there are other unfounded views that traditional practitioners are evil doers. Instead they are protectors of people from evil powers and witchcraft. They cannot cause atrocities to the people. The word witch doctor is truly not a good title for the African traditional practitioner. That is not the mandate of the African traditional practitioner.⁵³

We cannot deny the fact that there are people claiming to be traditional healers but practising witchcraft at the same time. Those healers who practise witchcraft are referred to in the Tswana language as *Ngaka ya moloi*. They work closely together with evil doers. They are not interested in helping and healing people. Instead their interest is on enriching themselves and knocking people to join them in evil doings. These doctors are rejected by both, the public and the ancestral world.

The issue here is that the only proper sense in which the *Nganga* is a ‘witch doctor’ is if he/she seeks to counteract the influence of witches. In that sense he/she is not a witch anymore than a psychiatrist is psychotic. Of course it is conceivable that a psychiatrist could be psychotic and, in like manner, a *Nganga* could be a witch, but in both cases this condition would undoubtedly hamper their therapeutic efficiency. There are also high possibilities that both, the psychiatrist and the *Nganga*, are more effective if they have enough affinity with those with whom they deal to be able in some way to think like them.⁵⁴

2.2.5 Spirit and Possession

⁵³ Amanze 2002,89

⁵⁴ Amanze 2002, 89

Spirit possession has been considered as marginal in this world. They relate the spirit possession with historical crisis and are seen as a product of acculturation. Others relate it with such disciplines as psychology, sociology, medicine, history, anthropology, and even performance art theory to each of which it poses many questions.

The African believes in spirits or mediums. These spirits possess natural powers.⁵⁵ They are able to cause problems whenever people neglect them. There are also evil spirits or mediums. They are caused by evil powers of witchcraft. Their main duties are to cause atrocities to the living. They cause sickness, diseases and natural disasters. The spirits are worshipped. It is believed that spirits play an important role in politics, history, religion and social issues of the community.⁵⁶ These spirits have got knowledge of the genealogy background. There are different kinds of spirits because each belongs to a certain family and tribe. Spirits which do not belong to a certain tribe are considered foreign to that tribe. These spirits have names and their special duties.

These spirits are consulted by living people. They are consulted anywhere, e.g. at hills, trees, grave yards etc.⁵⁷ In some parts of Africa especially Southern Africa, spirits are consulted by the traditional practitioner for a client of the community. In other words, the healer plays a mediatory role. The healer will call upon the spirits of the client and asks it to talk to the client. It is strongly believed that each family has got spirits. These spirits take care of the family affairs. These spirits form a long chain in the genealogy.

⁵⁵ Mbiti 1989,78

⁵⁶ Amanze 2002,64

⁵⁷ Amanze 2002,63

The living families are obliged to remember their spirits by performing rituals for them throughout their lives. During such rituals the spirits shall reveal to the family what should be done to continue living a good life. In his writings Krings indicates that the *Turawa* spirits are consulted privately. Such consultation commences with the payment of *gwiwan bori* which consists of a certain amount of money for the services of the medium and of gifts to the spirit in expectation. The gifts differ according to the tribes. For instance in case of the *Turawa* spirits, cigarettes of a certain brand was given as a gift.⁵⁸

In a Tswana tribe the people take a traditional beer or slaughter a cow or goat or offer certain food from the harvest. There are cases whereby spirits demand any domestic utensils, e.g. a basin or cup, to be taken to the grave of such spirit. Krings narrates his tape-record story as follows:

*having received the gwiawan bori the medium would start to silently recite certain praise formulae directed to the spirit, cigarettes of a certain brand were sometimes accompanied by the inhalation of incense, in order to attract the spirits' attention. Following the summoning of the spirit, the jan gora, comprising a series of ritualized physical actions, indicated the spirit's mounting of his medium. Having taken the body of his medium the spirit would stand up and call, or rather shout the names of his spirit relatives. Then followed the mutual greeting and the announcement of my proposed interview.*⁵⁹

The conversation about why they are consulted commences here. If there is an illness in the family, the spirits will reveal why it was allowed and what should be done to heal or satisfy

⁵⁸ Krings 1999, 53

⁵⁹ Krings 1999,53

them. The spirits also warn people on certain things which they are doing but which are not satisfying them. That was another way of consulting those spirits and satisfying them.

In Mali the cult of *Nya* understands possession as a privilege of a minority of male members of a society into which they have been initiated. These possessed men still belong to powerful lineages and their careers never begin as an illness. According to the *Nya* traditions the possession confirms a dedication to a specific localized deity. It is related to divination, a means of expression of a superior voice and a shamanistic technique.⁶⁰ It is believed that *Nya* controls rainfall, favors fertility and plays a protective role against witches and terrible diseases. In many cases people used to gather at a shrine to consult *Nya*, to get advices on domestic matters of life and also for diagnoses after repeated misfortunes. They make sacrifices of dogs and chickens to *Nya*, such that they can receive blessings and forgiveness.⁶¹

The Sotho-Tswana spirits are known as ancestors, *badimo*, like *Nya* will prefer a cow, goat, or chicken sacrifice. It is very rare that a dog can be used. Nevertheless according to the Malian cult of *Nya*, a dog is viewed as a substitutive victim replacing a hyena or wild animals which are associated with witchcraft. This kind of ritual is practised in the *Nya* cult. The ceremony takes place at the bush where all kinds of knowledge comes from.

Let us see how the *Nya* cult performs their cult ritual. At the *Nya*'s wood, while the possessed persons are 'set free' by *Nya*, the altars are taken from the bags and placed in large pots on top of which dogs and chicken are sacrificed. In order to nourish *Nya*, the altars are covered with sacrificial blood.⁶² Then the meat is transported to the village in order to be cooked and eaten by the initiates. In the weak light of a straw fire, at the door of the sanctuary,

⁶⁰ Colleyn 1999,68

⁶¹ *ibid.*,p.68

⁶² Colleyn 1999,70

with his hands resting on the altars bags, the specially accredited possessed man called *Nya's* mouth, *Nya da*, or messenger, *mututumo*, pronounces oracles, foretells, gives advices, threatens the malevolent witches, answers the supplications and mediates in the conflicts between villagers. They listen attentively to the possessed man because it is believed that what he says is very essential.⁶³

This ritual plays an important role in the social, economic and political life of the people. Healing is still the main subject here. People are protected against what can cause harm to their lives. This shows that healing is one of the essential elements in the life of an African. The approach is always holistic. This means that there should be balance in the social and economic life of a person. If one person is sick the whole family is affected. Traditional Healing in many African communities is a collective activity. Everyone in the community participate. Africans enjoys a good life. This can only happen if they continue paying respect to their ancestors. This will end sufferings, diseases, and poverty. Traditional healing is part of their daily activity.

⁶³ Ibid.,70

3. Christian Healing in Africa

Healing is also one of the most important ministries in the Christian religion. The Christian Church has been so active in the healing ministry for many centuries. Healing is taken seriously within the Church. A Church which does not practise the healing ministry is considered as not fulfilling its ministry. The Bible also indicates that healing is very important. People want to be healed both, physically and spiritually.

The Church ministry is deeply rooted in the story of God's dealings with the afflicted humanity. During the twentieth century we saw the re-emergence of some developments on healing after the Second World War that led to a variety of influences. For example the achievements of western medicine, the founding of the World Health Organization, the rise of psychologies which emphasize the whole person, a growing interest in the alternative treatments, the coming together of medical and pastoral thinking and practices through such bodies as the

Institute of Religion and Medicine, the new openness to the miraculous emergence of the charismatic, renewal and third wave movements in the Churches.⁶⁴ There is no doubt that the healing ministry of the Church went under tremendous influence throughout decades. Let us find out how Christianity understands healing.

Christianity understands healing as a process that can be categorized into stages.

*The first stage of healing is the alleviation of symptoms and this is often the doctor's first task in any given situation... The second stage is the eradication of disease, and must be our aim in healing of every disease... The third stage is the restoration of bodily structure and function, the harmony of which has been disturbed by the disease process... The fourth stage of healing is the achievement of the purpose of the whole so that men may realize the purpose for which they were created.*⁶⁵

3.1. Christian understanding of health

Christians understand health as

*a state of complete physical, mental and social well being
and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*⁶⁶

Health is not only where there is no any disease or infirmity. In other words, health is not just a purely physical phenomenon confined to the body. It includes the mind, spirituality and the

⁶⁴ Hurding 1992,68

⁶⁵ Wilkinson 1965,29-30

⁶⁶ Vere and Wilkison 1997,60

society in which people live. We can say that it deals with all areas of life. This means that anything which disturbs the person's life can be considered as unhealthy.

Health is taken in a holistic way or approach. The word 'wholeness' take us to the most important Christian term for health namely 'salvation'. Health is associated with the concept of being saved or delivered from danger as of spiritual salvation⁶⁷. Therefore wholeness includes both, the physical and spiritual dimension of the person. They are all combined for the restoration of the wholeness of a person. For instance we read in the Bible that Jesus healed a woman with a choric hemorrhage. He also healed others from spiritual disabilities. (Mark 5:34 and Luke 7:50).

The main objective of Christian healing is to stay healthy. That will enable us to worship, serve, praise and glorify God at all times. We know that from reality many cannot manage to continue praising God while their lives are experiencing physical and spiritual sufferings.

In Christianity healing can generally be classified in three components. Those include healing and wholeness, healing and others, lastly healing and suffering. Healing and wholeness means that through Christ we have been made whole and we will be made whole. Actually it is where we have this overview of wholeness as a state, process and goal that we can avoid some of the pitfalls, which lie in wait within the various healing ministries⁶⁸

People emphasise that healing occurs not in isolation. It cannot take place in a vacuum, and the road to wholeness inevitably involves others. If one member of the community is healed from any kind of sickness, the whole community rejoices.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*,p.72

⁶⁸ Hurding 1992,70

3.2. The causes of sickness or illness

The biblical understanding on the issue of the causes of sickness keeps on developing through out Church history. In the Old Testament God was the cause and the source of all what happened to humankind. This means, God was the source of health and illness. For instance in (Deuteronomy 32:39) God is the one who kills and gives life at the same time.

Healing and Suffering is biblical. Many people think that if they are in Christ they cannot suffer from any kind of sickness. Nevertheless we understand that the problems of evil, affliction and disasters, are made clear in the Bible that we have a God who does not only heal but also permits and uses suffering.⁶⁹

Sickness was also understood as punishment for sin. God punishes people if they are not obedient. For example Gehazi was punished with leprosy because he disobeyed Elish. (2 Kings 5:20-27) It was also seen as God's way of humbling human pride and as means of teaching the sinner to depend on God. For instance the book of Proverbs 3:7-8 says that to turn from sin is to go back to God's will.

There were situations where even righteous people do suffered. An explanation should be given. It is believed that an individual was considered essentially as part of the community. Therefore suffering of some people is explained by reference to the wickedness of others. There are many accounts in the Old Testament for this kind of understanding. For example King David story in 2.Samuel 24:10-25 shows how the Israelites suffered because of his sinful acts. There was also a belief that illness is caused by Satan in order to harm people and take them away from God.

⁶⁹ Hurding 1999,72

Later during the inter-testament, sickness was seen to have natural causes such as overreacting and gluttony, as it is recorded in the book of Ecclesiastes 37:30-31. This thinking influenced many people. The scientific explanation like the above was needed. Christians reject the popular view that the person who is sick must have sinned against God. There are many infections, bacteria, evil powers etc which can cause illness to the people. Sin is not the sole cause of sickness.

Sickness is ordinarily not directly willed by God, but it is part of our fallen human condition and is often permitted. Through the power of the resurrection, God's life is breaking into our wounded world, and he gives us the power to cooperate with him by healing the sick and healing a sick, disordered world as well.⁷⁰

Many people question the credibility of the Christian God today. The main reason is why God allows suffering. The issue of God's presence in humanity is sparked off by symptoms of sickness, misery and persecution.⁷¹ Christian theologians have struggled to convince people that suffering is part of humanity. They did so by portraying Jesus sufferings during his trial and on the cross to show that even the Son of God suffered.

Christians in Africa are still not yet convinced by the theology of suffering. It is contrary to their understanding of God. Suffering for them is associated with the absence of God from their lives, with curse and evil powers. They cannot understand a God who suffers. How can God suffer? This is confirmed by the debate among Africans who claim that God caused HIV/AIDS. While others are saying it is the punishment from God, others argue that how can the loving God

⁷⁰ MacNutt 1999,68

⁷¹ Gerstenberger 1992,15

not help his people. Of course, other's standpoint is that suffering is part of humanity. Let us look at the Christian understanding of suffering.

Suffering can be described as a mystery that all of us wrestle with in some form or other. It can be in the form of illness, sickness, poverty, oppression etc. The will of God is that people should be free from all sorts of sufferings.

God has revealed himself as being on the side of life (he is life), of wholeness, of health in spirit, mind, and body. In general, it is God's desire that we be healthy rather than sick.⁷²

There is no illness that God cannot cure because God has power to do all things. Therefore God shall respond to people's prayers for healing at all times unless there are some obstacles or the sickness is sent or permitted for some greater reasons. God does not want to see people suffering. There are cases where sufferings have a purpose, especially if it is an illness. In other words, suffering itself is evil, but good may result from it.

The Bible clearly indicates that some sickness or suffering was done for the purpose of bringing good. The apostle Paul is one of the victims of this transformation. He was blinded on his way to Damascus for three days. His life was completely changed. He became very strong and powerful on proclaiming the Good News. This transformation came out because of sickness. He confessed when evangelizing to the Galatians:

You have never treated me in an unfriendly manner before; even at the beginning when that illness gave me the opportunity to preach the Good News to you, you never showed the least sign of being

⁷² MacNutt 1999,67

revolted or disgusted by my disease that was such a trial to you...(Galatians 14:13-15)

There is a theology of redemptive suffering among the saints who have asked Christ to share in his cross as a special privilege. This means that we must not look at suffering only associated with the devil and health only with God. There are some cases where suffering helps people to come to God, through redemption.

This thinking shall draw us to the pastoral counseling strategy on sick people.

Patients are asked by chaplains that God is offering them a chance to accept this sickness as a blessing. This is difficult for the patients to do. Nevertheless,

*redemptive sickness is the exception, not the rule*⁷³.

People have to bear in mind that it does not happen in all cases.

3. 3 Jesus Christ, the healer

The Christian core teachings are in Jesus Christ. In Christianity Jesus Christ is the center of healing. We can read this in the four Gospels of the Bible. Jesus Christ found himself surrounded by people who were suffering and asking him for healing. Jesus knew their problems and that is why he performed his Messiahship healing miraculously. People's lives were disturbed and they needed help.

Jesus did not only cure diseases but also helped people towards repentance. In most cases he commanded people not to sin any more after healing them. For instance Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic before healing him. (Luke 5:20) It is very interesting that there is no where

⁷³ MacNutt 1999,69

in the Bible where Jesus asked the sick person about what she/he had done and whether the victim had sinned being a precondition for healing. In most cases there were no interrogations before healing. What is interesting is that Jesus warned people not to sin any more.

The remaining question is whether sin was associated with illness? Nevertheless, we can argue that it is the divinity of Christ. Jesus Christ based his healing ministry not on popularity but on giving life to the people. Jesus said: *come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest.* (Matthew 11:28). This makes Jesus' healing ministry unique from other methods. He calls people to come without any payments or rewards. That was his basic task.

3.3.1 Jesus Christ's way of healing

Jesus Christ's healing ministry should be understood in the light of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God was the first centre of his ministry.⁷⁴ According to the gospels, Jesus Christ did not have a consultation room neither bones nor scientific equipments for healing. In most cases he healed by the spoken word. He touched people and they were cured.

Nevertheless there were situations where he used some material elements, things from nature, for healing e.g. mud, washing at the river. Jesus healed all kinds of illnesses and sicknesses in his ministry. It is nowhere in the Bible recorded that he failed to cure certain diseases. They include blindness, deafness, the dumb, the downtrodden and even resurrected Lazarus from the dead.(John 11:14ff) Some people were healed through exorcism whereby the Name of Jesus Christ was the key player. We have read in the bible that Jesus disciples continued healing in the Name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ possessed extraordinary powers to perform such miraculous healing, because He was the Messiah.⁷⁵

3.4 The Church Healing Ministry today

⁷⁴ Lucas and May 1997, 89

⁷⁵ MacNutt 1999, 201

The Church finds itself in a situation where people have lost confidence in God's healing, love and mercy. People wanted practical healing of both their physical and spiritual needs. The modern scientific worldview gave rise to the discovery of the atom, bacteria as the cause of much diseases, the emergence of antibiotics and individualism. This is a very powerful worldview of explaining things. If someone is ill, healing comes through the right medication. The Church started to face challenges from the scientific world. Something practical was supposed to be done to deal with both, physical and spiritual illness.

3.4.1 Health Facilities

Modern medication became a necessity for the Church. The Church started building Christian hospitals, clinics and medical schools. That was not because the Church had lost hope in Jesus Christ's healing, but the feeling was that God was no longer willing to heal people directly by miracles except by strictly material and physical means. This is still common on the lips of many theologians from the mainline Churches today. The church diaconal service, for a long time was regarded as even more important in the church than in the government. The Church started providing formal health and education services as well as community services of various kinds.

Nevertheless there are still dramatic cases today where God heals people miraculously, and many Christians are convinced that God still cares for them. We see this in Charismatic Christian Movements and the African Independent Churches today.

Pastors and priests were compelled to work hand in hand with their counterparts' medical physicians. The Church is running clinics and hospitals. In Africa, the mission clinics and

hospitals still exist. Of course some have been nationalized by the states for different reasons, while others are run by both sharing costs. In most cases the main line churches were the ones who pioneered scientific diaconal healing.

The Church is still a major provider of other community services including broad ranges of social services to communities. In many cases development projects are often externally financed. Churches are facilitators of less formal, often voluntary initiatives in their communities, including care for elderly, sick, orphaned and vulnerable children.

Other activities provided by the Church include visits to the sick, mourning community members and a wide range of other activities. These worship services usually involve prayers which call for divine interference.⁷⁶ Counselling is done to the bereaved. The services are designed to work regardless of any miracles.

Many people in Africa today prefer to visit mission hospitals and clinics rather than government owned ones. Of course the service could be different because church institutions are concerned not only with physical healing but also with spiritual healing.

Some Pentecostals or Charismatic movements within Christianity are very skeptical when coming to the scientific knowledge of modern physicians. Their members are advised not to visit medical practitioners because they believe that a prayer is the answer to their sickness. This ideology has a background in the dichotomy between science and religion.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ MacNutt 1999,206

⁷⁷ *ibid.*,p.205

The Christian Church took initiative to sponsor people to become physicians in order to provide physical healing to the people. Their understanding was that those physicians possess wisdom from God. Christianity is an infant of Judaism. There is clear evidence on what Jewish people believed in the days shortly before the birth of Jesus.

Hold the physician in honor, for he is essential to you, and God it was who established his profession. From God the doctor has his wisdom, and the king provides for his sustenance. His knowledge makes the doctor distinguished, and gives him access to those in authority. God makes the earth yield healing herbs which the prudent man should not neglect; Was not the water sweetened by a twig that men might learn his power? He endows us with the knowledge to glory in his mighty works, Through which the doctor eases pain the druggist prepares his medicines; Thus God's creative work continues without cease in its efficacy on the surface of the earth.⁷⁸

This theology provided the Church an opportunity to indulge in scientific modern medication. The scientific modern medication is actually essential to the community. The Church started to see the validity of this modern medication.

3.4.2 Pastoral care and counselling

Sickness is present on several levels. Those levels include spiritual sickness, emotional sickness, and bodily sickness. These may look different, but they are one. They are happening to one body. For instance, medical practitioners are more engaged in finding the treatment of the whole person, not just treating the physical part.

It is so important for us to realize this: the person who comes to us asking for prayer for the heart condition may need far more

⁷⁸ MacNutt 1999,205-206

*than prayer for the physical heart- the bodily organ. She may also be suffering from a broken heart emotionally. The physical healing probably won't take place until inner healing and forgiving take place.*⁷⁹

The Church still insists that the complex nature of sickness and its related problems are not all solved by medical doctors alone. What matters a lot for the Church is the nature of the sickness. For instances an illness is accompanied by various kinds of feelings, anger, discouragement, loneliness, bitterness, confusion, despair, fear, depression, stress to the family etc. In this situation the medical doctors can heal only where the pain is on the body, but not the body as a whole.

Many medical practitioners today are convinced that most of our illnesses are related to stress and depression. This makes healing difficult. Medical practitioners also discovered that certain sicknesses are caused by emotions. For instance it is believed that anger is not dealt with, but has moved into chronic hostility and bitterness leads to heart disease and various other ailments⁸⁰.

The Church instigates pastoral counselling as another form of healing. Counselling actually was not taken as one of medical disciplines. It was developed after it was discovery that medical discipline cannot heal spiritual and emotional problems. There was a need for counselling because certain illnesses were caused by emotional disturbances. The medical practitioners were not trained for such a task.

The Church discovered that people who need counselling are mostly those who have personal problems. People find themselves in difficult situation of stress and depression. These

⁷⁹ *ibid.*,p.190

⁸⁰ MacNutt 1999,190

people like to talk to somebody who is not emotionally or socially involved in their lives. Such a person should be well trained in the field of counselling. The Church started training pastors, chaplains, sisters, and deacons in the field of counselling. In his book Oates summarises the aim of counselling as

*to facilitate and quicken personality growth and development, to help persons to modify life patterns with which they have become increasingly unhappy, and to provide comradeship and wisdom for persons facing the inevitable losses and disappointments in life.*⁸¹

This service is very rare at the hospitals and clinics or at the traditional and medical practitioners. The Church provides counselling at their hospitals, clinics and health institutions. It is expected that a counsellor should provide objectivity and a reasonable degree of privacy for them. The counselling should be done on mutual understanding between the counsellor and the client.

Counselling is done by many professionals. Those include social workers, nurses, pastors etc. The Church felt to have their own way of counselling which is relating to their faith. This is where the pastoral counselling comes into the scene. Pastoral counselling is when the client and the counsellor focus their relationship with God for the progress of their lives.⁸² This does not mean that ordained pastor are exempted from the same disciplines required of counsellors of other professional disciplines. Pastors uses other disciplines e.g. ethics, philosophy, anthropology, psychology etc, as supporting data for the information which can also help them to widen the scope of counseling sessions. Oates says that,

they become the basis for interprofessional collaboration rather

⁸¹ Oates 1974,9

⁸² Oates 1974,11

*than mere cooperation or amateurish competition.*⁸³

The major difference of pastoral counselling from others is that pastoral counselling strongly takes God as a reality. This is what is known as the ultimate concern of a person. It is very important for believers and pastors to take that into consideration seriously. A pastoral counselor represents the Church or is the image of the Church for better or for worse in the eyes of the client. We can go as far as saying that pastoral counsellor represents God image.⁸⁴ This is different from other general counsellors. Nevertheless, this does not mean that such a counsellor shall only concentrate on the heavenly articulation of divine words neglecting the context of the client. That is the reason why pastoral counsellor should be well equipped with other fields.

3.4.3 The Theology of counselling

Christianity has taken counselling as a vital discipline which should be incorporated into theology. Christian theologian discovered that there is a need for theology in counselling. The reason being that human being is not autonomous. Human beings depend upon their Creator. Their Creator is the one who gives them life, healing and existence. In other words, a human being was created as a dependent being. Therefore it is compulsory for them to ask, understand and learn what their creator needs from them. That is where theology comes into the scene of counselling.⁸⁵

In order to understand a person as a counselor, a person should be aware of their dependence on God and the way they live out their faith. For instance God's Words for Christian communities and other communities is very important. In the gospel according to John

⁸³ *ibid.*,p.12

⁸⁴ *ibid.*,p.11

⁸⁵ Oates 1974,58

1:1, it is indicated that God's Word was there from the beginning.⁸⁶ God's Word is one of the essential factors in the life of a human being. We cannot practice counselling without this Word, especially when counselling believers. The task of theology is to help people to understand their relation with God's Word. If such task is done, a pastoral counsellor shall be in a good position to provide counselling for a client.

In his writings Adams has discovered that God's Word is a necessity to human existence according to the Scripture.

Life without God's Word is absurd (it is sheer vanity, as the writer of Ecclesiastes put it) because capacity for knowledge (understanding of facts, properly interpreted and related) is derived, not native to human nature. This means that from the creation on, man was made to be moulded by counselling which is the directive Word of another, given from the outside.⁸⁷

God created Adam and made him the master of the earth. He was given the task of naming animals and trees and he was told how to use them as well as the possible consequences of their misuse. God was providing counselling to human beings from the beginning. The Church is now playing a role in counselling.

The pastoral care and counselling enables the sick person to cope with physiological problems, the inner conflicts and emotional disturbances. It is also concerned with the way people are living in this changing world of today.⁸⁸ Christianity is no longer concentrating on the spiritual life of people only, but also on their physical needs. The Church is concerned with of the social, economical and political matters affecting people. For instance poverty can result in

⁸⁶ Adams 1979,1

⁸⁷ Adams 1979,2

⁸⁸ Oates 1974,12

many social problems, e.g. prostitution and crime. In a situation where there is such economic crisis, people are more depressed and stressed. It is here where pastoral counselling is playing a vital role.

Christians put forward a prayer during their pastoral care and counselling sessions. Christians believe in miraculous inner healing through the power of Jesus Christ. Jesus promotes the love of each other, serving each other and hope. Therefore pastoral care and counselling is a basic ministry of the Church. The Apostle Paul emphasised strongly love, faith and hope as the models for pastoral care and counselling.

In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love. 1Corinthians 13:13.

3.4.4 Healing through Prayer and Psychiatry

We already said that for Christians prayer plays a role in healing. Today some physicians challenge the credibility of a prayer. They usually try to examine the scientific evidence for the value of a prayer. They are not the only ones who do so, many people who enquired healing from churches do not loss trust on the power of a prayer.

Nevertheless the new research is coming out with something positive for the Christians. There are Christian Healing Ministries who perform a scientific study on the Christian healing. It was discovered that the Christian prayer for healing is truly the new frontier in what has come to be known as alternative medicine or complementary medicine. Some expressions from those who experienced the power of prayer are:

*prayer is better than prednisone... and
prayer can heal what doctors and drugs cannot do alone.⁸⁹*

⁸⁹ MacNutt 1999,208-209

Christians believe that God cures directly through a prayer, but not in all cases. African people mostly prefer to be cured directly through a prayer. In cases where healing and cure do not happen immediately, something should be blamed. Of course in African churches it also depends on the individual who is praying for the patient. There are pastors or Christian prophets who are believed to possess the gift of healing with prayers. This is common in Charismatic, Pentecostal and African Independent Churches movements within Christianity.

Psychiatry is one of the influential methods of healing developed in Christian life, as we have already discussed in counselling. It is probably true to say that psychiatry is good in its analysis of problems than it is on cure. It helps a person to know exactly what to pray for. A psychiatrist's business often lies in exploring those parts of the patient's experience which arouse feelings of fear, shame and disgust.⁹⁰ The Holy Spirit is there to help us on what to pray for, but this method helps not only to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit but also on our human capacity that God has given to us. It is one of the ministries of inner healing. The emotions and feelings of a patient are very important. The one who is praying should be aware of this fact. It shows that Psychiatry is not yet taken seriously by some Christian counsellors.

This method of healing helps us to understand our human, emotional problems and often suggests how to cope with them. It explores the problems in order to bring them out into the daylight. The Grace of God helps a patient to work on her/his problems. Then the patient experiences God's healing power and deliverance. This helps the person to come to the sense of changing his/her life. We can now say that

*Those of us who pray for inner healing should know something about the intricacies of the human mind if we are really going to help the people we pray for.*⁹¹

⁹⁰ Mathers 1970,8

⁹¹ MacNatt 1999,215

3.4.5 Healing through the Sacraments

The sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion are means of grace. This means that God extends his grace to us through these sacraments. They are God's expression of the saving and healing presence in the church. God restores human beings through sacraments. The Church fathers called the Eucharist a medicine of immortality, as it provides us not only with a remedy on earth, but also with eternal life. It is meant for both, the body and the soul.

The sacraments are gifts of God, which He bestows freely. They cannot be manipulated to cure the illness. Thus, they help us to challenge healing practices based on superstitions. Dualism separated body or matter from spirit or soul is challenged by sacramental approaches on healing and the wholeness which consider human beings as a unity of the body, mind and spirit.

a) Holy Communion

During the early Church the Lord's Supper was known as the breaking of the bread. It was later described as thanksgiving or Eucharist during the second century. This word was later substituted by *sacrificium* or *oblitio* later. During the fifth century the prominent term became Mass or *Missa*⁹². The Eucharist is used by different traditions today, even though they differ with regard to its theology.

The Eucharist was understood as praising of the Father for the redemption brought by the Son and of the Spirit who has been released into history through the salvific sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.(John15:26;16:7ff). As a sacrament it means entering into that attitude of praise and thanks to the Father, of identifying with the transformed humanity of Christ and experience the works of the Spirit within our hearts. (2Corinthians 1:22 and Romans 8:29)

⁹² Theron,Hestens and Dreyer, 1999,50

There was an old debate about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The presence of Christ on the Holy Communion brings us to the concept of healing. Jesus Christ states his presence by identifying bread and wine with his body and blood. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus again claimed that the bread he shall give is his flesh.(John 6:51ff) Some church fathers like Clement of Alexandria argued that the elements of the Eucharist are an equivalent to Christ's body and blood.

Jesus' blood, therefore, the wine

*is a mingling (κρῶσις) of the Logos with material substance, and those who drink it are sanctified in body and soul.*⁹³

The presence of Christ in the elements of the Eucharist means that there is a healing power in them. The Holy Spirit transforms the physical elements to be holy. John of Damascus claimed that

*the Holy Spirit comes upon them and achieves things which surpass every word and thought.*⁹⁴

The presence of Christ is discerned as spiritual in those elements. In his writings Luther understood the sacrament of the Altar as

*the true body and blood of the Lord Christ in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by Christ's word to eat and drink. As we said of Baptism that it is not mere water, so we say here that the sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread or wine such as is served at the table. It is bread and wine comprehended in God's Word and connected with it. It is the Word, I maintain, which distinguishes it from mere bread and wine and constitutes it a sacrament which is rightly called Christ's body and blood.*⁹⁵

⁹³ Kelly 1977,213

⁹⁴ Mc Grath 1995,295

In this sacrament Christ offers us all the treasure he brought from heaven for us to which he most graciously invites us in other places, as it says in Mat.11:28

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you. This reformer strongly urged his followers of his time to

*never regard the sacrament as a harmful thing from which we should flee, but as a pure, wholesome, soothing medicine which aids and quickens us in both soul and body. For where the soul is healed, the body has benefited also. Why, then, do we act as if the sacrament were a poison which would kill us if we ate of it?*⁹⁶

Therefore many Christian theologians associate the Holy Communion with healing. It provides the body and the soul with healing. Jesus answered the Pharisees that

those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.(Mathew 9:12)

He was referring to those who labor and are heavy-laden with sin, fear of death, and assaults of flesh and the devil. Many people used to ask for the Holy Communion whenever they are seriously ill. They have faith that through the presence of Christ in those elements, they will be healed from physical pains and spiritual disabilities.

There are views that African Christians from mainline churches take the Holy Communion very seriously. I observed in my congregation that, a person cannot stay for a long time without partaking in it. During interview with congregants of the Lutheran congregation in Gaborone, I discovered that there are unfounded views that associate sickness and bad luck with sin against God.⁹⁷ Therefore if a person is living a sinful life, he/she is engulfed by sickness and bad luck.

⁹⁵ Tappert 1959,447-448

⁹⁶ Tappert 1959,454

⁹⁷ Gaborone Lutheran Congregation, an interview with congregants on May 2004, in Gaborone

Churches used to be full whenever there is a Holy Communion worship service. The Holy Communion is a sacrament of grace and forgiveness of sins. The eating and the drinking cleanses from sins and the person is healed from earthly problems. That is another way of understanding the power that is working through the Holy Communion.

There is also an argument about whether children and unconfirmed people should partake in the Holy Communion. The Lutherans churches in Botswana do not give the Holy Communion sacrament to unconfirmed people and children. The issue here is that they should be taught first and be confirmed, rather than to drink and eat without knowledge.

During an interview with Cosmos Moenga a pastor in the Lutheran church, argued that the Holy Communion is a means of God's grace and a free gift from God. It should not be denied to those who did not attend confirmation classes. Are the unconfirmed people and children denied the power of healing that is experienced in this sacrament?⁹⁸ This argument is very common in many African mainline churches. It is still difficult for these churches to allow unconfirmed people to partake in the Holy Communion.

There are still practices in the Lutheran churches of Botswana, where even people who are confirmed are disallowed to partake in the Lord's Supper because they have committed certain sins or broken some church laws. For instance, if a woman fell pregnant out of wedlock, this woman is not allowed to participate in the Lords Supper for a certain period of time. This woman and her partner should do some lessons and be given absolution. They will be free to participate in the Holy Communion. They can join the others in the Lord's Supper.⁹⁹ This practice is still common in some mainline churches in Africa.

Botswana

⁹⁸ Moenga, an interview on 3rd February 2004 at 8:00am in Gaborone, Botswana

⁹⁹ Practices in The Lutheran Church of Botswana and Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, Botswana dioceses 2004.

There is no doubt that this sacrament is associated with healing. For instance the ancient prayers from the Roman Catholic rite reflect this deep faith in healing through the Holy Communion. The prayer reads as follows:

*Lord Jesus Christ, with faith in your love and mercy I eat your body and drink your blood. Let it not bring me condemnation, but health in mind and body. Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.*¹⁰⁰

Some Christian denominations around the world including Africa use the Holy Communion for healing. There are claims of testimonies where people were healed through this sacrament. They believe that the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine and achieves things which surpass every word and thought.¹⁰¹ Theologically speaking, people should not be denied this gracious free gift from God. The Eucharist itself is a primary transcultural expression of the Church's concern for the sick.

b) Baptism

The baptism rite has a connection with the healing power in the Church. Long ago, the water for baptism was mixed with salt. We can read this on one of the Ancient Catholic prayers for the baptism rite:

*Therefore, we beg you, O Lord our God, to sanctify by your power this salt which you have created and to bless it with your blessing, so that it may become a perfect medicine for all who receive it and may remain always in every fibre of their being.*¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ MacNutt 1999,221

¹⁰¹ McGrath 1995,295

¹⁰² *ibid.*,p.220

This is the reason why salt is still very much important in the African Independent Churches today. They use it frequently during their healing rituals. Furthermore the water from the sea which is salty is believed to possess healing powers according to those churches. Christians understand that water alone cannot do those great things. The Holy Spirit is the only one who has such powers.

The power of the Holy Trinity becomes present in the water. Through baptism new life in Christ is experienced by a person. There were other components added to the baptism water. It was also believed that they are very important.

For instance the ancient blessing of the salt from the Catholic rite of baptism which until recently, read as follows:

*I exorcise you by the living God, the true God, the Holy God, the God of who brought you into being to safeguard the human race, and commanded you to be consecrated by sin servants for the benefit of those who are coming into the faith, so that by power of the Holy Trinity you might become a health-giving sacrament to put the enemy to flight.*¹⁰³

These added components cannot be neglected any how. Nevertheless today some other main line churches do not add them any more.

c) The Anointment

Anointment in the Christian Church is strongly associated with healing. In some churches anointment is not a sacrament but they believe in the value of anointing with oil. This has a biblical tradition. Jesus Christ also added it into his healing ministry. In the gospel according to Mark oil was used to cure people.

¹⁰³ MacNutt 1999,221

So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.(Mark 6:12-13)

In the book of James, Christians are advised how to handle sufferings.

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and if he has committed sins, and the Lord will raise up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.(James 5:14-15)

In the above passages there are phrases which deal with healing. Those are ‘will save’, ‘will raise him up’ and ‘will be forgiven’. These verses clearly mean healing in their original meaning. If a person is anointed with oil, such a person shall be saved or be healed in the sense of physical or bodily restoration. To be raised up can mean to be healed physically, while the forgiveness of sins can mean the spiritual healing.¹⁰⁴ The above verses, especially in the book of James means healing of sickness both, spiritual and physical healing. Anointing with oil was done, including forgiveness of sins around the fifth century. The oil was blessed by the bishop and it was taken home by people. They used it whenever sickness occurred. Prayer is very important here.

The prayer which was used to bless the oil, simply asked God to give it a curative power so that it might become a means for removing every sickness and disease, for the soundness of body, soul and spirit, for perfect well-being. This was the main task of a prayer during the anointment with oil. In case such a prayer is omitted, the oil will lack the power of healing.¹⁰⁵

The original practice of anointing began to change through the centuries; it’s use is still prominent in Christian life. In some churches today the anointment with oil is administered by

¹⁰⁴ MacNutt 1999,223

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.,p.224

ordained priests and pastors, because it was associated with the forgiveness of sins.¹⁰⁶ In most Christian Churches today the rite of anointing and pastoral care for the sick states that the celebration of anointing consists of the laying on hands by a priest or pastor of the Church, the prayer of faith, and anointing of the sick with oil sanctified by God's blessing.¹⁰⁷

The anointing and laying of hands are the core elements of Christian rites of healing. They are handed down to us by apostolic tradition. They are transcultural in the sense that they have been preserved, though possibility re-expressed ritually in the course of contextualization. The main line churches today in Africa take this method of healing serious. The anointment is used during illnesses.

d) Confirmation

In the Catholic Church confirmation is regarded as a sacrament. Confirmation is believed to empower people for the ministry. The spirit that was experienced during baptism is empowered with the knowledge of God's word.¹⁰⁸ In some Protestant churches today in Africa people are not given the Holy Communion if they are not yet confirmed i.e. before going through Holy Communion sacrament classes. People have to be empowered with knowledge first and then they can be confirmed. As long as this sacrament is associated with the Holy Spirit, other Christians are convinced that it also possesses the power of healing.

e) Other sacraments

There are other sacraments which are associated with healing even though some of them are not regarded as sacraments in other churches, especially Protestants churches. The Catholic Church regards them as sacraments and the healing power can be experienced in them. Those

¹⁰⁶ MacNutt 1999,224

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.,p.227

¹⁰⁸ MacNutt 1999,222

include the sacrament of order, repentance and forgiveness and marriage¹⁰⁹. They believe that healing power is also present in these sacraments because of the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is believed that a priest carries out the duties of Christ, therefore dedicating his life for preaching, healing, and exorcising evil spirits in the greater name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Priests pray for the sick and bless them by laying hands. Ordination of priests or pastors is very much essential in the Christian communities. It is believed that during their ordination certain powers are bestowed on priests or pastors. That is the reason why this sacrament is associated with healing.

The confession of sins is also very important in the Christian church. This goes back to the issue of what causes sickness or suffering. Some argue that sickness and sufferings are the consequences of sin. In the Catholic churches penance is a sacrament. The Protestants disagree with that. Nevertheless healing can be deduced in this sacrament. It is important for a person to confess sin to her/his Christian fellows because this can help the patient to receive the inner healing. This shall relieve the patient and the patient shall have hope. Confession itself is a process of healing, for instance,

*just speaking it out and bringing it into the light is in itself part
of the healing process, recognized by psychologists and counselors.*¹¹⁰

Another importance of confessing sins is that the person sharing his/her sins can be helped to put sins in perspective and be given suggestions on how to conquer failings in future. Confession of sins is actually a healing that takes out our sins into light.

Churches use sacraments and other rites for healing. This healing is not one sided but it includes both, the physical and the spiritual healing. In summary we can say that sacraments are

¹⁰⁹ MacNutt 1999,227-234

¹¹⁰ Ibid.,p.228

very essential for Christian healing. They bring repentance during the reconciliation sacrament. Inner healing, physical healing and deliverance from demonic oppression are taken care of by sacraments or rites.

All rites of healing and all the extensions of the Eucharistic ministry are intended to surround people who are isolated or excluded with God's gift of the baptismal community. This was the core ministry of Jesus Christ. The Church continues this ministry by administering sacraments of healing to communities.

3.4.6 Faith healers and miracles

The Church believes strongly in Christ's miraculous healing as found in the scriptures. They understand God as the almighty, provider, creator of the universe and everything in it. This God is able to accomplish true miracles of healing, if needed. We read in the Bible how God healed people miraculously. The miracles were supernatural. It is difficult for some people today to believe in these miraculous healings performed by Jesus Christ. It is clear that an honest medical evaluation of many of the recorded miracles of healing makes one wonder, if they were all really supernatural as it is said.¹¹¹

The main issue today in Churches is that, why does God not perform many more miracles of healing like in the time of the Bible. This issue is very vital in this time of many incurable deadly diseases. This issue has led to the proliferation of many Charismatic Churches in Africa claiming to possess miraculous power of healing of any kind of diseases.

The Main Line Churches are very suspicious with regard to the healing powers of these Churches. They claim that they are just practicing magic, or superstition. The Main Line Churches accept that miracles are not frequently happening like during the New Testament era,

¹¹¹ Hagen 1961,58

but they believe that God's miracles are still happening. The problem is that we do not recognize them. Others say that God does not want to produce supernatural miracles of healing and that is the reason that we seldom see any repetitions of those miracles of the New Testament.

Many people who go to Church today are hunting for miraculous healing from their illness or sufferings. Nevertheless

*we can understand the problem of human disease and suffering enough to know that it is not necessarily best solved by performing a lot of miraculous cures. It may well be a sign weakness for us to expect a miraculous cure best left to God.*¹¹²

Christians are convinced that miraculous healings are not happening regularly because people have weak faith in God. Faith is taken seriously in the Christian beliefs. It is believed that those who have strong faith in God can perform miraculous healing through the name of Jesus Christ.

Faith healing is like ritual healing. It depends on certain rituals in most cases carried out by a healer. The faith of an individual is very important in healing. In other words, if a person does not have faith, healing is regarded likely not to occur. Faith is a very important factor in healing. In neo-Pentecostal Churches the emphasis is on the postulates that if a person has faith, his/her worldly life will gradually improve as a consequence of faith because it is related to the Holy Spirit. Faith is a condition related to the intensity in one's personal relation to the Lord, Jesus, or more often the Holy Spirit and the actual manifestation of that relation are seen in many different ways.¹¹³

Faith healing is one of the most important elements in ritual healing. It goes together with the inner feeling of a person. Christians are convinced that faith healing usually corresponds to the

¹¹² Hagen 1961,62

¹¹³ Eggen 2004, 54

faith of the gospels, especially in neo-Pentecostal Churches. Of course there are others who understand faith healing of the Gospels differently. For instance others argue that

*faith healing on the other hand doesn't necessarily promise healing as a result of faith, although it demands faith as a precondition for healing. However, as the Faith Gospel is rarely seen explicitly expressed at its extreme, this is not necessary important.*¹¹⁴

In Charismatic Churches in Botswana sick people are advised to turn to Christ and have strong faith in order to be healed. Therefore faith in God is not only a matter of losing out on some important spiritual values, but it is actually running a greater health risk than it should.

There are too many faith healers in Africa today. They belong to Pentecostal movements. These healers do their healing ministries through crusades in different African countries. Their theology of healing is based on miraculous healing which, they claim that it happens only if a person has faith in God. There are people who give testimonies about how they were cured during such healing crusades.

Recently there was such a crusade during the Easter holidays in Gaborone, Botswana conducted by a faith healer from Swaziland called Dlamini. People gave testimonies after Dlamini's miraculous healings. Those testimonies were as follows:

...had a painful knee and has been having nightmares for a month... while Dlamini was praying the previous night he felt the pain leaving his knee and after the healing he had a night free of nightmares. Tshiamo who said she has attempted to commit suicide on several occasions since 2002. She was haunted by evil spirits and she saw haunted by evil spirits and she saw spirits of

¹¹⁴ Ibid.,p.55

*people plotting her and this made her fear...
Last night after the pastor prayed for me I could feel freedom
and I regained my senses and now that I regained my senses and
now that fear is gone. said Tshiamo.*¹¹⁵

There are too many unconfirmed testimonies of this kind in Botswana and some. There are even faith healers who claim that if people believe in God they can be cured from HIV/AIDS. It is alleged that there are those who advise their members to cease consulting traditional healers and also not go to hospitals or clinics. They should just only have faith in God. This ministry of healing is receiving popularity in parts of Africa.

3.5 Healing in the African Independent Churches (AIC)

The first African Independent Churches were Ethiopian Churches which did not at all change position of their practice with regards to traditional healing versus miraculous healing. They did not cease their traditional and cultural practices after they had accepted Christianity. They also played a significant role in the expansion of the diaconal approach in giving more attention to political issues of that time. They preached against racial discrimination and oppression. They focused on the context rather than the individual person and made it clear that there is a need for political change rather than charity as the solution to peoples' misfortunes.¹¹⁶

These Churches continue to approach healing and political change hand in hand. They tackled issues of health, unemployment and social problems. For instance many Ethiopian

¹¹⁵ Leagajang 2004, p 2. News Paper.

¹¹⁶ Eggen 2004,57

Churches started to provide religious healing like the Zionist Churches in Southern Africa. Of course there is a shift in their theology of liberation. It seems that nowadays politics is not an important issue for Ethiopian Churches and most seem to focus mainly on individual or very local problems. And today the main big problem is that people are hunting for physical healing and spiritual healing.

Their focus on the individual misfortunes may be correlated with their reduced role as political agencies. Schoffeleers claims that with no exception, healing Churches are politically acquiescent and he elaborates some mechanisms behind the mutually excluding relation between healing service and political activity. Healing means to individualize and thereby depoliticize the cause of one's illness.¹¹⁷

The African Independent Churches differ little from the mainline Churches which are more Europeanized in the issue of healing. Nevertheless they did not have the capacity to provide services comparable to the service of the Main Line Churches (mission churches). They did not have foreign donor agencies. These Churches were established because Christianity in its European form, as a religion limited to the transcendent, could not provide a recipe for the healing like the African religion according to the Norwegian professor Jarl Simensen.¹¹⁸ Healing in these Churches is given first priority. They are very famous for their tremendous healing powers.

They believe strongly in the healing power of Jesus Christ such that others do not allow their members to contact medical practitioners at hospitals and clinics.¹¹⁹ Their argument is that this

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,p.58

¹¹⁸ Engelsviken 1991,81

¹¹⁹ Amanze 1998,176

negates the healing power of God which is achieved through faith alone. Members should have faith; if their faith is weak they shall perish because of illness.

People are flocking to them, even those from the mainline churches. They also practise the exorcism of evil spirits. Another thing that makes them very popular is their healing which is contextual to the African cultures, religion and traditions.

*The treatment of illness or disease will always reflect African ideas expressed in diagnostic statements about illness.*¹²⁰

Their healing ceremony or ritual is dominated by African cultures, traditions and religion. What is important for them is the concept of enculturation. They are simultaneously convinced that Christianity has important ideas which are similar to the African religion, especially in matters of spirituality and healing. Therefore, their approach in healing is holistic. The spiritual and physical realms are connected.

Healers in these Churches see themselves as having been endowed with the supernatural power which characterized Jesus' healing ministry.¹²¹ They had discovered the healing powers in the Jesus Christ of the Bible. They went as far as saying that what Jesus Christ did in Palestine according to the Bible can also happen today, especially in healing.

Healing is performed by bishops, pastors, and prophets. They are the most essential people in the leadership of the Church and healing rituals. In order to be a pastor or bishop or prophet, theological education is not important, but what is important is to possess healing powers and be able to heal through prayers and be able to interpret visions, dreams and prophesies. It is very rare to find anybody who is in leadership of these churches without possessing such kinds of gifts.

¹²⁰ Dube 1988,116

¹²¹ Nthamburi 1990,46

Another thing is that a person should have been called to practise this ministry of healing. It is believed that God is the one who calls them to this healing ministry. Some of them get their calls from ancestors while others are trained to be healers, prophets, pastors and bishops. The training is done in congregations by other healers and prophets.

3.5.1 Baptism in the African Independent Churches (AIC)

The Christians in the AIC understanding of baptism is to infuse human beings with new life, the life of Jesus Christ, his presence and power of that life should be able to drive out all the powers of sickness and death. Baptism is understood as to be drawn. It is used by Christians to eradicate human sin and also the original sin.¹²²

The original sin is traced from Adam. It is one which made a sour relationship between God and people. If this old Adam is drawn out through baptism, a person becomes a new creature in Christ.¹²³ Therefore a person is liberated from evil powers and healing is brought to her/him. Jesus Christ's followers are identified by the Holy Baptism. He commanded his disciples to baptize all nations in his name. (Mat 28;20). This is one of the main tasks of the Christian Church.

a) Treatment of disease and illness through baptism

Faith is very important at this point. Illness is taken as a test. In other words, God can put man to test by allowing sickness. People who come for healing are told to believe strongly in God in order to receive healing. Healers found in these Churches are given power by the Holy Spirit to treat physical diseases and cast away evil spirits from patients.

¹²² MacNutt 1999,220

¹²³ Tappert 1959,349

The Kimbanguist Church healing ceremonies involve a union of a patient, extended family, friends, and neighbors and departed ones.¹²⁴ The healing includes the patient and other people the patient is living with, i.e. the whole community. This approach is holistic.

These Churches use water for healing. The water which is consecrated is used by people in their daily activities, for example, for the blessing of new houses, cars and livestock.¹²⁵ Water plays a vital role during the healing rituals. Sometimes they sprinkle it on painful parts of the patient's body. Then oil is applied after sprinkling. This water is mixed with certain herbs or medicine depending on what the Spirit is revealing to the prophet or the pastor. In Botswana, most African Independent Churches mix the healing water with *sewacho* (ashes from animal sacrifices or tree) followed by prayers, there after, the patient can drink it.¹²⁶

There is what is called 'induced vomiting'. It is whereby water is boiled and let to cool down a little bit. Then salt and vinegar are added to this water. The healer will pray for this water and the patient shall drink this until she/he starts vomiting.¹²⁷ There are also ritual baths where a patient takes a bath in the water mixed with *sewacho* which is made of cow dung and sometimes salt. Of course it depends on what it has been to the healer or prophet by Spirit.

Baptism is also used as a form of healing. The Holy Spirit is the only one which can reveal whether a patient can be healed through baptism. This is derived from the middle age whereby water was consecrated for baptism and also for rituals blowing away of evil spirits. The Independent Churches also have a ritual of thrashing of the body to get evil spirits out by hitting on the shoulder and legs while the person baptized stands or lying in the water, even throwing sea sand on the legs.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Nathamburi 1990,46

¹²⁵ Tovey 1988,25

¹²⁶ Amanze 1998,181

¹²⁷ Ibid.,p.180

¹²⁸ Oosthuizen 1988,170

Water plays an important role in baptism. They consecrate it first before the ritual of baptism can continue. The consecration is done by the baptizer who is mostly the prophet or pastor or bishop. The baptizer just enters into the sea or pool of water first and later with outstretched arms, blessing the water before baptism.

Sometimes this water is mixed with salt and it is considered a precious commodity, especially for those who are far away from the sea. In some practices baptism water is mixed with ash for medication. The consecration is done by dancing regularly around the water. The dancing is accompanied by singing and drumming.¹²⁹ This will be followed by exorcism and ritual. It is believed strongly that water and its component truly chase away evil powers from the one been healed or baptized.

Another method of healing found in these Churches is healing by wool strings. The string is tied around the waist, neck, legs and arms of a person depending on what the Spirit had revealed to the healer.¹³⁰ Those strings serve as protectors or guards against evil powers caused by witchcraft. They also give luck to people on daily social activities. They also cure some disease according to what is revealed to the prophet. In other words they have many purposes for this kind of healing.

They also use some ordinary human consumption and material for their healing. Those include vaseline from shops which will be prayed for together with some *muti* or traditional medicine.¹³¹ It will be given to a patient to rub on painful parts of the body. In these Churches

¹²⁹ Ibid.,p.173

¹³⁰ Amanze1998,182

¹³¹ Oosthuizen 1992,40

traditional medicine *muti* is used in some cases. They do not reject such medicine, unlike the main line churches.¹³²

Nevertheless the Spirit is still the one who reveals to the healer that the patient should be send to the modern hospitals or to the traditional practitioners for treatment or what kind of traditional medicine can heal the patient. The prophet (healer) is the one performing the healing. In most cases the prophet starts first by preaching about Christ as a healer during the worship service, and there after the healing activity shall proceed.

The laying of hands by the prophet, prayers, distribution of the holy water, other symbols of God's healing power and dramatic exorcism of evil spirits are done during the healing sessions. Jesus Christ here emerges in the African world as the one who cares, protects, restores, and who banishes fear.¹³³ This is the basic theology in the Independent Churches. It plays a vital role in attempting to formulate an African Christology. We can see that healing in these Churches is more contextual to the life of today. They are popular because

*they are Churches in the true sense of the word; they are hospitals and they are social welfare institutions.*¹³⁴

Their mission ideology is based on healing which, they claim that it is not covered properly by the mainline Churches. Even though mainline Churches came out with hospitals and clinics, these churches claim is still not enough for the African people. The main reason is that traditional and cultural healing is excluded at the hospitals and clinics. The African Independent Churches accommodate the traditional way of healing into their Christian belief. This becomes clear that

¹³² Amanze 1998,183

¹³³ Wessels 1990,114

¹³⁴ Oosthuizen 1991,48

one of the reasons for their formation was to contextualize Christian healing methods so that it can meet their needs.

Many people are joining the African Independent Churches for nothing else except for healing purposes. Of course after they get help automatically they become members. If you enquire from those members why they left their Main Line Churches and join the AIC, the common reply is always

*for a long time I was sick. I tried all sorts of treatments but without results. I received the advice to go to such –and-such a prophet. I did that and now I am better. Praise be to the Lord.*¹³⁵

We can see now that there are tremendous miracles happening in those Churches. They have great influence today on our continent. In Botswana people used to visit these Churches only for such kind of healing. If a person does not want to join them, she/he will pay for the healing. The members on the other hand are treated and healed for free. There are some African Independent Churches which claim that in their healing they do not use charms and magic, but pronounce healing in the name of Jesus Christ who overcame all evils, principalities and cosmic powers.¹³⁶

3.6 The Charismatic and Pentecostal movements

In the 1950s, Charismatic movements were developing in the Church.¹³⁷ This kind of charismatic movement was also found in Africa. Charismatic (charisma) is a term which is

¹³⁵ Wessels 1990,114

¹³⁶ Nthamburi 1990,47

¹³⁷ Lederle 1983,1

derived from the New Testament word for God's gifts of grace. In the first letter to the Corinthians 12:8-10 those gifts are indicated. These gifts attract most public attention are probably *glossolalia* or speaking in tongues, miraculous healing and extraordinary powers such as deliverance.

Today many people understand charisma as rebuking and driving out demonic spirits known as exorcism.¹³⁸ They are very famous with their miraculous healing. They are one of the streams found in Christianity. The Catholic and Protestant theologians were challenged by the charismatic movements.

For instance Bishop Lesslie Newbigin gave a penetrating analysis of the three main Christian groups to answer the question, 'how are we incorporated into Christ?'. The Protestants answered that by the word, which is by faith. The Roman Catholic says that it is by the sacraments, while the Pentecostals argued that it is by receiving and remaining in the Holy Spirit.¹³⁹

The answers given were very much interesting and challenging. The Charismatic ideas influenced Pentecostal movements within Christianity such that the twentieth century can be remembered as the era of Pentecostal- Charismatic Christianity. It was in that era when we saw a proliferation of these movements in Africa even today.

Their theology is based on spirituality and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is actually

a movement marked by spiritual enthusiasm and special gifts and which crosses all boundaries of culture, race, age and church tradition-is profoundly significant... Because no heart is pure

¹³⁸ Lederle 1983,1-2

¹³⁹ Ibid.,p.2

*that is not passionate and no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic,' the charismatic movement of today is the chief hope of the ecumenical.*¹⁴⁰

In Africa this movement became so powerful because some of its charismatic ideas were similar to the African way of worship.

3.6.1 Healing in the Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches

Jesus Christ is the main healer. They strongly believe in the biblical way of Jesus Christ methods of healing. Christ is shown as the conqueror, the Christus Victor, in relation to the spiritual forces of the traditional religion according to them.¹⁴¹ They argue that there is no alien spirit which can overpower the name of Christ. Their healing approach is centralized on Jesus Christ. It is strongly believed that miracles performed by Jesus Christ during his earthly time can also happen today. This kind of healing is now popular.

We know that Jesus Christ heals us today in different ways. Christians from these denominations believe strongly that Christ can heal even incurable diseases of today if people have faith in him. For instance a story of a foster parent who had a child with HIV/AIDS placed in her care and began to pray for her to live.

The story goes as follow;

*I sat next to her and prayed for her to live. I said, God, if you take her, take me also. I was fighting with God and crying to Him, and saying, Please don't do that to me. After the treatment she took the child back for a check up and the doctor said, The child is clear. I ran for joy.*¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.,p.3

¹⁴¹ Engelsviken 1991,82

¹⁴² Dube 2002,31

There are many stories and testimonies about miraculous healing in these Churches. Their approach in healing is also holistic. Their emphasis is more on spirituality. They also practise some kind of healing which is near African religion e.g. dancing, singing etc.

4. The Modern Medicine

Almost the whole world of today use modern medicine. Many governments in Africa have started to improve their medical technology in their countries. A developed country is expected to have better medical facilities. The Church has a long history of providing health facilities to people. Modern healing is still popular in our societies. People used to queue at the clinics and hospitals. This method of healing should be effective at explaining the cause of sickness and put into action the curative processes¹⁴³. The Main Line Churches encourage their members to visit clinics and hospitals to receive treatment. The medical doctors are respected for their treatment of certain physical illness or diseases. They use modern equipment which they invented and studied. According to most of them health is the absence of disability.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless today modern medicine has expanded their methods of treatment. It includes not only the physical conditions but also the spiritual part of the person. There are psychologists, counsellor, sociologists, psychotherapists etc. This accommodates the holistic approach on modern scientific healing. As we already mentioned, churches are providing chaplains at the hospitals and deacons.

The medical doctors are accused for failing to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of their patients by the Church and traditional healers. They are also blamed for only concentrating on physical disabilities but not taken other things into consideration. They check heart beat, but they have little time for patients' worries. They check patients' blood pressure, but they do not care about their daily pressures. They take patients' temperatures but they do not talk to them.

¹⁴³ Oosthuizen 1991,47

¹⁴⁴ Vere and Wilkinson 1997,64

They take care of illness, but they are not interested in the wholeness of a person. They check patients' proteins and vitamins and tell them that they are suffering from Kwashiorkor, but they do not ask them whether they are employed or not.

4.1 Health facilities

Modern medicine embarks on the human health and comes out with better facilities for different sickness. They constructed mental hospitals, rehabilitations centers, counselling centers, physiotherapy places etc. There are well trained modern practitioners in those fields of modern medicine to administer people who are caught with different diseases and illnesses. The modern medicine has discovered that some human illnesses need such kind of therapy, emotional healing, and mental healing.

The modern medicines have sophisticated machines which are able to reveal what could be the problem of a patient. They are man made machines. They are able to do surgeries. Modern medicine does not depend on any external extraordinary powers, unlike African healing. They study critically the nature of living things and find ways of helping them from diseases and injuries.

Modern medicine does scientific research. They want things to be proved scientifically how they function. Their interests are in the cause of an illness and the cure. They do not want to be told that God and evil powers are the cause of a certain illness and disease.

Today modern medicine is very popular in Africa. There is no country in Africa which does not have a hospital or clinic. You will find that a country has more than three big hospitals. There are many health facilities like clinics in villages around Africa. Modern medicine is associated with development. A developed country is seen by its high standard of health facilities including personnel. Modern medicine is part of civilization today.

5. African Traditional Healing and Christian healing (exchange and interchange)

The gap between traditional healing and Christian healing which was wide long ago is closing slowly. The two approaches are exchanging ideas today. Christianity found African people using traditional methods of healing. This practice is rooted in the African culture as we have discussed in previous topics. The coming of Christianity and imperialism condemned radically the African traditional healing approach as evil and associated with satanic powers. Many Africans who converted to Christianity were compelled to cease going to traditional practitioners. Instead they were advised to pray to God and also go to clinics.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless Christian healing with its European model did not meet the needs of all the African people.

It is clear that many African Christians continued with traditional practitioners confidentially, especially during the night. Of course, that made life difficult for many of them. There was no doubt that there are illnesses which can be cured neither by scientific medicine nor by Church Holy Spirit powers. Even though many Africans were influenced by the western civilization, they continued to fear witchcraft and sorcery. They knew that there is nowhere to get help except at traditional healers.

Nevertheless traditional healing was also affected because some people started showing less interest in traditional healing. They started to be concerned about their situation, mainly their profession. It is alleged that some of them have started to practise things which are not according to their professions. Those things include witchcraft and sorceries. They help witches to fulfill their missions. People did not differentiate traditional healers from sorcerers. The traditional healing is now used for profit making business. The dignity of African traditional practitioner is lost. Of course there are those who are still keeping their profession as true traditional healers.

¹⁴⁵ Amanze 1998,176

5.1 Traditional healing mixed with Christian healing

The African traditional practitioners have discovered that people are mixing the Christian methods of healing with their traditional ways of healing. They need to improve their methods by putting it into today's context. There was later the eruption of African Independent Churches which broke away from the Main Line Churches. These Churches blame the Main Line Churches being European minded when coming to matters of healing African origin diseases. They started to practise some traditional healing methods in their churches.

In other words, they mixed both, traditional healing methods and the Christian approach on healing, such that their Church members will not go to the traditional healers but to them. They wanted to do healing in one place. Therefore members do not need to go to the Church and again visit a traditional healer.

The mission Churches did not allow their members to visit traditional healers or practice ancestral veneration. They associated such practices with paganism. But Africans did not want to leave the Churches because they found that Churches are important and their beliefs are the same like theirs. The main problem was the understanding of health, disease, illness and sickness.

The Christians taught that sickness was caused by virus, bacteria etc. while the traditional understanding was that sickness was caused by a person, or the patient is cursed or sinned against the ancestors. There is always a reason why a person falls sick. This lack of understanding on how to interpret sickness or illness between the two approaches of healing caused a dichotomy.

The main challenge for Christianity is that

*the quest for African Christianity theologies which has been vigorously pursued in the last decade, amounts to attempting to make clear the fact that conversion to Christianity must be coupled with cultural continuity... what African theologians have been endeavoring to do is to draw together the various and disparate sources which make up the total religious experience of Christians in Africa into a coherent and meaningful pattern.*¹⁴⁶

The coming of African theology and Black theology catalyzed the debate. These theologies influenced Christians who were attending main line churches. They started addressing black people's situations e.g. health, poverty, oppression, ill treatment etc. African theology started to look at healing from the biblical perspective and make comparisons with the African traditional healing approach. The two theologies used the Bible as their main source.

Later these theologies discovered that the African traditional way of healing is close to the one in the Bible. The big problem is that missionaries discouraged Africans to practise their traditional and cultural ways of healing. The New Testament main figure Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ' is their role model of healing.

5.1.1 Jesus Christ the Great healer

African theologians started to understand Christ as the Great Healer among other healers found on earth. The divine powers of Christ put Him beyond the healers, doctors, and prophets we see today. These people can only heal in His name, but not according to their human nature powers. In his writings Appiah-Kubi argues that

how do we reconcile what we preach with what we believe and practice? Who is this healer and physician,

¹⁴⁶ Maluleke 2000,25

*Jesus Christ?*¹⁴⁷

The Christian Church preaches that Christ healed the sick, gave food to needy and helped the disabled.

Many African theologians agree with Appiah-Kubi that total personal healing of spirituality, psychological and physical man is the gift of God, which He pours on His believing community through Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁸ Jesus Christ is the great healer in African terms. Jesus Christ gives wholeness of life to His people and would not bring harm to them.

Christ is conceived as the great physician, healer and victor over the world by African Christians. This means that Jesus Christ's concept of healing is not foreign in Africa traditional healing. Africans understand Christ as the great healer above all other healers found in their surroundings. The reason is that there are traditional practitioners who performed such kind of miraculous healing. The only difference is that Christ's healing was extra-ordinary.

Christians are given healing powers. Those powers are limited. Christians should have faith in God and they shall be healed in the name of Jesus Christ. A healer in the Christian Church cannot heal on his/her own personal powers. God is the one who heals people through the prophet, bishop, pastor, medical doctors, nurses etc. Those people, performing healing in the Church always pray God to heal them such that their clients can be healed. God gave diversities of gifts to people by the one God's Spirit.

For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. (1Corinthians 12:8-10)

¹⁴⁷ Appiah 1997,73

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*,p.73

The healing powers and vital forces come from God and are transported to the world through Jesus Christ, and those who have faith in Christ shall be treated. They should use those spiritual gifts of healing to help others and maintain the continuation of God's healing ministry in the world. This understanding is very much close to the traditional healing which also believes that vital forces and healing powers are from the Supreme Being and are transported through ancestors to the people. We now come across the interchange of the hierarchy of healing.

A traditional healer gets healing powers from the Supreme Being or God through the ancestors. The ancestors work as mediators between the Supreme Being and the human beings. The traditional healer mediates between the people and the ancestors. This means that the ancestors communicate to the people through the traditional healer. People go to these healers to know what their ancestors want from them.

The gift of being a traditional practitioner comes from God. There are different kinds of gifts the Supreme Being gives to people. For instance there are those who are good in rain making, those who are good in herbs, others in interpreting dreams, signs, visions and those who talk to ancestors. These different gifts are from one source which is the Supreme Being Spirit. These gifts have to be used properly according to the satisfaction of the ancestors and God. Otherwise they shall be withdrawn. The same thing applies to the Christians understanding. This is a similar channel with the Christians theology of God and the understanding of Christianity.

Jesus Christ can be compared with Great Ancestor. The great ancestor in African terms is the one who is higher than all other ancestors and close to the Supreme Being.¹⁴⁹ Theologians like Mbiti and Appiah-Kubi argue that the title of Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of

¹⁴⁹ Amanze 2002,67

David, and the son of Man have no relevance to traditional African concepts,¹⁵⁰ but Christ can fit well as the Great Ancestor who comes to rescue people from crisis and who ask forgiveness on behalf of people from the Supreme Being. This is similar to the saving work of Christ according to the Christian teachings.

Christianity and traditional healing get their healing powers from a similar source. Their sources of healing powers are from God and the Supreme Being. People call upon the Name of Jesus Christ to heal them while others call upon their great ancestor to heal them. For example, in the Zulu bible the word *uMsindisi* refers to the rescuer, savior, redeemer, and healer¹⁵¹.

There is a clear exchange between these approaches of healing. In most African traditional beliefs it is found an ancestor is known to be powerful and that he can save people.¹⁵² If the ancestors are failing to take control of the situation, the great ancestor is called to rescue. This title is suitable for Jesus Christ in African terms, especially on healing.¹⁵³ The Great Ancestor is all the time at the right hand of the Supreme Being. It is so difficult for traditional healers sometimes to differentiate between them. The same thing applies to the Christian doctrine of Trinity.

5.1.2 Healing equipment

The Main Line Churches are also very critical on the use of medicines that are not approved by scientists. They prefer patients to visit hospitals and use modern medicine prescribed by doctors. They use a prayer. The Holy Communion and the Holy Baptism sacraments are also associated with healing in the Main Line Churches. The water that has the word of God is holy

¹⁵⁰ Appiah Kubi 1997,73

¹⁵¹ Oosthuizen 1967,43

¹⁵² Amanze 2002,68

¹⁵³ Amanze 1998,110

and can be used to chase away evil spirits. This is mostly practised in the Roman Catholic Church. Water is life.

The elements of the Holy Communion are also very important in healing. Those elements are bread and wine. Some Main Line Churches use oil to anoint people as part of healing. Christians are advised to anoint with oil as a form of healing. In practical terms not every illness can be healed through prayers, Holy Spirit and holy sacraments. The Apostle Paul advised his readers to

*no longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake
of your stomach and frequent ailments. (Tim. 5:23)*

It is not that if a person prays to God, his/her illness shall be cured immediately. The truth is that it happens in some cases. For instance Paul had a thorn in the flesh and he sought the Lord three times to relief him.

God replied him:

*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in
weakness.(2Cor.12:9)*

Then Paul responded by saying that he is content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities for the sake of Christ. (2Cor12:10) We can also deduce that God's healing does not happen immediately.

a) Prayer

In the Charismatic Pentecostal Church prayer and faith are taken very seriously. They even advise their congregants not to visit hospitals or clinics. Jesus Christ is the healer above all. If a person is not healed, it is because of his/her weak faith. They also use water for healing.¹⁵⁴ This water which is prayed for, nothing is added to except the Word of God. The water is taken

¹⁵⁴ Amanze 1998,180

home in containers by members. They splash this water in their homes, cars, kraals etc. They are actually casting out evil spirits.

They also use oil for anointing those who are sick. The Charismatic Pentecostal churches discourage their members to seek help from traditional healing. They are critical of traditional healers. The only thing they borrowed from the African Traditional culture is the singing, dancing and clapping of hands during their worship service. This goes together with the African traditional way of ritual healing.

b) Water

In the AIC also earthly material are used for healing. Water is taken as a medical remedy and it is very important in the Zionists Churches and other AIC. Water and ashes are mixed and prayed for and also the laying of hands. The idea is to bless the water such that it can cure the patient according to how the prophet had revealed¹⁵⁵.

Water is also used for healing during baptism. In his research on African Independent Churches in Botswana, Amanze came across a situation where the Holy Spirit can be reveal to the healer that a person can only be healed through baptism. The sick are taken to a pool, river or dam. The worship services takes place there. Prayers and dancing are done. The healer or prophet will immerse the sick seven times in a form of a baptismal ritual for healing.¹⁵⁶

There is also what is called a 'ritual bath'. Water is mixed with a medicine called *sewacho*. The mixture is poured in a bath and the patient is asked to drink this mixture as a healing agent. Nevertheless it depends on what the Holy Spirit revealed to the healer or prophet.¹⁵⁷ Water is

¹⁵⁵ Sundkler 1961,23

¹⁵⁶ Amanze 1998,181

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.,p.181

used for induced vomiting. This water is boiled and cooled down a little bit, then salt and vinegar are added followed by prayers. The patient drinks this mixture until it is finished. Later the patient will vomit out the mixtures and traditional poison known as *sejeso*. The purpose of this mixture is to clean the body.

c) Muti

Another medicine used is called *muti*;

*this could be herbs, roots, leaves from trees, bushes and plants, sometimes mixed with treated parts of animals and ordinary ingredients, such as salt, blue stone, white wash, sea water, Vaseline, methylated spirits, bicarbonate of soda, sulphur, sugar and ash.*¹⁵⁸

Water forms the central healing remedy in these Churches. It is only mixed with different things. It is also important to indicate that animals are sacrificed in these Churches for the purpose of healing depending on what has been revealed by the prophecy.

d) Healing vestments

In the Zionist churches the colour of the vestments plays a vital role. It is believed that their vestments are prescribed to them by the Holy Spirit. These colours are used for healing sessions and have special value and bearing on the outcome of a treatment. Colours which are involved include white, green, and blue. The red colour stands for vision and is also the colour of wholeness. The blue colour one is for healing and also symbolizes love, while the green colour symbolizes faithfulness. The red colour as a uniform signifies contact with Christian ancestors.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Oosthuizen 1992,40

¹⁵⁹ Oosthuizen 1992,43

In the main line churches vestments are playing important roles in worship services and healing services.

e) Healing by wool strings

The wool strings are used for healing. The Holy Spirit reveals the colour of wool which should be used for healing. Those colours include red, white, blue, green, black and yellow.

Today many members are found wearing them.

*Normally the string is tied around the waist of the patient for any disease such as prolonged menstruation period, kidney diseases, and venereal disease such as burning urine and others.*¹⁶⁰

The traditional healers' attire is just simple and not expensive. They do not put on today's expensive clothes. They rather go for the cheap ones. They are recognized by their hats which are made of wild animal skins. In most cases they do not bath frequently. They do it seldom. Some of them keep their beards long.

We are looking for what is exchanged and interchanged between the Christian healing and the traditional healing. The African Independent Churches method of healing is borrowed from the traditional healing. Most of the things used, as we have discussed above, are found to be prominent in the traditional healing. Those things include water, *muti*, *sewacho*, and some other utensils used in domestic affairs.

The AIC discovered that Main Line Churches methods of healing do not address African problems. They are now taking some things from the traditional healing and use them in their churches. Of course they do not move away from the scriptures. They understand the Holy

¹⁶⁰ Amanze 1998,12

Spirit as the pioneer of healing.¹⁶¹ The traditional healers also see the ancestral spirits and the Supreme Being spirit as their guides in their healing ministry. In his healing ministry Jesus Christ healed by the Word and cast out demons the same way.(Luke 4: 31-35; 8:26-32)

The blessing and laying of hands is very common in the process of healing. This practice is also found in traditional healing. The traditional healer will touch the patient and call upon the ancestors to reveal the illness and treatment. Sometimes the traditional healer gives the patient the bones to throw on the ground such that they can reveal the patient's problems. Physical contact during the healing session is very important. Jesus Christ also practised the same method. For instance during the healing of the two blind men.(Matthew 9:27-31,Mark 6:53-56)

There were occasions where he used earthly material. During the healing of a deaf mute, Jesus put his fingers in his ears and He spat and touched his tongue.(Mark 7:33-35; 8:22-26). In this case the saliva was used, as it is practised by the traditional healers who spit on their bones and ask the patient to throw them down.

Sometimes Jesus commanded his patients to wash themselves in the river in order to be healed. The traditional healers perform their healing in hills, rivers, caves etc. The AIC practise their healing in big dams, rivers, hills and pools of water to perform their healing sessions. One reason for that is their capability of communicating with world beasts, e.g. big snakes.

Traditional healers use some wild beasts, especially those which are feared. They communicate with big snakes in caves and water. Sometime these snakes are giving them power

¹⁶¹ Amanze 1998,115

of healing. They use skins of these snakes as containers of their healing herbs and bones. They tie themselves with these skins around their waists.

The AIC congregations baptise in big rivers and dams which are believed to be the home of big water snakes.¹⁶² In an interview with a prophet of the Holy Trinity Church of God in Lobatse, Botswana on the issue of baptism, prophet James Mogapi explains the process of baptism in their Church as follows; the prophet will have a session of serious intercession prayers at the river. These prayers request the snake to allow them to baptise new members. If the snake permits, they will then enter into the water and the ritual of baptism commences. There are situations where they are not given the permission to do the baptism. The prophet has to consult the ancestors for advices. They should not make a mistake by baptising without the permission of the snake. Otherwise the snake will kill them, especially the prophet.¹⁶³

f) The counselling session

The Christian model of healing emphasises on pastoral counselling is very strong. In Church hospitals and clinics there are places where counseling is conducted. In the AIC the prophet advices the patient to join their Church in order to be observed near by and participate in daily healing services. This is a form of applying pastoral counselling to the patient. The traditional healers also do the same thing. Some traditional practitioners used to keep their patients at home while still receiving treatment.

Counselling is done in that period by the healer. A traditional healer will always ask a client few questions before the throwing of bones. In most cases it starts as conversation. Such a

¹⁶² Amanze 1998,181

¹⁶³ Mogapi 2004. interview on 20th July 2004 at 9:00am in Lobatse

conversation is very important for a healer because it reveals the fears, feelings and emotions of the patient. Of course there are false traditional practitioners and prophets who play tricks on their clients by starting with conversations before divining process.

To make it possible for the two approaches there should be clear stipulated transcultural practices. In situations where certain types of illness are regarded as the result of sorcery or witchcraft, it will be good if Christian catechesis and health education should be instituted. The counter-cultural aspect of Christian healing should also challenge practices based on those superstitions which sometimes lead to injustice and cruelty toward persons suspected of practising witchcraft, as well as such healing practises that are based on wealth or egocentrism, or such modern institutions that demean the dignity of the sick.

For instance old women in African communities are accused of witchcraft. If any tragedy happens the blame goes to them. In many cases those accusations are wrong. Today many women and men allege their mother in-laws for be witching them. They are told by false healers who are just after money. This is a psychological tricky business. Because in some African communities there are unfounded beliefs that a person can bewitch by her/his parents' in-laws. These healers take advantage of that. This can the avoid breaking down of families as it is common in many African societies today.

It is important to enrich and make Christian rites of healing understandable to the people, therefore the need for contextualization. It is necessary to identify elements of local rites of healing that can, after critical evaluation be suitable, be substituted by elements of the traditional Christian rites through dynamic equivalence, illustrating the original core of the rite through creative assimilation. Elements of local rites of healing include pertinent gesture, symbols and material elements that can be integrated into Christian use.

6. The Modern Medicine and the Traditional Healing.

The coming of missionaries to Africa had a positive impact on healing. We learned that some African chiefs only preferred missionaries for their medication and blessing of their fighting weapons. This means that Africans have discovered that modern medication was good. On the other hand, the missionaries did not understand the capabilities, knowledge, and strength of African medicine men and women.

They did not give any credit to the outstanding wisdom of healing possessed by African traditional practitioners. Instead they referred to it as witchcraft. The missionaries were convinced that their western medicine and Christian healing are the only ones which can help to reduce the appalling mortality rate among African people. This thinking was not welcomed by African people and caused tension between missionaries and traditional practitioners. The traditional practitioners felt that they were not respected by missionaries.

The main problem was that missionaries urged people not to go and consult traditional healers; instead they should visit clinics and church services for treatment and healing. This considered to be compulsory for all who joined Christianity. Whereas consulting a traditional healer was considered to be sinful. African Christians often sought help from traditional healers secretly.¹⁶⁴ Thus life became very difficult for African people who surrendered themselves to Christianity, but did not want to leave their African identity.

Their identity as being African is very important for them and traditional healers were consulted whenever problems arose. They did not want to leave Christianity because they had seen that there was something good coming from it which might improve their way of living. Nevertheless they continued to have strong faith in traditional healing in spite of proliferation of western medicine.

African people find themselves living under two distinctively different influential concepts of healing, i.e. modern medicine and Christian healing. There is a story which explains how the people of Botswana are caught between these two concepts. The story goes as follows;

we {Batswana}, when we fall ill, are like a little boy standing on top of a hill with thumb in the mouth, one leg in a black hole and the other in a white one and wondering which one to lift first. The white hole represents the beaten path of traditional methods of health delivery via our traditional doctors, nurses and midwives. The black hole represents the whole unknown world in health care via hospitals and clinics with their new-type doctors and nurses using strange tools and most of the time speaking foreign language.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Folk 1979,447

¹⁶⁵ Staugard 1985,125

Most people in Africa find themselves in this situation. They start to ask themselves whether to go hospitals or clinics or whether to seek help from the familiar traditional practitioner. Nevertheless this situation did not only bring negative things to African people, but also positive ideas which are vital for the society. The two methods of healing should learn from each other and come up with effective healing.

There is a very interesting exchange and interchange between the two. Modern medicine is highly regarded today and common. This gives the traditional practitioners tough competition in Africa. They are compelled to improve their methods and techniques of healing, but without losing their traditional identity. We are going to look at what kind of exchange is happening between the two and how it benefits patients.

6.1 Lack of cooperation

It is clear that medical mission societies from Europe could have done more for African people, if they had respected the knowledge of traditional practitioners. I am convinced that if cooperation was existing from the beginning, it could have benefited both.

*They could have recognized their practice in areas where they could serve and supplement it with Western medical knowledge. This could have alleviated tensions and helped to plant a sound medical practice in the culture of the people.*¹⁶⁶

Unfortunately this did not happen during those days. However, we see today that there is an improvement in this issue. Even though the tension is still there between the two, we have seen good valuable exchange and interchange happening nowadays.

¹⁶⁶ Folk 1979,447

The modern medical doctors do not pay much attention to their counterpart, traditional practitioners in Africa. Consequently there is no dialogue between the two. The medical practitioners accuse traditional doctors for lives lost because of illnesses which could have been easily treated at hospitals and clinics. They also blame them for overdosing medicine to their patients. In most cases, when these patients become critically ill, they are taken to hospitals and clinics.

The traditional practitioners on the other hand claim that modern medicine can heal certain diseases or illnesses. They cannot heal those illnesses caused by witchcraft or related evil.¹⁶⁷ The traditional healers are not happy when their clients are advised not to visit them. Let us now compare some of the equipment used by both.

6.2 Consultation rooms

The modern medical practitioners are enjoying good working conditions in modern facilities, e.g. hospitals, clinics and health centers. These facilities are well equipped with modern equipments. Their working conditions are more western orientated. This kind of facilities attracts many Africans. These facilities make healing much easier and professional. Their equipment enable modern medical practitioners to work effectively. This is the reason why people queue at clinics and hospitals. However, this does not mean, that they have left their traditional healers. Although Africans still strongly believe in the traditional healing methods they also see the importance and benefits of facilities provided by modern medicine.

The consultation room provides privacy for the client and the doctor, especially during counselling sessions.¹⁶⁸ The modern medicine has attracted many African people. For instance, if a person is close to die, the last resort is taking that person to a hospital. Of course, there is

¹⁶⁷ Staugard 1985,188

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.,p.187

the strong belief that modern medicine is able to cure natural diseases, but not illness caused by witchcraft.

The Traditional healer does not have a good working environment as compared to that of the modern medicine. They use their homes for healing. I visited a traditional healer in Gaborone, Botswana. The room he was conducting his healing session was very small and not very conducive for such healing process. It is very rare to find traditional practitioners who practice in better working environments. In some cases, the consultations rooms are very small.

The working place conditions or the atmosphere at the traditional practitioner's rooms are said to be playing a vital role during healing process. Their healing rooms are smelling of medicine or *muti* and they are decorated with strange things e.g. skins of wild beasts, snakes skins etc. A person can be scared when entering such a consultation room. In some villages the room is located at the corner of the yard. This separated healing room helps the bones to reveal what the ancestors are saying. I heard people who defend traditional healing saying that what a traditional healer does at his/her healing room is the same with what the medical doctors do in their laboratory.

6.3 The costs of healing

Modern medicine is becoming very expensive for people nowadays. This is due to the increase of costs of medicines, equipment and even labour. In many African countries public hospitals, clinics and health centre are not well equipped than private ones. The government is compelled to provide better service to the people, but there are no funds. Private medical practitioners are offering better medical service, but their prices are very high.

In his research, Gumede claims that over 50% of babies born in the black community in South Africa are born outside the hospitals and clinics. The TBA's and traditional healers are providing this invaluable service at no cost to the government. About 80% of all black patients

visit traditional healers before they visit a medical doctor at a clinic or hospitals. At King Edwards VIII Hospital, 60% of the patients had been attending traditional healers. It is clear that the cost of being alive is rising and will soon be a luxury. The medical scheme is very expensive.¹⁶⁹ For instance, 70% of the white workers benefit from medical aid, 36% of Indian and coloured workers also, but only 45% of the black work force is able to pay medical aid.¹⁷⁰ These figures may have changed throughout the years, but the fact is that fees for modern medication are constantly going to rise.

In many African countries only very few black people are able to pay for medical aid. The medical aid schemes are working hand in hand with private hospitals and clinics which offer very good service. On the other hand, the majority of blacks is unemployed. They are compelled to go to state hospitals.¹⁷¹

This has created a better market for the traditional practitioners of today. During the olden times traditional practitioners were not paid for their service. They were instructed by the ancestors not to charge people, because healing was a good service to the community. Nevertheless, a patient can give thanks to a healer out of his/her heart. This is not compulsory. It is an African practice that if somebody helps you, you are also expected to help that person sometime.

It is very rare to find such kind of traditional healers who practise that today. There are those who do not charge people, but command them to pay after they are healed. Those kinds of healers are also very seldom found today. The reason is that there are too many false healers today who are only after profit. A false traditional healer is the one who is not fair and does not

¹⁶⁹ Gumede 1988,326

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.,p.327

¹⁷¹ Maganu 2003, p.28. Government Press

work according to the ancestral procedures. Such a healer will tell lies to a patient. For instance such a healer will never tell the patient whether he/she can or cannot heal an illness.

A traditional healer will always tell a patient what the bones are saying about the illness. If the bones are saying that the illness cannot be cured, the healer will tell the patient the truth and ask him/her to look for help some where else without charging the patient. But today's healers are only interested in accumulating wealth.

The proliferation of traditional healers whom in most cases are false healers is challenging the credibility of traditional healing in Africa. Healers are moving from country to country looking for greener pastures. People will prefer a healer who comes from another country rather than one from their own country. People tend to prefer such healers. The situation is caused by the fact that traditional healing today is commercialized. As a commercialized institution, everybody is claiming to perform healing better than another. The price for healing is increasing. It is commonly believed that magic powers are used by false traditional healers.

Another thing which keeps their healing price high is the nature of witchcraft today. Witchcraft and sorcery today are very powerful. They have increased their standard of committing atrocities to people. This situation puts the true traditional healers in danger. There are cases where a traditional healer's life is endangered when attempting to heal certain illness associated with witchcraft. Some healers set the price very high because of such reasons. They also argue that people who go to private medical practitioners are paying a lot of money. Therefore people who go to them should also pay them like wise.

Traditional healers are blamed for robbing their poor patients. For instance the poor in most cases do not have cash. They used to pay with what they own, especially livestock. The traditional healer will ask for a cow which is equivalent to P1000.00 Botswana Pulas or 210\$ US today. This cow is going to produce many calves. It could be more reasonable and efficient,

if the patient pay in cash instead of a cow. Because the cow will still keep the wealth of the family e.g. by providing milk, plough etc. People are worried about the amount given to the traditional healers by their clients, while the treatment is not done especially by false traditional healers. This concern came out in this time of HIV/AIDS.

Some African governments provide medication at affordable price. During the 1980s, a patient in Botswana paid P0,40 corresponding to US\$ 0,35 by 1984. That covered one curative care only per visit and the money must be paid whether the cure was effective or not. The government increased charges to P2.00, corresponding to US\$ 0.09 as it is now.¹⁷² This includes medication and everything that may be needed for the patient.

The truth is that many Batswana were against the increase, arguing that is too much for them. On contrary, they are able to pay a traditional healer any amount he/she ask for at that moment without hesitation. The charges of traditional healers in Botswana are high. In an interview with Mr Lekgatho Tau (Traditional healer), he said that he charges P20.00 (US\$ 4.00) for consultation and sometimes P10.00 (US\$ 2.00), if the patient has no money. Treatment depends from the nature of the illness.¹⁷³ In most cases the minimum for treatment of minor diseases is about P100.00 (US\$ 15.00). In cases where witchcraft is involved and strong medication is needed, a couple of hundreds of Pula's may be paid. These prices keep on increasing.

One traditional healer residing in Gaborone, Mr Brown Legwase, said to me during an interview that, to treat a new home or house traditionally and protect it from witchcraft powers, he needs P1000.00 (US\$ 210.00) or a cow. According to this traditional healer, for the treatment of sicknesses which have a natural cause and are not caused by witchcraft, he offers

¹⁷² Staugard 1985,154

¹⁷³ Tau 2004,an interview on 11 May 2004 in Mogobane at 2:00pm

cheap treatment to his common clients. He said, sometimes he even asks them to pay less than P100.00 (US \$ 15.00) or nothing at all. The reason for that is that medications for those diseases are available and easily obtained. Those illnesses include fever, headache, diarrhoea, vomiting, coughing, joint pain, muscle pain, back pain etc. Nevertheless, he said, that sexual transmitted diseases are sometimes complicated and he charges people accordingly. Another reason for charging was, that if he does not charge people for STD's this may increase immorality or illicit sex among young people.¹⁷⁴

The above interview shows that traditional healing is also very expensive. The good and curative received from private practitioners is too costly for those without medical aids. At least the traditional healers accept any kind of payment. At the current moment, both methods of healing are very common and receiving customers.

6.4 Healing Equipment

The modern medicine has excellent scientific equipment, as we have already indicated. This modern equipment surpasses by far the usage the bones, *sewacho*, ash, dreams and visions as done by traditional practitioners. The traditional healers are trying to come out with new techniques on their healing in order to compete with modern medicine. That, of course, is very difficult, but they need to win people.

Today traditional healers are using knives, raisers etc to perform surgery on their patients. The throwing of bones can reveal to the healer where the traditional poison is in the body of a client. Then certain medicine is applied to the spot and the cutting commences with a sharp thing. The healer will take out that traditional poison by a sharp instrument or by his teeth, and sometimes the medicine will force the poison to go out voluntarily.

¹⁷⁴ Legwase 2004. an interview on 16th June 2004, at 1:00pm in Gaborone.

Some of the things used to take out include pieces of meat, small domestic utensils e.g. needles. The process discussed above is very similar to what happens at the theatre. The medical practitioners carry out minor or major surgeries after having done extreme x-rays or scanning. They use modern equipment. In most cases their surgeries are successful. This success also depends on the level of training received by the practitioner and the availability of relevant equipment.

Some traditional healers use water as their x-rays or scanning machines. In an interview with prophet Mogapi, he said that water is put in a container and certain rituals are performed. If a patient is bewitched, the images of people who did such a thing will be visible in that water. The patient will soon discover who her /his enemies are. This is one of the amazing wisdom from some traditional healers. The same water can reveal the kind of sickness of a patient. If it is a traditional poison, it will appear in the water, and also how and where it causes pain to a patient.¹⁷⁵

They also use a mirror to perform healing. The healer who uses a mirror is called *Ngaka ya Seipone*. In an interview with Legwase, a mirror is used to identify where the traditional poison is in the patient's body. This mirror has been treated traditionally and possesses powers of revealing strange things caused by witchcraft. The mirror can also show people who are responsible for the cause of the patient's sickness.¹⁷⁶ This is the reason why I find it similar to an x-ray.

Legwase and Mogapi both agreed during the interview that it is possible for a patient to take revenge against his/her enemies appearing in the mirror or water, but expensive. The reason is that those enemies may die. The traditional healer will take a needle and ask the

¹⁷⁵ Mogapi 2004.interview on the 20 July, 2004, in Lobatse, Botswana at 9:00am

¹⁷⁶ Legwase 2004.interview on the 16th June 2004, in Gaborone at 1:00pm

patient to pin their shadows or images on their heads. These people may die or be attacked by a serious illness immediately, according to both healers. It is unfortunate that the modern medicine x-ray can only reveal what has happened in the body, but cannot identify people who caused such an illness.

The traditional healers, in most cases, use sharp instruments during their healing. The fear is that those sharp utensils are not sterilized before and after being used. This of course, can cause transmission of diseases from one person to another. This practise is not good and very dangerous for the patients. The traditional healers should learn from the modern medicine doctors in theatres, laboratories and hospitals, where equipment used cannot be re-used without been sterilized.

The traditional healers should be told to boil those knives, razors etc immediately after use. They will be trusted by their clients. But this will also help to combat transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. We used to hear in radios and television in Botswana that, traditional healers are advised to stop using knife or any sharp tools on their client without sterilization, especially in times of HIV/AIDS pandemic in this region. We can see that traditional healers are trying their best level to survive. This exchange helps to improve their equipments used for healing.

6.5 Marketing places

Traditional healers are migrating to towns and cities and main villages where many people live. This is another way of getting customers. During the olden days they used to stay in hills, fields and cattle posts. They avoided staying in the villages where there are too many people. This was ethical. They did not want to indulge in daily disputes, or differences among people which could lead to discrediting their status in the society. They were very much respected in the community. People were going out to them, when looking for help. They were not lazy to go to the hills or cattle posts searching for the traditional healer.

The fact that this traditional healing is now commercialized, few traditional healers are found in small villages or cattle posts or hills. They have migrated to cities, towns and big villages

looking for better pastures. These are populated areas with lots of businesses going on. Of course here cash is flowing every time, unlike in small villages. In an interview with Mr Lesang Sebetso, a resident of Gaborone in a shanty area called Old Naledi, he said, *traditional healers in this place are too many more than tuck shops, They just want money from people. In villages they do not get many customers.*¹⁷⁷ Life in these areas is busy and fast and money is the main player.

Traditional healers have a task ahead of them in order to make sure that their clients are getting a better service. There is high competition among them which sometimes creates rivalries. There are unfounded views that they fight each. The only weapon used for fighting is their medicine, *muti* and natural powers.

The medical practitioners find themselves in the same situation. In many African countries better health facilities can be obtained in cities and towns. It is very rare to come across a private clinic or surgery in a village. In villages you will find public clinics which are not well equipped. In towns you will find that public clinics and hospitals do not have better facilities than the private ones. The main issue is that people go to towns and cities for better medication. Therefore there is high competition among private practitioners and also against their counterparts in the public sector.

6.6 Training

Training is highly regarded in modern medicine. The training is done in the faculty of Science. There are medical schools, Health Educational Institutions and Health centers which train different kinds of professions in the faculty of Science. They train nurses at different levels, medical doctors, counsellors, Physiotherapist etc. African governments and Non Governmental

¹⁷⁷ Sebetso L.2004. interview on the 16th June 2004 in Gaborone at 5:00pm

Organizations spend money in educating African students in fields of medicine. The reason is that in many African countries there is a shortage of qualified medical practitioners. The few who are available cannot afford the multitudes of patients with many different kinds of illnesses. The government of cannot afford to pay high wages to this doctors as they demand, because there are other services to be provided for the public.

Most of these doctors go to look for green pastures in private hospitals and clinics, where wages are better. Governments are forced to employ doctors from outside their countries which is also very costly. The training of local medical practitioners is very essential for African states. The training is also very costly. In most cases the medical doctors' training takes many years.

The traditional practitioners also take training very seriously. Their training also sometimes takes a long time. The length of training depends on the trainer under the directions from the ancestors. The unique thing for qualifying for this training is that, a person should have been chosen by the ancestors (badimo) or a spirit. It is not open to everybody. It is inherited. It is passed from one generation to another. A person is born to be a traditional healer because his/her parents or descendents were traditional healers during a certain time.¹⁷⁸The ancestors, divine spirits and possessed men can choose anybody to be trained in this field. The selection differs from tradition to tradition.

The ancestors can make a person ill. If such a person is taken to the traditional healers, the divining bones may reveal that the only cure is that the person should become a traditional healer. If a person refuses, the illness may take long, because he/she denies the call of the ancestral spirits. The person may be severely punished. The traditional healer shall perform the healing and later direct the patient which steps to follow in order to be trained as a healer according to the will of the ancestors. This is contrary to the Malian spirit possession, as we have already mentioned that

¹⁷⁸ Amanze 2002,91

*possession is a minority of male members of a society into which they have been initiated; possessed men still belong to powerful lineages; their careers never begin as an illness; trace has no therapeutical value; possession confirms a dedication to a specific localized deity; spirit possession is related to divination, a means of expression of a superior 'voice' and a shamanistic technique.*¹⁷⁹

In other African traditions trainees are nominated by traditional healers by looking at their moral behavior in the society. The behavior of an individual is the entrance qualification to the training.¹⁸⁰ The candidate should be loyal to customs, norms and values of the society. Others are just called to the profession by dreams and visions. Again there are those who just feel like becoming a traditional healer.¹⁸¹

In Sotho/Tswana traditions, the admission to the profession used to be done professionally. Let us see how they used to do it. As we know, there is nothing free on this planet, admission to the profession was to be obtained through payment of a fee, and going through a course of learning under one or more of the initiated. An ox is very often a valid entrance fee. Of course others give out some goats' as equivalent to an ox. The instruction is called 'teaching to dig' because most medicines and charms are obtained from plants which are dug up in the fields. That is the preface to the field of studies.

The traditional healing trainer takes his pupil or pupils with him to an open country one day, and the following day to the mountains. The main duty there is to show his pupils where the healing plants are to be found. In the course of time he communicates to his pupils all his

¹⁷⁹ Colleyn 1999,68

¹⁸⁰ Amanze 2002,89

¹⁸¹ Mbiti 1975,152

knowledge. Then later the disciple can begin to practise in town. They are permitted to wear the baboon-skin mantle or head-dress, and to sit on a hyena-skin mat, which are both sacred to their profession.¹⁸²

The person shall be taken to stay with a traditional healer who should give training. As we already mentioned, traditional healers sometimes stay on hills, cattle posts and lands. We can put it in simple terms by saying that the trainee is going to stay with the healer until the training is completed. The trainee is taught all kinds of herbs, medicines, and as well as their use. They are taught how to communicate with the ancestral spirits. They are exposed to all witchcraft wisdom and how to combat it. They are given the wisdom of healing, interpreting visions and dreams. They are familiarized with the mysterious surrounding of the traditional healing.¹⁸³

After completion of the training like in other modern fields of studies, a test is made. The trainer will test her/his trainee with mysterious things which are threatening to him/her. This is to check whether the trainee can defend her/himself against enemies. The testing is done differently. If the trainee has passed the test, he/she can start performing traditional healing. In case when there is something lacking or needs to be improved by the trainee, the trainee shall be given the opportunity to improve on it. The ancestors will also tell whether the trainee is ready to carry out duties. There are those who are trained by the ancestors themselves. Those trainees are believed to be very powerful. The training is done at big rivers or dams, or caves which are believed to be homes of huge snakes or wild beasts.

Once upon time a traditional healer in Botswana told the Radio Botswana Station how he became a traditional healer. He said he was working in the mines in the neighboring South Africa. When he was sleeping during the night he used to dream strange things and to see horrifying visions. This affected him very much. Sometimes he used to hear a voice saying he

¹⁸² Amanze 2002,93

¹⁸³ Mbiti 1975,152

should quit his job and follow what the ancestors want. He quitted work and did not return back home to Botswana.

He was taken by something he cannot explain to the Orange River in South Africa. He stayed with a big snake in this river for about two years. He was eating whatever this snake was eating. They were communicating very well. He was taught to be a traditional healer. He said that they used to go out of the river during nights to take dreams to people and good luck. His relatives in Botswana thought that he was dead. After completing his learning, he came back to Botswana. He started his new proffession.¹⁸⁴

This special healer, still communicate with this snake and the ancestors. According to him he uses the waste of different kinds of snakes to heal people. He argued that this is the right way of training for traditional healing, because it is persuaded by the ancestors. He said that today traditional healers are trained by others, and this is not sufficient because others teach only trainees how to practise witchcraft. But the training does not stop there. The traditional practitioners keep on meeting new challenges in their career.

The training is not free like in modern healing. During old days traditional healing training was done without payments. The trainee's family can only give thanks to the trainer. He can be thanked with a cow or anything else.¹⁸⁵ The trainee also must give thanks to the ancestors. A ritual ceremony is organized for the ancestors.

People are invited to eat and drink. Traditional beer is poured on the ground for the ancestors to drink. Actually a graduation ceremony, the same way we do for an academic graduation. The traditional trainer is also invited and shall share his/her portion. It is hard to

¹⁸⁴ Radio Botswana, programme 'A O ITSE GORE' May 1994

¹⁸⁵ Amanze 2002,93

complete such training. If somebody has managed to complete the training, there is joy in the community, the family, and him/herself. Ancestors are given thanks for what they have done to the trainee.

Today the traditional training is not anymore as cheap as it was long ago. People who are interested in the field used to pay cows, goats or money at the completion of their training. It is now commercialized. We are not sure whether ancestral spirits are involved in such commercialized training. Legwase said during an interview with me that people who go to train as traditional doctors are training to be witch-doctors. His argument is that to be a traditional doctor, you should be chosen by the ancestral spirits or you should have inherited this profession.

The calling and training profession of traditional healing differs from one tribe to the other. The same thing applies to the qualification of being admitted to the profession. Nevertheless there is a common standard which is found in almost all African tribes. Mbiti, however, claims that a traditional healer is expected to be

*trustworthy, morally upright, friendly, willing and ready to serve, able to discern peoples' needs, and to have consideration for their charges. Training in skills of healing is an essential part of the traditional healer's call to his profession.*¹⁸⁶

The Traditional healing practice should learn from the modern system of health education. The education system is professional. It is in both, oral and written form. There are educational facilities, e.g. laboratories, classrooms, books etc. There is a syllabuses for courses. In the modern system, everything taught in health institutions and medical schools goes through a series

¹⁸⁶ Amanze 2002, 89

of scientific research before it is taken to schools, colleges and universities. There are various equipments to help learners in their courses. There is no confidentiality about what should be taught to the students. Learners have access to any information concerning their course. This is contrary to the traditional healing training process.

The traditional system of training healers is very confidential and individual. The reason is that a traditional healer will like to keep his/her wisdom to her/himself and will not share it with anybody else. They fear that if their wisdom is exposed to the public, their strength shall be weakened and they may lose their prestige in the community. The healer will die with this wisdom of healing. In order for this wisdom to be preserved, the training should be paid for. Traditional healers do not want their wisdom of healing to be recorded in books, tapes, and be taught to everybody. Their argument is that the ancestral spirits may be dissatisfied. They can only expose their wisdom on the permission of the ancestral spirits.

In an interview with Tau, a traditional healer residing in a small village in Botswana called Mogobane, argued that the wisdom they possess was hard for them to achieve. They cannot just give away this wisdom to the public easily. They say that people may stop asking help from them because they just go to the bush themselves and look for medicine whenever they feel sick. Another reason for not keeping their healing ideas in books is that, many of them do not know how to write.¹⁸⁷

Tau also indicated that there is fear and suspicion among themselves. They do not want to reveal their skills and wisdom to the public, because other traditional healers may bewitch them easily. The fear is that sorcery and witchcraft culprits are not supposed to have access to the traditional healing wisdom because that may bring danger to everybody.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Tau 2004, interview on 11th May 2004, in Mogobane, Botswana at 2:00pm

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., interview

The issue of having a Traditional Medical School, is considered by others as very important. The main problem is that traditional healing training can be done anywhere e.g. hills, in caves, at rivers. Those are the conducive learning environments for them unlike to modern medicine. Classrooms are not necessary. They are dealing with big wild beasts like snakes. The possessed men have to do their training in shrines or bushes.

It will be vital for the modern society to have the theory of traditional healing wisdom in books. Traditional herbalists should write about their herbs, their prescriptions and other important information on papers. Then it can be available in chemistries or pharmacies. Nevertheless, in some pharmacies in Africa traditional herbs are sold. This is a very good move which will benefit modern people and improve further scientific research on traditional herbs.

The scientific research on traditional medicine can bring both methods of healing found in Africa into dialogue with each other. The wisdom of traditional healing can be preserved for generations to come. There is a general fear that this wisdom may die with their owners. Nevertheless, traditional healers have confidence that the Supreme Being and the ancestors will at all time give wisdom to some people, in order that traditional healing is passed on from generation to generation. According to Legwase during an interview he said that this wisdom will keep on changing according to generations. The Supreme Being is the one who releases vital powers to each generation. They (healers) do not have this fear that their wisdom is going to be buried with the owners as, we modern people think.¹⁸⁹

The traditional practitioners and other traditional minded people are very much concerned about how modern people have left their traditions, cultures, norms and values. According to

¹⁸⁹ Legwase 2004,an interview on June 16th 2004,in Gaborone at 1:00pm.

them the challenges we are facing now, e.g. incurable diseases are caused by lack of respect to cultures and traditions. Their blame is on the youths of today who are too much westernized. They want the youth to be taught all these values. The proposal is that the youth will be interested in these things, if there is a formal school or college which specializes in traditional methods of healing, cultures, values, herbs, *muti*, witchcraft, being possessed etc. In other words, traditional practitioners should come together and form a school like the medical schools of today. This shall motivate people to take African traditional healing seriously. Such kinds of schools can be put into attractive models of today's learning.

There are very good attempts of bringing all traditional doctors, prophets, spirit possessors etc together to form an association. In some African countries traditional healers associations have founded already. By 1985 there were about four traditional healing associations in Botswana.¹⁹⁰ These associations can help in the combat of witchcrafts and sorcery in societies. They can also assist in bringing the traditional healing in touch with the modern world. That idea can help to distinguish witchdoctors or evil spirit possessors from the true African traditional doctors and spirit possessors. The reason is that traditional healers shall register at these associations and be guided by the laws or constitutions. This may help people today who experience cheating by false traditional healers and spirit possessors. These persons pretend to be experts in the profession by using magic, and then they get money from desperate people and disappear. There are too many cases of this nature in many African countries.

Many people came out with complain that certain traditional doctors demand a lot of money from them before healing is completed. Then later the healer will be nowhere to be found. People are losing trust in traditional healing. The need for a traditional healers' association is important. It can bring order by providing certificates for their members so that people can

¹⁹⁰ Staugard 1985, 229

know that they are the right and qualified healers. This may also revive the traditional healing prestige and respect to people of today.

At the current moment people of today are concerned about the powers of traditional healing. They argue that evil is happening at a higher rate. This can mean that traditional medication powers are weaker than witchcraft or modern science. Mr Samuel Ratsoma, an assistant headman in Molapowabojang, Botswana made a critical statement at a funeral of somebody suspected of having died of HIV/AIDS. This assistant headman from a rural village said,

I would like to call upon all the people practising witchcraft and sorceries to form an organization. That organization shall have a spoke person who shall speak in funerals like this one , that they should not be blamed for the death of the deceased. This shall help us to combat HIV/AIDS, because every death occurred even if we know that it is HIV/AIDS, sorcerers (baloi) are blamed.¹⁹¹ (translated from Setswana into English)

In some African countries whenever death happens, the blame is put on witchcraft. The chief is calling for above mentioned association, because they can speak for themselves if they are not responsible for the death of somebody, especially in case HIV/AIDS. The main reason behind this, is that people used to blame them for deaths caused by HIV/AIDS and other natural diseases.

6.7 Good Service

The modern medicines have got facilities to provide good service to patients. Those include diet, bedding etc. This is very good. The traditional healers do not have such facilities to give to

¹⁹¹ Ratsoma, a speech made at funeral in Lobatse ,Botswana on 11th November 2003

a patient. This does not mean that patients never stay at their homes. A patient can stay at the traditional healer home for treatment. This happens if the healer discovers that it is necessary to admit this patient in order to do close observation and prepare right medication for such a patient. The patient shall eat whatever is eaten at that home. In other words, a traditional healer's home is not only a clinic, but is also a hospital.

There are many complaints from the public about state hospitals and clinics in many African countries. People's dissatisfaction is that the hospitality given to their patients at these hospitals is not good. Of course, authorities concerned in some countries like Botswana deny that. I did an interview with patients from three different hospitals in Botswana on different dates. Those hospitals include the Princess Marina hospital in Gaborone, the Arthlone hospital in Lobatse and Nyangabgwe hospital in Francistown. The complaints of the patients about these hospitals were the same. They argued that nurses do not speak to them well and if they need help they may get it or not.¹⁹²

There is a clue that public hospitals staff are sometimes not providing good hospitality to the patients. It is possible because of lack of well trained staff, equipments, poor management, and lack of funds to provide a quality service. Another reason could be that there are too many patients coming to public hospitals and clinics. This is contrary to private hospitals and clinics in Africa. They provide good service to patients. The reason could be that patients pay a lot for the service. As a result people do not trust very much public hospitals.

The traditional healers provide a good hospitality whenever needed for their patients. They welcome them and speak to them and provide traditional healing and counselling to them. If they

¹⁹² Interview at Arthlone Hospital in Lobatse, male ward, 12 April 2004 1:00pm
 Interview at Nyangabgwe Hospital in Francistown, male ward, 20 February 2004 1:00pm
 Interview at Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone, male ward, 27th March 2004, 1:00pm

are not busy, they have a short conversation with their clients. People feel accepted at a traditional healer's home. In some cases a traditional healer is taken to the home of the patient to perform healing there. This happens when the patient is critical or is not able to move. The family can collect the healer to come and perform healing and this is conducive to the family. This is one of the things which encourage people to go for traditional healers. There are still people who never went to a clinic or hospital in their lives in many African countries.

In the end of the year 2003, I counselled a traditional healer who was Sotho speaking in Southern part of Botswana at a village called Tlhareselele. This healer had joined the Lutheran Church, was baptized and confirmed. He later became very sick. The relatives urged him to go to a clinic, but he refused. He was coughing, having high fever and he could not walk. I went to administer the Holy Communion Sacrament to him. The ailing traditional healer said to me that in his life he never went to a clinic, and his faith is in his traditional curved bones and the Christian faith. He said it would be against his ancestors, if he would visit a clinic or hospital. Unfortunately he died after some few days.

Patients at hospitals used to urge doctors to release them whenever they start recovering, even though they are not yet fit enough to leave the hospital. A reason behind this can be that they want to go to consult traditional healers, also the loneliness in the hospital can be a reason.

There are also cases where by relatives of a patient will ask for the release of their patient in order to take him to a traditional healer, because a traditional healer is not allowed to perform healing on hospitals premises. The relatives shall take their patient to a healer. After the healer has finished his/her work, the patient is returned back to the hospital. The relatives will bring traditional medicine from the healer to the patient at the hospital every day.

There are hearsays that patients are given this medicine to drink during checking hours, so that nurses and medical doctors cannot see. In most cases nurses and medical doctors do not want their patient to be given this traditional medication, because it disturbs their treatment process of the patient. This is the main reason why people do not like to be admitted to hospitals. Many people only go the hospitals when they have found that traditional healing had failed.

7. The modern medicine with Christian healing

The Christian healing and modern medicine have an old historical connection. The two cannot be separated. They have been close together. We have already mentioned that the church started building hospitals, clinics and health centers in order to provide healing to African people. They did not want not only to concentrate on spiritual needs only, but also on physical needs.

When missionaries came to Africa, it was difficult for the church to handle healing comparing with what they preach from the New Testament. This confusion consequently resulted in the eruption of many Christian movements with different approaches in their doctrines on healing. For instance, there are faith healers, prayer healers and those who strongly follow St. James' advice regarding anointing and the laying of hands. There are also others who have established or belong to special orders and societies for the practice of their belief that there is a unique healing power in the sacraments of grace and particularly in the Eucharist.¹⁹³ This was still not enough to cover all the needs of people.

*The majority, however, have interpreted their response to the healing imperative through the provision and operation of hospitals and clinics to minister to the sick, especially in situations where no other such provision was available.*¹⁹⁴

The Church marked its picture to be an institution that has a very long history of involvement with health care. This shows a close relation between the Christian healing and the modern medicine so that the two cannot be separated. There are Christian hospitals and clinics administered by Churches. Nevertheless, there is a decline of hospitals and clinics owned by

¹⁹³ Mc Gilvray 1981,1

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*,p.1

the Church in the world today. This is due to the financial constraints Churches are facing today.

*The expansion of secular medical service; rapidly increasing costs of operation and the problems of support relationship led to a questioning of the relevance of Christian medical programmes and a search for authentic expressions of health and healing which would be faithful to the gospel.*¹⁹⁵

This challenged the Church drastically during the past decades and this forced the Church to withdraw from running hospitals and clinics. In Africa some Churches take this burden to their governments. Some governments do not want to take full responsibility of these health institutions. They prefer to have partnership with Churches for running hospitals.

The establishment of the Christian Medical Commission played an important role in the Christian healing ministry in this changing world. Of course, the thinking was that healing is an important thing in the theology of the Church, but people should put their trust also in modern medicine. The creation of this commission attracted many spiritual and divine healing groups which felt, at last, that they were being provided with a forum within a world-wide ecumenical body.¹⁹⁶

The need for dialogue and cooperation between Christian healing and modern medicine has been one of the fruitful things in human history of health. The dialogue between the two approaches healed the division and created a mutual understanding for the sake of human beings.

This is also a command from Christ to love neighbors and to be compassionate. The dual approach is still working in Africa on issues of healing. They went as far as including

¹⁹⁵ Mc Gilvray 1981,5-6

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.,p.43

communities in the struggle. This goes together with Paul's theology that all people of God are committed to reflect Christ the Savior in the fullness of His Divinity. (Col.1, 19-20)

*No man alone can heal the total brokenness of the human condition .Rather through a variety of talents, gifts and disciplines the whole man is healed with God's grace....In this healing ministry both the individual and the congregation live by God's mighty power working in Jesus Christ.*¹⁹⁷

These gifts are used together according to Christian understanding. Healing is taken in a holistic approach today by Christians. In the book of Genesis 2: 4-10 we come across the leaves of a tree for healing the nations. This is the tree of life. These leaves are medicine, in contrast to the toxic drugs and sorcery of evil Babylon /Rome. (Revelation. 18: 2-30).

In the book of Ezekiel 47:12 the leaves for healing have become the healing of the nations. The main idea here is that revelation of the tree of life with its leaves is for the healing of the word. Whether a literal image of the actual medicinal properties of trees, or metaphorical imagery of spiritual healing, this text proclaims healing for our world and for each one of us.

7.1 Integration of modern medicine with the scriptures

There is a need to integrate modern medicine and the scripture, especially when coming to formulation of public policies regarding health. We have already said that doctors are able to make moral choices affecting their patients, but they are not inherently qualified to solve ethical dilemmas. This means that any lay person, who understands medical factors surrounding an ethical question, is just as qualified as a physician to present a course of action.

The Church provides pastoral therapy and psychiatry for patients .This is another way of helping medical doctors in what they cannot do. Churches have fulltime employees at hospitals, e.g. deacons, chaplains, psychologists, etc. The problem facing the Churches is finance. This

¹⁹⁷Mac Gilvray 1981,50

caused the Church to leave everything in the hands of medical doctors and this makes the integration difficult. Christian decisions on issues of health and medicine are influenced by the Bible.

In most African countries the participation of Christians in modern medicine is not reaching a high climax. The reason is that many Churches cannot afford to sponsor students to study medicine and other Christian related fields of studies. The Church staff declines slowly at public health institutions. Another big problem is that Churches cannot afford to pay wages of its staff at hospitals. This situation reduces the influence of the Church on the participation in modern medicine sectors.

*Medical and biblical truth must be integrated to avoid decisions that are medically unsound or morally deficient.*¹⁹⁸ The Church

found itself in a difficult situation where they should make choices necessary for public good, while on the other hand guaranteeing the protection of an individual created in God's image. This situation compels the Church to commit theological errors, for instance the issues of whether abortion should be legalized by the state or not. There is still an on going theological debate on that issue in many African Churches. Some countries like South Africa decided to legalize it. In Namibia and Botswana, to mention just a few, debates among churches, governments and the public on the subject are still going on.

8. The Challenges of HIV/AIDS Today

The Church was caught in a dilemma on the issue of the use of condoms. The integration sometimes is complex due to new challenges coming up today. These challenges comprise of medical, economical, social and cultural problems the world faces today. In Africa, HIV/AIDS

¹⁹⁸ Dietrich, Wood 1990,212

is one of the main problems and many lives are lost because of it. The epidemic of this virus is alarming at a high rate in Africa. The disease is causing a panic to Africans and to the world. Nevertheless, there are facts about this disease which all the three approaches towards healing cannot ignore.

HIV/ AIDS is an incurable disease. It is sexually transmitted through unprotected vaginal or anal intercourse. It can also be transmitted through oral sexual contact. The risk of becoming HIV infected is four times higher for a woman than for a man. The female body is more exposed to semen from man.¹⁹⁹ People infected are highly infectious right after becoming infected, and during the full-blown AIDS phase. Some partners become infected only during one sexual contact, while others remain uninfected after hundreds of contacts.

People get the HIV virus through sexual intercourse, blood transmissions with infected blood, infected needles and other sharp instruments and through mother to child transmission. The following are things through which a person does not get infected. Those include coughing and sneezing, handshaking and hugging; sharing food, clothes, and normal dry kiss etc.²⁰⁰ These facts should be taken seriously by every practitioner, healer, prophets, etc.

There are faith healers, especially from African Independent Churches, which do not use modern medicine at all. They put their trust in prayer. They also do not consult traditional medicine men and women. This causes a problem to the Health Departments in some African countries.

*The Gospel of God's Church, known as 'Sabata ya Mazezuru'
discourages its followers from seeking medical attention in hospitals.*

¹⁹⁹ Gennrich 2004,13

²⁰⁰ Ibid.,p.27-28

*The belief is that God can heal through prayer thus no medicine should be administered.*²⁰¹

Recently in August 2004 the Botswana Health Department took a campaign of immunizing kids under the age of five to protect them against polio. The children of the “Gospel of God Church” members were not immunized. Their parents refused their children to be immunized because it is against their Church doctrine.

8.1 Factual errors about HIV/AIDS

After HIV/AIDS was discovered, many different views about it came up. Some of them were misleading the public. Medical doctors are still making research on this deadly disease. We cannot trust theories of some doctors, because the habit of this virus has been falsely described. For instance, British author Patrick Dixon says that, the AIDS virus is common in many animals. He also claims that a cat died of the AIDS virus in San Francisco.²⁰² More also Gene Antonio twice states that HIV has been found in green monkeys in Africa, and later he suggested that it had crossed over to man from diseased sheep.²⁰³ There were others who claimed that the virus can be found in mosquitoes.

There are also other unfounded ideas about this virus. Some people claim that by sharing properties and kissing with an affected person, the HIV virus can be transmitted. Others say that AIDS can be spread casually or by insect bites, others are saying that AIDS is the deadliest epidemic since the Black Plague.²⁰⁴ All these assumptions are not founded. Modern medicine is facing a big challenge to inform the world about this virus. Of course, their medical credibility in

²⁰¹ Mabiletsa 2004,p 4. News Paper Mid Week Sun

²⁰² Dixon 1987,62

²⁰³ Antonio 1987,1,26

²⁰⁴ Dietrich, Wood 1990,216

Africa is also challenged by African traditional practitioners. The solution is that they should come out with medicine that can cure this disease. The medical errors about this virus can cause confusion and terrible mistakes for people, especially Africans. The facts about the AIDS virus should be taught to the people as a priority.

8.2. The Challenges of HIV/ AIDS in the Christian Church

The Christian faith came across this challenge. The proliferation of Churches in Africa, which claim to have the power to heal any disease including HIV/AIDS, is continuing. There are too many prophets, fortunetellers, bishops etc who are claiming to possess spiritual powers, or divine powers from the Holy Spirit, which they can use to heal people. It is very difficult to know exactly whether this spirit is truly the Holy Spirit from God. There are testimonies given by people that they used to be healed by excessive prayers from those Churches. Others claim that they had the HIV virus, but when they went back to be tested for the second time, they test negative. The fact remains that the Church is tested with its power of healing. The Church has the HIV/AIDS virus. Its people are affected or infected. There is an urgent need for solution.

The theological argument about the nature of this virus is continuing throughout the world. There are some theological debates in the Church about this issue. The big question is that

*what is God doing about the epidemic? Or what beliefs about God and human beings should inspire the churches' actions in response to HIV/AIDS.*²⁰⁵

The effects of this virus compelled Christians to link it with belief in God. There are Christians who claim that HIV/ AIDS is a punishment from God, the reason being that humanity has left God. God is not happy with that. The only way HIV/ AIDS can be eradicated is by

²⁰⁵ WCC 1997, 20

people turning back to their God whom they have forsaken. This makes people think that people infected with HIV have sinned against God, which is wrong reasoning. Theologically, God cannot be blamed for HIV/AIDS. God still loves humanity and creation. God does not want to rule creation by force.

Instead, God has given humanity freedom, so that people may choose relationship rather than be manipulated into obedience like puppets.²⁰⁶

It is up to people to use this divine gift of freedom which is necessary for entering into real relationship with God. To deny any such relationship, indeed, is to deny all kinds of relationships. There is no reason to blame God for HIV/AIDS or earthquakes, because God allows the natural world to evolve as it can. The gift of freedom also applies to this natural world. We know that some creatures transmit disease to others. We have to know that

the virus is not something outside creation, nor is it a “special” creation of God’s intended to punish human beings...it is something which has become possible as the world developed, a creature like everything else, and hence able to interact with contemporary conditions and to produce natural evil.²⁰⁷

This does not mean that God cannot heal or cure this disease. God is above creation, and there is nothing created that can escape God’s divine powers. The theology of creation by Christians argues that God is aware that this freedom given to creation is at the risk of creating evil. God is not only open to the joy and flourishing of creation, but also vulnerable to pain about its viciousness and disasters.

There are Church leaders who prefer to believe in a modern psychological dogma rather than in the Word of God. They give this modern dogma first priority, and this may lead to

²⁰⁶ Ibid.,p.21

²⁰⁷ WCC 1997, 22

theological mistakes. Homosexuality was blamed for the HIV/AIDS virus. It was even said that the AIDS virus comes from homosexuals. Christians tend to associate the HIV/AIDS virus with them, because they claim it is referred as sin according to the bible. It seems that there are no references about homosexuality in the Scripture which present it in a favorable manner. This idea takes us back to the issue that HIV/AIDS is God's judgment on homosexuality. This can be a theological mistake.

Christians tend to forget that the principle of their faith is to love one another in spite of their sins. There is a mentality among people today that if a person is HIV positive, it is because he/she had sinned against God. This stigmatizes people who are infected with the virus. This kind of theological error should be considered as serious.

There is another theological mistake made by people which tries to justify the deaths caused by this disease. The error is

*the tendency for the Christian community to rejoice that God's laws on sexuality have been vindicated by this epidemic. Although God's good purposes for restricting the expressions of our sexuality have become clearer, why do we have to exult in that? We should not need the confirmation of dying people to know that Scripture is true.*²⁰⁸

8.2.1 The use of condoms

Another current theological debate in Africa is the use of condoms to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Some Churches argue that the open advertisement on the use of condoms as prevention of HIV/AIDS is sending a wrong signal to people, especially the youth

²⁰⁸ Dietrich, Wood 1990,223

that it is not wrong to indulge in early sexual activities. In other words, the promotion of condoms is the same as encouraging fornication, illicit sex, or sex outside marriage. This scandal came out due to the open promotion of the use of condoms by governments, non-governmental organizations, etc. Their argument is that the level of morality in our African societies has declined. Many young people are sexually active at any early stages. Therefore the Church is blamed for doing not enough to help improving the morality of the people. That is why other organizations like the state cannot fold their arms and watch people dying.

Some Churches have decided to preach abstinence, faithfulness and the use of condoms, if people cannot manage to stick to the first two, while others totally reject the use of condoms. Some African theologians' approach on the issue of condoms is based on the conserving life. They take life as a gift from God. They argue that, ethically speaking, the use of condoms is ambiguous in many cases, but in some situations using condoms would be more on the side of conserving of life. They take life as a precious gift from God. The Christian faith is based in a God who loves life. God became human, so that human beings may have life in its fullness. In his writings Ruele speaks about a theology of life as

*a product of a life-threatening context. It is born out of the problematic life experiences in which the people of Botswana and Southern Africa and indeed of the whole world find themselves. A theology of life is a response by the people to the pain and suffering brought by all that endangers life, such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, war and poverty.*²⁰⁹

The devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic threatens life and challenges the credibility of healing today. There are those who argue that the use of condoms preserves people's lives. Therefore

²⁰⁹ Ruele 2003, 78

this method should be accepted by religious organizations as a fight against the pandemic. The use of condoms should be viewed as the life saving entity, not only to married people, but also to the unmarried, i.e. youth who are sexually active.

Nevertheless, another view is that there is little doubt that in the AIDS situation today, God will be on the side of life. God will not demand immediate moral perfection from people who, for various reasons, cannot yet measure to that deal. The Word of God raises the possibility of making use of objects to our disposal in the search towards solutions. (Luke 15:8-10) On the other hand one would argue that churches and religious communities should say in clear terms that they would not tolerate promiscuity, or any society should say in clear terms that it would not tolerate promiscuity or any kind of behavior that endangers human life and well-being.

If there is no cure for HIV/AIDS, can we not consider going back to our guideline that includes the exception, especially if a person cannot follow the rules, and then he/she could choose the option of the condom. This will guarantee that all the choices are presented to the people concerned, so that they can take responsible decisions for their own lives. These of course, bring other arguments.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic challenges in theology of healing have raised a lot of concern to the people. There are theologians who are calling for the prophetic voice of the Church on this subject. In her writings, Dube and other theologians describe HIV/AIDS as a historical moment of crisis.²¹⁰ She continues to indicate that

*indeed, any reading of prophetic literature indicates that their work was largely informed by prevailing social crises.*²¹¹

²¹⁰ Dube 2003,46

²¹¹ *ibid.*,p.45

This crisis needs to be confronted with a prophetic message of Jesus Christ. The reason is that there are other global factors, which increase the crisis. It is beyond doubt that the roots of the global socio-economic and cultural problems related to HIV/AIDS are unjust distribution, accumulation of wealth, land and power. These scenes leave the poor and vulnerable at the risk of death caused by this disease. This leads to various forms of malaise in our communities. There are more and more cases of economic and political migration of people within and outside their own countries. These uprooted people may be migrant workers hunting for better-paying jobs or refugees because of economic, political or religious conflicts. The scene is terrible for mankind in time of HIV/AIDS.²¹²

Another major thing that puts more fire to the crisis is

*racism, gender discrimination and sexual harassment, economic inequalities, the lack of political will for change, huge external and internal debts, critical health problems, illicit drug and sex trades, including an increase in child prostitution, fragmentation and marginalization of communities- all these factors, which affect “developed” as well as “developing” societies, form a web of inter-related global problems which intensify the vulnerability of human communities to HIV/AIDS.*²¹³

These factors cannot be ignored in the fight against the HIV/AIDS crisis. Of course, the power of God’s healing is challenged.

8.2.2 New kairos

²¹² WCC 1997,14

²¹³ WCC 1997,15

Another theological interpretation of HIV/AIDS challenges today is brought in to the scene by Maluleke. Maluleke argues that HIV/AIDS is a new *kairos*.

*The HIV/AIDS epidemic has ushered in a new kairos for the world in general and for the African continent in particular. But that is only one dimension of it. The other dimension is that it is a kairos for and of the church- the local as well as the worldwide church. While we in the church may not all be infected, we all can be infected and once one member of the body is infected we are certainly all affected.*²¹⁴

The word *kairos* was used by African theologians, especially from South Africa, against the then apartheid government in South Africa. They wrote a document called ‘the *kairos* document’ (crisis, moment of truth). Maluleke feels that the challenge posed by HIV/AIDS is a new *kairos*. HIV/AIDS is

*a crisis that is shaking the foundations and there is every indication that the crisis has only just begun and that it will deepen and become even more threatening in the months to come...It is shaking the foundations and meaning of life, individuality, family, culture, community, religion and church. In much of Africa, people are living under the heavy cloud of the HIV/AIDS scourge...In this way very few are living in dread of HIV/AIDS...It is in terms such as these that I regard the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a kairos.*²¹⁵ The Church of Christ has HIV/AIDS.

This is a moment in which the Church should stand up and use whatever is available to deal with the crisis. It is a significant moment for theologians, pastors, prophets, bishops, and Church

²¹⁴ Maluleke 2003,59

²¹⁵ Maluleke 2003,63-64

healers to mobilize themselves and combat the situation. They are obliged to break the wall of silence about the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In his writings Maluleke is convinced that there is a need for the HIV/AIDS challenge to be met at the deepest level of theology, doctrine, ideology and culture.²¹⁶ There should be a theology of HIV/AIDS that shall deal deeply with the theological issues affecting people in today's context of AIDS. This shall include theological education in the Church and Christian Education for the children, youth and adults.

These are challenges posed by HIV/AIDS in the Church today. These challenges brought by HIV/AIDS into the Church are not new phenomena for Church theology. These bring a theological debate within the Church. The Church is challenged to practise caring for those who are ill and dying of AIDS. People who are dying from AIDS look at the Church for solace. The Church is their only and last hope when they suffer from a disease that has no cure. Often the Church has ignored its role and has stood by and watched God's people die in agony. Jesus of Nazareth was a man full of compassion and love. He visited the sick, prayed and healed them. The Church being the body of Christ has to follow in the footsteps of its master and help people living with HIV/AIDS to die with dignity and hope.

Christians have no doubt that if Jesus would return back now to the earth, he would be the coordinator of the Home Based Care for people living with HIV/AIDS. He would visit them and heal them from pains and sufferings. The Church has to come up with better approaches towards AIDS that will cause people to change their sexual attitudes and behaviors, instead of condemning the methods of HIV/AIDS prevention done by other parties.

²¹⁶ *ibid.*,p.68

9. The Traditional Healing Approach on HIV/AIDS

The traditional practitioners denied at first that there is an illness called HIV/AIDS which is incurable. This was during the first cases of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. In Botswana around the 90s, the practitioners claimed that this disease is *boswagadi* (that is an illness caused by lack of traditional treatment of a person who lost a spouse).

The practice is that, if somebody lost a spouse by death, a traditional healing will take place for a certain period of time. The person should not involve in sexual activities with anybody until the healing is completed. If such healing is not done, this person is going to be sick of *boswagadi* and which is an incurable disease.²¹⁷ This person can transmit this illness to another person through sexual contact. That is the reason why HIV/AIDS was associated with *boswagadi* by traditional healers.

²¹⁷ Amanze 2002,215

The traditional healers in Botswana continued to deny the existence of the virus. In some other African countries there are unfounded claims from traditional healers that this disease is a punishment from the ancestors, because they are not happy with how people behave today. Legwase claims that people have left their customs, communities, norms, values, traditions and morality has declined. There is disharmony between people and their ancestral world.²¹⁸ HIV/AIDS is allowed by ancestors and the Supreme Being. They do not protect people from this deadly and evil disease. The vital forces from the Supreme Being are suspended.

There are unfounded beliefs in Botswana that HIV/AIDS is associated with witchcraft, especially today. The issue is that some people are aware that this disease is incurable. People want to know why they got contact to the virus. They believe that somebody must be responsible. The 'why' question is very important at this point. A person can be witched to get the HIV virus. The person with AIDS knows that her/his illness is caused by the HIV virus, but will still ask:

*Why me and not my neighbour? While I sleep only with my husband, my neighbour is running with many men. The only answer that will really satisfy this woman is that someone, by means of magical manipulation, has 'caused' or 'sent' the virus to make her (rather than her neighbour) ill (this is the personal or ultimate cause of illness).*²¹⁹

Of course, witchcraft and sorcery are all the time being blamed for illness, bad lucks and misfortunes. In Botswana recently some traditional healers, including Legwase, confessed that HIV/AIDS exists. He said that when a patient comes to him, they throw their divine bones called *ditaola* in the Sotho/Tswana language. The bones shall reveal to them whether the

²¹⁸ Legwase 2004, an interview on 16th June at 1:00pm in Gaborone, Botswana

²¹⁹ van Dyk 2001,113

disease can be cured or not. The ancestors tell them through bones. They will then advise their clients to visit a clinics or a hospital. They do not charge the client because no healing is performed.²²⁰

Nevertheless, if what they are saying is true, that is what a true traditional healer will do, as we have already discussed in previous topics. The only bad situation happening is that some healers will never reveal to the client that he/she cannot cure his/her illness. The practitioners will make the client to pay, even if the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS related diseases are seen on the client. This is very common in Southern Africa, especially in Botswana.

Another thing which the traditional healers argue is, that HIV/AIDS is caused by pollution. They say that people

*get sick because they neglect to purify themselves from states of impurity or 'pollution' by failing to carry out the appropriate rituals that have been prescribed for everyday life since time immemorial among Africans.*²²¹

This actually is concerned much with sexual intercourse. People who have committed abortion, miscarriage, people who give birth to twins and men who had sexual intercourse with women during the menstrual period are all ritually impure or polluted.²²² The main argument here is that most of these rituals are not followed any longer today. The failure to follow them has caused sexual transmitted diseases that cannot be cured, like HIV/AIDS.

The traditional doctors' argument is that people should return to customs, norms, values, and to their traditional beliefs. Due to that neglect, the ancestors and the Supreme Being are not

²²⁰ Legwase 2004, an interview on the 16th June 2004, in Gaborone at 1:00pm

²²¹ van Dyk 2001.117

²²² Ibid.,p.117

happy. Therefore they are not providing vital forces including their defensive role against evil. That is why HIV/AIDS and other natural crises are still happening in the world and do not cease.

Most respected traditional practitioners get many clients from all walks of life. They can be very powerful educators. They have influence in the communities, as well on other healers through their professional networks, e.g. modern medical doctors. They understand local belief systems and can explain illness and misfortune in ways that people are familiar with. Therefore, they need correct information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. There is a danger that they may mislead their clients if they have no information about AIDS.

Many people with HIV/AIDS approach traditional healers for spiritual and emotional healing, even when they have access to other health services. Traditional doctors often treat the whole person, i.e. not just the disease, but also a person's mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being.

Traditional healers often see their patients together with other family members. As a result, they can play an important role in family counselling and in reducing stigma as well as discrimination against people living with the HIV/AIDS virus. Family counselling has the added advantage of strengthening family ties.

Traditional medicines and health practices can help alleviate symptoms, strengthen the immune system, and treat opportunistic infections. Nevertheless in hospitals patients are given traditional medicine during public checking time without the knowledge of the medical doctor. In many cases these remedies are too strong for a weak patient, and it also makes treatment difficult for the medical doctors. We need to do research on traditional medicine, as well as on how they can be used safely with biomedical treatments.

10. The Appropriate Measures to be taken

The three approaches of healing are used together in some African countries. Countries where Christianity is the main religion these three approaches of healing are prominent like in Southern Africa. It seems that the three will continue existing together in many African societies. It is important to look for better measures to guide the use of these methods of healing together.

In his book van Dyk disclosed that many black people consult both, traditional healers as well as western health care professionals for the same condition, while the traditional healers are consulted to diagnose the personal cause of the condition, or to prevent a recurrence of the illness by performing a ritual. On the other hand, a western doctor is consulted for medication to treat a condition symptomatically.²²³

On the other hand, others will go to churches for spiritual comfort and support. There are churches which practise also traditional healing, and people consult them too.²²⁴ The only big problem which confuses people today is that all these three healing approaches are failing to cooperate fully with one another in combating disease or illness. There is a high competition

²²³ van Dyk 2001,113

²²⁴ Amanze 1998,183

among them, and this causes a lot of underestimating of each others professions. For instances traditional practitioners are alleged for encourage people to come to them, rather than to go to hospitals or to the Church prophets or healers.

There are churches alleged for teaching their members not to visits clinics, because Jesus Christ is a great healer. The modern medicine seems to be flexible between the other two approaches, but their argument is that a traditional healer's medicine should be tested scientifically in order to accept it.

They are only concentrating on facts. This becomes chaotic, because they are threatened by erroneous ideas that are related to racism. This means that practitioners, like medical doctors who are western orientated, will feel that black people do not trust their white medicine and they are suspicious of it. This is proven by the debate about the origin of HIV/AIDS. There are unfounded allegations that HIV/AIDS is created purposely by the West and the Americans in order to demolish the black population. Due to this situation we have to take appropriate measures and see how the three approaches can work hand in hand.

The appropriate measure to be taken on the issue of HIV/AIDS is the involvement of everybody in the fight. Therefore everybody should be a nurse, doctor, counsellor, pastor, prophet etc to the other. In his recommendations to the Government of Botswana on the nation vision 2016, Maganu of the World Health Organization urged the government and other sectors to play an active role to ensure that the underlying causes of the HIV/AIDS epidemic are tackled. He emphasized that gender inequality and economic empowerment should be given more priority.²²⁵

²²⁵ Maganu 2003,p.28. Botswana Government Press

Everybody should be involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We should cease criticizing one another, but concentrate on all possible measures to help combating the disease. The spread of the disease in Southern and Central Africa is compelling the whole community to reconsider generally assumptions about sickness, and how epidemics should be tackled. The most important thing in the fight is to call for the protective and regenerative power of the African concept of human community. This call plays a decisive role in determining what kind of society survives the epidemic.²²⁶

In this crisis of HIV/AIDS, the Church should play a leading role in the fight against the epidemic. Individual Christians should speak out about the HIV/AIDS to enhance the awareness and banish stigma and discrimination. This can happen during worship services and other Christian spiritual gatherings. The prophetic voice of the Church is needed in this crisis. The Church is called to act with love and respect to those infected and affected with HIV/AIDS.

It is time for the Church to integrate the topic HIV/AIDS into their existing teaching programmes. Those programmes include Bible study groups, church choirs, confirmation classes, Sunday school, youth groups, women and men's leagues etc. Especially, the young people HIV/AIDS education is very crucial, because many young people today receive very little education about sexuality from their homes. It will be good if the HIV/AIDS curriculum could be integrated also in tertiary institutions like theological seminaries and colleges.²²⁷

HIV/AIDS is a new terrorist. This terrorist has declared war over humanity, a new war of terror. Therefore

²²⁶ Saayman 1994, 176

²²⁷ Gennrich 2004,58-60

*Jesus Christ demonstrated God's love to all human beings, coming to be present in the midst of the human struggle. If Churches are to fulfill their mission, they must recognize that HIV/AIDS brings the lives of many people into crisis and that is a crisis which churches must face. The very relevance of the Churches will be determined by the response.*²²⁸

10.1 Acceptance and Common understanding

The three approaches of healing in Africa should accept each other's capabilities. The modern science should cease condemning African traditional science, but instead the two should enter into a serious dialogue with one another. This kind of dialogue can lead to a common understanding and cordial cooperation between them. In some African countries today there are traditional healers associations. These associations can speed up dialogue and common understanding.

There is also a lot to be done to convince the Main Line Churches to accept the theory of healing by traditional healers. Therefore African theology should seriously engage on doing theology in the context of African people. Christianity should re-consider that before imperialism Africans had hospitals or clinics. Those were certain hills, trees, rivers, homes of traditional healers and place where the whole tribe used to gather for public ritual and public discussions. Those were the healing centers during olden times. Of course, things have changed tremendously.

A dialogue between the different approaches of healing can help the traditional healing to improve their skills on today's illness. There are many things which can be improved in the

²²⁸ Ibid.,p.43

traditional healing. For instance, traditional healers use the same knife or any sharp thing to cut all their clients without sterilizing them. This is dangerous, especially in this time of blood and fluids transmitted diseases, e.g. HIV/AIDS.

Although it is indeed possible for AIDS to be transmitted through infected blood transfusions and dirty injection syringes, these two forms of transmission still only account for less than five percent of all cases of AIDS.²²⁹

This proves to the modern medicine that traditional healing can contribute to the spread of other infections, while they are in their traditional laboratories. The best measures which can be taken are to improve the working conditions of the traditional healers. They can be convinced to buy sterilizers and also be given education on the dangers of an unhealthy healing place. The traditional healers can be given first aid education, so that they can combine it with their own healing methods.

The traditional healers should help to put their knowledge into a written form so that it can be preserved. The tendency of these healers is, that they keep this very important knowledge and skills and die with it. The same thing applies to the healing prophets in the AIC. They cannot divulge the mystery of their healing. The modern medicine, however has kept theories of their medical research in written form. The traditional healers and Church prophets are the only ones interested in the practical side, because they are too selfish to share with one another divine wisdom.

²²⁹ O'Donovan 2000,104

This kind of exchange of theories should not take side. This means that it should not be only the traditional healers and Church healers telling the medical practitioners. This means that traditional *muti* and herbs have to be tested in laboratories, and traditional healers have to take penicillin and check whether the ancestors cannot recommend it for a patient during a traditional healing session. The priest or pastor of the Main Line Churches should also engage in ancestral veneration to test whether these are truly God's healing spirits as the Apostle Paul recommended. This shall benefit all parties.

The debate on traditional medicine always takes an emotional tone of accusations and contrasting it with modern medicine. This tends to make people debate from an ideological rather than a practical perspective. This was also increased by African governments who preferred the western scientific medicine and discouraged the use of traditional medicine during post colonialism. They have ignored the fact that traditional medicine is very much based on culture.

Every ethnic group has its traditional medicine based on its indigenous knowledge. However there are close similarities between these groups. For instance, it is believed that almost all traditional medicine systems utilize herbs as the main source of their therapeutic substances, minerals and animal products are also utilized. The traditional medicine in various African societies should therefore reflect the indigenous knowledge based on a particular society. It is strictly cultural and traditional. It is the way African people live.

The modern medicine is a system of medicine based on science and scientific methods. Actually it draws on the biological sciences (anatomy), physiology, molecular biology etc, and on the physical sciences, e.g. physics, chemistry etc.

The historical mistake which should be corrected according to Maganu is that,

*the first missionaries, who were the first to bring to our society the system of Scientific Medicine, which in those days was itself very undeveloped, led a campaign to denigrate and generally portray Traditional Medicine (TM) as superstitious and primitive is very unfortunate. Modern Africa Governments, including our own, have generally turned away from this approach and are accepting TM as a part of the life and culture of their people.*²³⁰

This error should be corrected. The African traditional medicine should be taken as part of African culture and tradition by modern medicine. It plays a vital role in healing. We need to talk about integration and incorporating of traditional medicine into modern medicine. This can be only possible, if the two accept each other on grounds that they have the same objectives and purpose.

There are traditional healers who accept that HIV/AIDS cannot be cured. In an interview with Tau and Legwase, they were asked whether they can test a person whether he/she is HIV positive or negative, their answer was that they cannot, but the ancestors can reveal it to them. They were claiming that if they throw their bones, the bones shall tell them that the person is sick and the ancestors do not recommend any medicine for the cure. What they reveal are the symptoms. For instance, one bone will show that the person has got occasional fever, skin rashes, mild to moderate swelling of the lymph nodes in the neck, armpits and groins, persistent cough etc.²³¹

²³⁰ Maganu 2004, 8 .Mmegi News Paper

²³¹ Legwase 2004,interview on 16th June 2004 in Gaborone at 1:00 and Tau 2004, interview on 11th May 2004, Mogobane at 2:00pm

In some cases another bone tells that the person was cursed or bewitched by somebody to get such a disease. The above mentioned symptoms are related to HIV/AIDS symptoms.²³² According to them they used to tell their client to visit a clinic because the ancestors were saying the illness is incurable. They argue that by doing so they are losing customers. The reason is that people think that they are not powerful or they are false healers.

This kind of practice is fruitful in combating the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. While the medical doctor is doing scientific research at the laboratories, a traditional practitioner is busy with ancestral veneration, and ritual healers are busy with intercessions prayers to their God to give visions and wisdom to both, traditional healer and medical practitioner.

The spread of the HIV virus in Africa must be halted if we want to avoid catastrophic consequences. The full ramifications of the AIDS epidemic are not yet well understood, but their effects will be felt during the next twenty years. The current campaigns for prevention of the spread of the virus must be intensified through all possible media and methods of communication. The traditional healing system should be highly engaged in prevention measures.

We must expand and diversify family planning and educate youth on the incidence of HIV/AIDS, along with other sexually transmitted diseases, and teenage pregnancies. One of the big problems facing Africa is that of teenage pregnancy. Some traditional practitioners claim to be able to terminate early pregnancy. Of course, some are successful in doing that. However, it is dangerous and in many cases it costs some young mothers lives. Traditional healers are known as good healers on some sexual transmitted diseases. It will be good if they can bring out their healing philosophy regarding this type of illness and put it to modern tests.

Even if new infections by the HIV virus are halted, the current rate of infection unfortunately means that HIV and AIDS will be with us for many years to come. The task of mitigating the

²³² van Dyk 2001,38

effects of AIDS related illnesses must be given the utmost priority throughout the health and education systems, through support for affected households, and through initiatives at the work place, Churches and traditional gatherings.

It is important to encourage all business and enterprises, including government to set up schemes to educate their employees about the dangers of HIV/AIDS and to promote the safe practices regardless of any religious faith. Benefit schemes, insurance, pension and medical aid schemes at the workplaces must be improved so that those who are suffering from AIDS related diseases or any other illness can continue to work productively for as long as possible, and so that families and dependants are adequately cared for.

The onset of the AIDS epidemic has already increased the number of organizations dealing with the problem in many African countries. It is important to train personnel to serve all the three institutions of healing found in Africa. For instance staffed and equipped orphanages must be provided as a matter of urgency.

Women of childbearing age have the highest risk of contracting the HIV virus, and women of all ages bear the heaviest burden of caring for AIDS sufferers and their dependants. There must be greater support for home based or hospice care to help with this burden.

Conditions need to be created to support both, public and privately funded research into measures to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, or even to eradicate the virus itself. Those traditional healers who used to claim that they can cure AIDS, should be encouraged to come out and prove themselves.

We can just simply say, the practices of traditional medicine and spiritual healing must be brought within a regulatory frame work, and made accessible in co-operation with modern medical facilities. It should be possible for people to be referred to traditional healers who have

registered and are properly regulated. Traditional healers should be able to use facilities within or nearby modern clinics and hospitals. This could be a good move.

10.2 Standardization

The modernization of Africa is at high level. This affects the medical system in Africa as we have already discussed. States are compelled to intervene to regulate the proliferation of traditional healers, Church healing prophets, and medical doctors from different training institutions. There is no way government can escape from this scenario.

Some African governments like Botswana, have put legislation to regulate all kinds of medical practitioners in their country. They have a system of registration of medical practitioners with code of practice and have a prescribed way of dealing with those who go against the code. This of course, has been practiced properly in modern medicine for centuries. In African traditional healing and AIC healing it is a new thing. The system is progressing in some parts of Africa.

The traditional healers are registered according to codes from their governments health policies. The traditional healers have formed a traditional healer's organization to help the state in the matter. In Botswana there is a traditional healer's organization called "Dingaka Association".²³³ The traditional healers in Botswana who want to be recognized by the state should register with this organization and get the license to perform healing. There is also a cry from many countries in Southern Africa to integrate traditional healing services into the so called formal health care system.

²³³ Staugard 1985,229

The World Health Organization (WHO) is also interested in this integration. The W.H.O. recently conducted a workshop to commemorate the African Traditional Medicine Day under a theme 'Moving the African Health Agenda Forward with Traditional Medicine' in Mbabane, Swaziland. At the same conference the W.H.O Regional Director for Africa, Dr Ebrahim Malik Samba, made a statement that the W.H.O has developed model tools for institutionalizing African traditional medicine in health systems and offered assistance in developing a national regulatory, legal policy framework that could make it possible for Swazi traditional healers to work within the health care system.²³⁴ If these good ideas would continue, they shall benefit Africa as a whole on improving traditional medicines. The Traditional Healers at that workshop were encouraged to form an organization which shall make the cooperation with the government health care easier.

Church healers at the AIC should also form such organization through the Christian Councils in their respective countries in order to help regulating the proliferation of false healing prophets and healers.

This system of forming an organization is not as easy as it is with the modern scientific system. The problem is to determine the level of training and certification of the traditional medical practitioner; who is a qualified practitioner, what training should they have undergone, how do we determine their competence etc, bearing in mind also that there are many kinds of practitioners who fall under this umbrella of 'Traditional practice' as we have already discussed. Standardization will therefore be a big problem.

According to the former permanent secretary of the Botswana Ministry of Health, Dr Maganu, standardization of traditional medicine is very important, and it can be possible in Africa, if there were a written code of practice. Maganu argues that

²³⁴ Mmegi News Paper, 10th September 2004,p.20.

*people always quote the Asian countries, especially India and China, as having found a balance between the two forms of Medicine. The advantage of their systems have (Ayuverda, Acupuncture etc) is that they are to a large extent written and codified, and therefore they do have what can be called standard practice, and therefore also standardize their training and code of practice. African traditional medical systems lack this written base and that is why they are so difficult to standardize.*²³⁵

There is still a possibility to put the wisdom of the traditional practitioners in written form. This should be the project for the modern scientific system to encourage the healers to join modern ways of practising healing. In Botswana the Ministry of Health used to conduct workshops and seminars with “Dingaka Associations” (traditional healers association) and faith healers. In his article Maganu indicates that there are attempts from the African governments to work on the matter.

*Some African governments have set up laboratories to study the active ingredients of traditional herbs. There is always a dilemma when a herb is found to have an active principle. The Ministry of Health is therefore to be commended for re-looking at the issue and going again for legislation.*²³⁶

Of course, this is not easier due to the above mentioned problems. However there is a scope of integration of modern medicine, traditional medicine and AIC healing systems. The integration can commence from the reasonable degree of collaboration keeping in mind their different conceptual bases.

²³⁵ Maganu 2004,p.8 Mmegi News Paper, 22th April 2005

²³⁶ Moltmann 1988, 78

10.3 Theology of healing in Africa today

A theology of healing is very essential for the people of Africa today. *We do indeed need a good theology of healing; but, if that is all we have, we shall be in danger of being left in disillusionment and disappointment.*²³⁷ Theology should address the questions and needs of people at a particular period.

Healing in Africa and probably some parts of the world, has different approaches. As we have discussed previously in this thesis, there is push and pull in Africa concerning the use of those approaches. In this situation we can call upon Paul Tillich's theology of mediating the Christian message to the modern world. It seems that Tillich does not have problem with the secularization of the modern world. Nevertheless, what seems to be his main problem is the tendency of Christian theology of clerical heteronomy and any Christians claim to rule. We know that the Christian theology of healing had a dominant influence on African societies. Tillich's idea is that

*he seeks to disclose to autonomous men and women the depths of the theonomy of their beings and to set free again the religious dimension of modern culture from its displacements and wrongful occupations.*²³⁸

If we have to formulate the theology of healing in Africa, we need to take into consideration the culture and traditions of the African societies. According to Moltmann, Tillich's theology is a function of the Church and it is an authentic theology of culture. His argument is that the culture

²³⁷ Hurding 1992,75

²³⁸ Moltmann 1988,78

with which human beings respond to the questions of their basic situations at all times and in all places, by giving themselves forms of life, is the real vehicle of the religious and the most universal manifestation of the absolute. He takes religion as a substance of culture.²³⁹

There is a need to relate the Christian message in matters of healing to the context of culture. The main task of theology lies in the correlation of tradition and situation, since the main task of theology is to answer people's questions which of course are situational. The theology of healing in Africa should be fitting the contemporary situation of the African people today. One of the contemporary theologians of his time, Tillich called it the correlation of tradition and situation. In general we can use Moltmann's argument that

*theology must therefore disclose the questions contained in human existence and formulate them with reference to God, and it must formulate the answers lying in the divine self-revelation in terms of the questions which lie in human existence. The unity of the two lies outside history.*²⁴⁰

The Church is challenged to come out with a theology that shall heal African people. It is clear that people from different cultures and traditions can exchange their different experiences and traditions, even their different understandings of the same Jesus Christ, the Jesus Christ of the Gospels and Church tradition.²⁴¹ African theologians look at healing, culture and traditions differently.

There are scholars who encourage that Christianity should be contextualized into African cultures and traditions. For instance Mbiti argues that African Theology grows out of our joy

²³⁹ Ibid., p.78

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.79-80

²⁴¹ Shorter 1978,21

and experience of the Christian faith.²⁴² According to Shorter, those who talk about Christianizing African traditions see the Church as a cultural unity. The other one see the Church as a plurality in unity, a fellowship of local churches, exchanging among themselves their vision of the risen Christ in a bond of faith, hope and love.²⁴³

The theology of healing in Africa still has the legacy of European influences. It is appropriate to dig deeply into the theology of the Church to find out whether the theology of healing cannot help African people. The famous African theologian, John Mbiti, tells a fictitious and tragic story that can help us to understand the legacy of the western theology in Africa.

The story is about a PhD African graduate majoring in theology who returns home after many years of studying abroad. This student learned a lot in his theological studies in Europe. His theological studies includes German, Greek, French, Latin, Hebrew, in addition to English, Church history, systematic theology, homiletics, exegesis and pastorally. He later completed his doctoral studies. On his return home he took his bible in various languages he had learned together with Bultmann, Barth, Bonhoeffer and Brunner.

As usual in African practice at home, relatives, neighbors, old friends, dancers, musicians, drums, dogs, cats, all gathered to welcome him back. The fatted calves are killed and meat was roasted. During the celebration suddenly there was a shock. Someone had fallen to the ground and it is his older sister. The graduate rushed to her and call for her sister to be taken to the hospital urgently. People were stunned and looking at him bending over her sister. The graduate was surprised because no body was responding to him. Later a school boy said to him that the nearest hospital is fifty miles away and there are few buses that go there.

²⁴² Tutu 1997,39

²⁴³ Ibid.,p.,22

Someone else at the scene told the graduate that his sister is possessed and hospitals will not cure her. The interesting speech came from the chief who said to him, *you have been studying theology over seas for ten years. Now help your sister. She is troubled by the spirit of her great aunt*, said the chief. The graduate was confused and slowly he went to get Bultmann and looked at the index, search for what he wanted, and read again about spirit possession in the New Testament. Finally he found the answer that Bultmann has demythologized it i.e. according to Bultmann such a thing does not exist in reality. He insists that his sister is not possessed and people shouted at him saying, *Help your sister; she is possessed! He shouts back, Bultmann has demythologized demon possession! It does not exist.*²⁴⁴

The graduate was totally convinced by the western theology. Many graduates from African universities are also convinced by the western theologies. When they return back to villages they tend to be radical to some of the cultural and traditional practice. For instance if one member of the family is ill, these university graduates will refuse to give money to take the patient to the traditional healer or a healing prophecy Church. Instead they will prefer to take the patient to the clinic or hospital.

Of course, this causes conflicts in the family. It is important if the theology of healing can come out of African cultures and traditions. An environment of mutual understanding of that theology with other existing theologies can help our people to recognize the traditional and modern medicine.

There are too many social cases where culture and traditions are in disagreements to the modern and Christian approaches in healing. This reflects the situation of our people in Africa

²⁴⁴ Maluleke 2003, 60

especially when sickness attacks the family. A mediating theology is needed to bring the three approaches together. That theology shall help us to read Bultmann, Moltmann, Barth and others with an African eye, within African context, with African concept of life.

As we know that theology is described as a critical reflection on how people live out their faith. Everybody who thinks about God, Supreme Being is engaged in theology. African people always ask healing from the Supreme Being, through ancestral veneration while Christian healing and modern medicine put trust in God and science. There is always trust and faith in God or the Supreme Being when illnesses attack. African cultures and traditions should be taken into consideration in this context, as Mwasaru writes that

*the church must take African culture seriously; this is a message that is being proclaimed by African Christians with increasing frequency and clarity. This means not merely an Africanization of personnel or even of forms of worship, but the adoption of new structures suited to the African way of life.*²⁴⁵

Mwasaru cries for a radical break, which many African theological scholars and traditionalists are calling for today, especially in this time of illnesses in Africa. Such kind of structure can help us to put all forms of healing found today into the African context. It is the task of theology to use all its methodologies and maintain an equilibrium point in matters of healing in Africa.

In his writings Magesa argues that any effective change begins with addressing people's worldview.²⁴⁶ The social, economic and political live of people are very important. In the case of HIV/AIDS in Africa, this appears to be the approach that could achieve results, a healing

²⁴⁵ Mwasaru 1978,100

²⁴⁶ Magesa 2000,76-84

from the roots. The people's worldview can help us to approach a crisis effectively. This includes the culture, traditions, religion, social life and the economic life of people.

This point of view goes together with what Tinyiko Maluleke says in his HIV/AIDS theological curriculum that;

unlike early African theology of inculturation however, a theology of AIDS will seek to do more than merely inculturate; it will fearlessly and creatively engage in critique of culture...A theology of AIDS will seek to go beyond sheer cultural cliché's so that the weapon of criticism- i.e. African culture which was used to critique Western culture and Western Christendom- becomes also an object of criticism. If anything, the AIDS epidemic demonstrates the fallibility of all human cultures- African culture included.²⁴⁷

Therefore all three approaches of healing in Africa should take culture into consideration strongly and engage in theology.

10.4 Mediating theology on healing

It is right to ask help from God during times of illness. This is a very important worship found in both, the Traditional and Christian healing. If we use the mediating theology to analyze the understanding of healing, I am afraid that we will deviate from our forefather's theology which objectified God. We are compelled to rely on the mediating theology of theologians like Schleiermacher which reject the God who is an object. Schleiermacher brings out a very interesting concept of immediate self-consciousness (feeling). I would like to see how this concept can be applied and play a vital role in the healing therapy in the African context.

²⁴⁷ Benn 2002,11

Schleiermacher with his new development of the doctrine of faith challenged many sacrosanct theologians. His argument is that God who is an object, like other objects, is to some extent dependent on human being, just as the whole objective world is dependent on them. In other words the human being proceeds not from God or from the world, but from humanity known as self.²⁴⁸

This puts us back to how we formulate the African understanding of Christology. For instance in terms of healing in African, Christians talk about Jesus Christ as the great healer *Ngaka*, as the diviner, great ancestor, great prophet etc. All these headings of Christology make God an object rather than the subject. This means that African Christians should re-visit their ideal thought that a Church healing prophet or traditional diviner represents God's healing image when they are performing healing, as we have already discussed on previous chapters. Because Schleiermacher argues that immediate self-consciousness (feeling) is the instrument used to touch God.²⁴⁹ Therefore we do not need ancestors to touch God for healing and for other vital forces. Feeling is not absolutely or unconditionally free, because there is a concrete world beyond the self in human freedom.

Schleiermacher shifts us from such thinking and wants us to understand that

*God is not present in objective historical facts but in the subjective consciousness of historical human beings. On the other hand he freed faith from the dogmatic assertions and moral postulates and seated it in the human heart as the indwelling 'feeling of absolute dependence' on God.*²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Van Niekerk 1980,119

²⁴⁹ Van Niekerk 1980,118

²⁵⁰ Moltmann 1988, 59,60

The whole argument here is that people experience the presence of God through their existence with others. We attain awareness of God through our life with other people, even if we can only discover God in the strength of our presence in the world with other people; the discovery is reserved for the personal self.²⁵¹ If we see people suffering from different diseases like today, how others are healed and cured by different healing practitioners and our interaction with them that, is how we come to be aware of God presence. In other words, if I see a medical or traditional practitioner, practising healing I become aware of God. But those healers are not gods or represent God.

People today believe that a witch doctor can bewitch a person if such a person, believes strongly in witchcraft and traditional *muti*. If a person does not have faith in those powers, healing cannot materialize. In other words, if a person has no feelings or what Schleiermacher refers as self-consciousness in what a healer or medical practitioner is doing to him/her, nothing shall happen.

Schleiermacher's idea of attaining awareness of God through our living with other people has got some sparks of African anthropology. The ancestral veneration ritual can be one of the examples especially during healing. If a person is sick and the cause of illness is the anger of the ancestors, a feast is made for them. They prepare food and traditional beer to be shared by the whole community. Traditional beer shall be poured on the ground for the ancestors to consume. It is believed that the ancestors will be happy and cure the patient. People feel the presence of ancestors during such feast.

This awareness does not end there. If a person loses his/her money somewhere on earth, the person always comforts him/herself that at least he/she gave it to the ancestors. Another

²⁵¹ Van Niekerk 1980, 119

thing is that whenever a person does well towards another one without seeking to be rewarded, the person will say the ancestors will reward you. The belief is that our living with other people like taking care of the sick, disabled, etc without asking to be rewarded, will increase our blessings and grace from the God or the Supreme Being. As we have already mentioned earlier, a true traditional healer does not charge people for his/her healing service, but people can give thanks to him/her. The hospitality we get from those who care for us make us to be aware of God's presence in our life.

The inner life of the believer is a very crucial element of the healing process. If a patient has a conscious feeling that a certain healer is the best, this contributes a great deal to her/his cure or healing. Schleiermacher's postulate of immediate self-consciousness can be applied to the African traditional healing practices and to other aspects of it.

The ATR is a religion which based its theory on the supernatural powers and myths. This is not a surprising thing to the Christian theology. The New Testament is full of myths. In ATR the prominent myths are found in matters of healing. I am convinced here that we need to revisit Rudolf Bultmann's theology of demythologizing the New Testament. The big problem we have now in Africa is that many educated young Africans claim that traditional method of healing is just a myth. They tend to rely on scientific methods of healing.

Many young people accept the validity of the laws of nature in the context of technology, but do not believe in supernatural miracles taking place during Sunday worship services. It is clear that the mythical world-view of the Bible is replaced by the scientific world view of the nineteenth century. I think the same applies to the contemporary situation of some African communities of today.

There are some people in Africa who believe in the scientific understanding of the things happening in the world today especially when it comes to the matters of healing. In Africa there are cases where the families of patient are caught in antagonistic camps of whether the patient should be taken to the traditional healer or a certain healing church or rely on the scientific medication. In most cases you will find that those who prefer the modern medicine argue that the traditional and African Christians healing are just myths.

This scenario created a situation whereby the feeling of dependence on supernatural powers was overcome by the sense of freedom among men and women. However, this does not happen to the majority of the African people. It will be appropriate to go together with Moltmann's ideology that a

*myth is already an expression of a self-understanding of faith, not a quest for an objective world-view. It is the task of a critical exegesis of the text to bring out the existentialist significance of statements of faith in their mythical modes of expression, in order to present these to men and women of today as a possibility for their self-understanding.*²⁵²

This applies to how the contemporary people in Africa understand the ATR healing approach. The main task for the African theologians is to critically analyze the anthropological theory in African theology and find whether it can be vital to the healing faith to people.

²⁵² Moltmann 1988,13-14

11. Conclusion

The three approaches of healing are very important in Africa today. Africans are happy to have them, because other continents do not have such a mixture. For instance the three categories of healing found in the Church in Africa, namely diaconal healing, ritual healing and faith healing, make the African Church rich. The Main Line Churches practise diaconal healing, the African Independent Churches provide ritual healing, while the neo-Pentecostal churches practise faith healing. This makes the Church of Christ very much unique in comparison with other continents.

However, the focus on one approach of healing does not mean the exclusion of others. In fact, all types of Churches may to some extent express or practise the two other ways of healing as it was discussed before in this paper. For example, main line churches pray for the sick to be healed and they also emphasize that faith is important. Churches practising ritual healing also offer diaconal support for members. Pentecostal churches also address the necessity of ritual healing, healers and the communal approach.

The people of Africa should appreciate the fact that we need traditional healers, medical doctors, pastors and prophets. This shall encourage cooperation and mutual understanding among them in order to improve the health of people.

Whenever people are desperate looking for healing, they flock to wherever they can get help, no matter if it is expensive. People are concerned about their lives on earth and after death. That is why they prefer to consult the traditional healers or the Church healers and when the illness becomes worse, they go to hospitals. The three approaches of healing have a task of healing people. If there is a better idea on preserving life, which is not known to one healer, it should be passed to another one. This knowledge is going to rescue people.

Christians and the A.T.R. believe that life is from God or the Supreme Being. Anyone who tries to terminate this gift, becomes the enemy of the God or the Supreme Being. The same thing is happening to the medical practitioners in their theatres and laboratories. My standpoint is that we should use any available method to preserve life. For instance, if the use of condoms helps in protecting the life of people against HIV/AIDS, why can we not encourage our people to use them, if they fail to abstain or to be faithful to one another? We are, of course aware of the negative thinking of people on this matter who will rush to the conclusion that condom use leads to immorality.

On matters of HIV/AIDS all Christians, despite their doctrinal ideology should practise Christian counselling to help the infected and affected members of the community. Of course, it seems to be difficult for Christians to reach a compromise on some ethical issues, however an alternative should be found for the sake of God's people. This situation is caused by the fact that the biblical mandate for some contemporary situations may not be clear and this causes Christians to disagree on how to apply a particular theological principle to a specific problem.

Another alternative could be that Churches should reflect on ethical issues together as one, rather than individually. They should all respect each other and carry on with the dialogue about their different views in certain matters so that they can work together to respond to the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS to both Church and the world.

To enter into this ethical dialogue, the Church needs to have a comprehensive knowledge of basic ethical principles, a grasp of personal and social dimensions of the problem, and clear scientific and technical information. Of course, the Church itself has that but it does not recognize that it has. Within the Church there are members of different field of studies, who come to worship services every Sunday. These members can be used to give some clear scientific information about the ethical issues. The fact is that a well informed, transparent and verifiable ethical discussion and decision making process on the part of the Churches will surely meet with a ready response today.

We know that the people out in the world are really expecting solutions to their ethical problems and dilemmas through the moral guidance of the Church, but their ethical problems are not yet taken into consideration. Therefore the Church should emphasize the need for accurate information and open discussion of the issues concerning HIV/AIDS in the process of ethical decision making. It is very important to draw on medical and other expertise for an accurate factual and comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS.

We generally conclude the issue of dialogue should be taken seriously at all levels. We know that renewed expectations are raised by churches, are that religious communities should offer moral guidance in the public arena. They are actually the light of the nation. We are aware that pressing personal and social moral issues, however, are prompting discord among Christians themselves which are even creating new divisions within and between churches.

However, we trust that in a prayerful non-threatening atmosphere, dialogue can locate more precisely where the agreements, disagreements and contradictions occur. It is convincing that dialogue can affirm those shared convictions of which the churches should bear common witness to the world at large. Furthermore, the dialogue can also help in discerning how ethical beliefs and practices related to that unity in moral life which is God's will, can help towards behavioral change. This can help both, the Church and the world, to combat the epidemic.

It seems that churches have little or no experience or conceptual tools that help to deal with issues related to the catastrophe caused by the AIDS pandemic. It is advisable that researchers, public agencies, and non-governmental agencies including churches should cooperate together to adapt their services and general communication towards HIV/AIDS related problems. In order for cooperation to be possible, much more research is needed.

There are no doubts that some people in Africa still hesitate to visit hospitals and clinics. Some of these people blame the modern medicine for the loss of many lives in Africa. The main factor responsible for this situation is illiteracy. It is the responsibility of the government and the Church to educate their people so that they will understand the importance of modern medicine in modern Africa. In order to achieve common understanding for all the three approaches of healing in Africa, the quality of services offered by hospitals and clinics should be improved.

In some parts of Africa there are cases where hospitals and clinics run out of medicines. There is a deplorable lack of healing equipment in some clinics and hospitals, especially in those which are state owned. Private hospitals and clinics are well equipped, but too expensive for more than half of the African population.

In traditional healing there is nothing like shortage of herbs, *muti*, divine bones and healing water at a certain time. A patient receives service at the right time for the right treatment. There

should be an improvement of the healing services offered by modern scientific healing. There is a need to pay attention to the poor, vulnerable and underprivileged. These people experience hard times whenever they visit modern health facilities to seek help. Sometimes the attitude of the staff is not at all fair and friendly towards them. It is also difficult for these groups to get transportation at the right time to reach health facilities.

It is advisable to many African governments to take into consideration the economical situation of these groups. They are not able to get good medication due to lack of medical insurance. It is the responsibility of the state to find a comprehensive health insurance or other types of prepayment schemes.

GLOSSARY

ATR : (African Traditional Religion)

AIC: (African Independent Churches)

Badimo: The Sotho-Tswana name for ancestors. They are known as the living dead. They are between the Supreme Being and the living.

Boswagadi: This is an illness caused by lack of traditional treatment for a widow immediately after the death of the spouse according to the Tswana culture. A disease caused by widowhood.

Diviner: is a person who uses medical powers, particularly supernormal powers. Their duty is to find out whether a witch or a spirit has caused the illness and tell a patient the procedure necessary to propitiate whichever is the cause and prescribing the right herbal remedy to cure the physical damage already sustained by the patient.

Ditaola: these are curved divine bones of animals used by traditional healers for revealing the problem and solution of a person who came for help. These bones mysteriously communicate everything to the owner (traditional healer). They function like a doctors' stethoscope which tries to find out about blood pressure, heart and other organs of the body work. They enable the healer to discover the disease of the patient.

Gwiwan bori: certain amount of money for the services of the medium and of gifts to the spirit.

Idlozi: The Zulu word for ancestor

Jan gora: The spirit who leads his medium.

Mainline churches: These are churches mainly from Europe. They are mostly called mission churches because they established themselves in Africa and other continents, e.g. Lutheran Church, Anglican Church

Modimo: The Sotho-Tswana Supreme Being (God),it means something very high.

moNanga: A traditional medicine practitioner.

Medicine men: those include herbalists

Muti: This could be herbs, roots, leaves from trees, bushes and plants, sometimes mixed with treated parts of animals and ordinary ingredients, such as salt, blue stone, white wash, sea water, Vaseline, bicarbonate of soda, sulphur, sugar and ash.

Ngaka ya Moloi: (Witchcraft doctor) this doctor helps those who perform sorcery or witchcraft and protect them.

Ngaka ya Seipone :(Mirror doctor) this doctor uses a treated mirror to identify the illness of the person,to remove traditional poison and to show the images of the enemies of the patient.

Nya: It is a Mali cult.

Seditse:(divination gourd) is a tail of a horse or any animal which is used by traditional healers to sprinkle traditional medicine. They always carry it along during the healing sessions.

Sejeso: (traditional poison) this poison is so dangerous that it can kill a person immediately after eating it, or it can stay on the person's body causing pains and suffering until the person die.

Senonnori: It is actually referred to by people as an invisible wild animal which has got powers to change itself into many things during the night. It is like a ghost. It terrorizes people during the nights. For instance it can make a person get lost during the nights.

Sewacho: made of ashes from animals sacrifices or trees, cow dug, and salt. It is used for bathing during treatment.

TM: Traditional Medicine

uMsindisi: The Zulu word for the Savior, Redeemer, Rescuer, and Healer.

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