

Chapter 2

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focus on healing as a distinctive feature of the African Initiated Churches particularly the Zionist Churches in Botswana. It examines the theological basis for healing from both Old and New Testaments. It looks at African culture in relation to healing and African perspective of the Western Scientific medicine. The dynamic and holistic approach of African culture to healing as enabling the Zionist churches to the specialists in the field. The various methods of healing and the implications thereof. It also evaluates critically the untrustworthiness and divisions emanating from the money raised through healing in these churches. Finally, it assesses the role of the ancestors in the life and ministry of the Zionist Churches.

Healing is a distinctive feature of the Zionist Churches

One of the most distinctive features of the Zionist Churches in Southern Africa is their reputation to heal people suffering from all kinds of diseases. From Sundkler's observation of a Zulu prophet (quoted in Daneel 1971:192) who said during a church gathering, this is not a church but a hospital. And such remarks are often made by the prophets and bishops of the Zionist Churches. There is no doubt whatsoever that healing is their area of specialty. This shows clearly their indisputable competence and success in the healing ministry (Daneel 1971:192). This is a fact well-known by Christians and non-Christians in all Southern Africa. Certainly, this is what made the Zionist Churches popular. This again has far-reaching implications as far as the life and ministry of these churches is concerned. For instance, it is observed that healing is directly or indirectly in most cases central to the leadership disputes and breakaways that take place within the Zionist Churches. This will be illustrated in the paragraph below.

Healing and leadership: Course for disputes and schism.

I visited a number of Churches in Gaborone, eager to observe how they practise healing and how successful they are in that regard. I discovered that healing and

leadership disputes are main courses for splitting of Churches. For example, I had a conversation with a certain prophet-healer of what I will call Spiritual Church B. I realized during the conversation that in actual fact the prophet-healer was a staunch member of the Spiritual Church A, who broke away because he felt that he was not given the recognition he deserved as a prophet. According to him, recognition meant an equal status with the bishop, and the money that was paid by patients for healing had to be equally shared. In fact he wanted the money to be shared equally between the two of them. The prophet maintained that they were equally gifted, in his view, in the field of healing, and that they were doing the same amount of work in that regard. Besides, he maintained that he was not working at that time, so he wanted enough money to make a living out of the spiritual gift of healing that God had blessed him with, as the bishop was doing. Apparently, the bishop refused to share the money with him, claiming that he was the head of the church and therefore he was entitled to more money than anyone else. Consequently, the prophet-healer broke away and left with some influential members, some of whom ultimately did exactly the same thing to him. They broke away and started their own different churches. They made a lot of money out of the whole situation. Later, I visited the bishop who refused to share the money equally with the prophet-healer, to hear his side of the story. He admitted that their differences emanated from the money that was raised from healing. He claimed that the prophet-healer influenced some members of the Church to exert pressure on him to accept the prophet's demands.

He claimed, again, that the matter caused confusion and chaos in the Church and reported that those who supported the prophet were the ones who left with him when the schism took place unfortunately they did the same thing to him. He further indicated that the prophet-healer was not the first one to do so and he was not the last. He maintained that others would try to do it again. But he boldly asserted that he would not agree to share money equally with anyone, no matter what, because he was the head of the Church. Leadership and healing appear to be the main cause of the chain of schisms in these churches, for example, Spiritual Churches B, C, D, E, F and G which came into being because of the desire to make money out of healing and leadership. Some members of these churches came from the original church. Their identity is observed in their styles in terms of worship, tradition and teachings.

However, any attempt to reconcile them would be futile exercise their leaders do not see eye to eye because of their squabbles.

In the context of this state of affairs any sensible person is bound to ask the following questions, as I did. Is money here the root of schism or is it healing which causes the issues? Is healing a business? Are all the leaders of the Zionist Churches greedy? How many Churches were formed under these circumstances? How long has this been going on? etc. These questions and the above information clearly shows the problems that are related to healing and leadership. This reflection justifies the fact that healing in most instances is the major cause of the multiplicity and proliferation of the Zionist Churches. It is in this context that indisputable healing and leadership are directly responsible for what I personally perceive as ecclesiastical over-production of these Churches. It is, again, in this context that one can fully understand why the government of Botswana was at one stage concerned about the uncontrolled growth of the Zionist Churches, as reflected in the preceding chapter of this study. Kealotswe (1994:4) is also concerned about the multiplicity of the Zionist Churches and attributes the problem, to a great extent, to issues regarding healing as well as leadership. He maintains that the Zionists are healing Churches and that their leaders make a lot of money through healing activities.

Hence, Kealotswe suggests that it is of vital importance that any research into these Churches should reflect the background and life of their founders. He asserts that such reflections will give people an idea why and how schisms occur as well as why and how money raised from healing activities has often led to such schisms and the multiplication of the Zionist Churches (Kealotswe 1994:5)). This clearly shows that extensive research has to be conducted into healing and leadership and all problems, dissatisfaction etc, emanating from it (Bate 1995:15). At present most in-depth study in this regard focuses only on the success of healing. But whatever is said and done, healing will always form the central part of the religious activities of the Zionist Churches (Amanze 1998:175). It can also be said that healing is the hub of the mission and ministry of the Zionists. Therefore it is now important to look at the theological basis for healing as it is practised in the Zionist Churches in Botswana and elsewhere.

The Theological Basis for Healing in the Zionist Churches

The theological basis for healing was derived from both the Old and New Testaments as they contain the records of the healing activities of God (Amanze 1998:175). In the Old Testament, for example, God the Creator is conceived of as a Healer and Saviour. Consequently, the terms healer and Saviour as applied to God are interchangeable (Amanze 1998:175). The healing and saving aspects of God are recorded in many places in the scripture (Amanze 1998:175). In the Old Testament context, God normally uses the human agents to heal and save his people by word and deed. Healing quite often took place in the context of prophecy (Amanze 1998:175). The message of the Hebrew prophets was principally a call to return to God and be healed or saved. A typical example in this regard is the story of Naaman the Syrian Commander, who suffered from leprosy and was healed by the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 5:14).

In the New Testament context the healing aspect of God continued in the life, mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus healed all kinds of diseases using many different means to achieve his goal. His mission and ministry is clearly defined in scripture (Luke 4:8-19). Because of his healing ministry Jesus, according to the New Testament, has always been perceived as the Saviour, Redeemer and Healer (Amanze 1998:112). Therefore, it is deducible that the perception of Jesus as the Healer or as a physician is theologically authentic (Amanze 1998:111). This belief has been held by all generations of Christians through the ages, since the time of Jesus' disciples. They believe in the healing ministry and its continuity and this is reflected clearly by the Lucan theology in the Acts of Apostles (Acts 3:1-105: 12-16). In fact it can be said that the healing ministry contributed significantly towards the growth and rapid development of the Early Church (Acts 3:1-105: 12-16).

The Apostles always perceived themselves as furthering the mission of Jesus Christ by healing people suffering from all kinds of diseases. The perception again was in line with Jesus' promise to the disciples and therefore it was viewed as the fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 8). They believed the Christ was at work through the Holy Spirit when they healed people suffering from all kinds of disease (Bosch 1991:113). They believed that the healing power of Jesus was in the Church and could be exercised by

the believers who are the body of Christ. The implication here is that Christ who is always present in the form of the Holy Spirit still heals through the worshipping activities of the Church (Bosch 1991:114-119). He heals those who suffer physically, spiritually, mentally and socially. In prayers for healing, the power of Jesus heals people and also comforts those who suffer from various calamities and diseases in life by the power of the Holy Spirit (Amanze 1991:112). The typical example in this regard is the famous story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead in scripture (John 11:1-27). It is therefore indisputable that God's love for his people is seen most clearly in the healing miracles of Jesus and his power to raise the dead. The Apostles knew about God's love for his people and it is precisely for this reason that they continued with their healing ministry after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). It is undeniable from the above analysis that healing was as central and crucial to the ministry of the Early Church as it was to Jesus' mission and earthly ministry. On the basis of this theological and African cultural understanding healing and all it entails is taken seriously by the Zionist Churches (Amanze 1998:110-110).

Healing as understood in African Culture

The African worldview perceives life to be a unit. This is effectively expressed by Taylor, quoted in Anderson (1991:4): *“that the sense of cosmic oneness is fundamentally where all things share the same nature and some interaction one upon another as hierarchy of power but not of being, for all are one, all are here, all are now. No distinction can be made between sacred and secular, between natural and supernatural. Man and unseen are inseparably involved in one another in a total community”*. This sense of relatedness, connectedness and oneness is so strong in African culture that when it comes to human beings it is adequately expressed by the concept of “Ubutu” which means “You are because I am and I am because you are”. This concept means that individualism and isolationism are foreign to Africans (Amanze 2002: 125-132, Mbigi 1995: 1-6). It is clear that in African culture the world is perceived as an integrated whole where all things are profoundly related and connected. It is therefore evident that everything is perceived and dealt with, in that context.

For example, healing and all it entails is understood in that context and this is evident in the definition of this concept. Kealotswe (1985:53) defines health and healing this way: health is the absence of disease (“dis-ease”) physically, spiritually, mentally and materially. Therefore, to be healthy means to be at ease, to be in a state of complete harmony physically and mentally and otherwise and also to be in complete harmony with nature, society and all one’s surroundings. This implies that health, in the African context, is a broad concept which entails many factors: it is not limited to the absence of physical or biological diseases but covers the complete life of an individual, society and nature, as shown above. Likewise, healing is also understood in the same way. For instance, healing is an act of restoring equilibrium in one’s body, or in an individual, society and nature wherever disequilibrium occurs (Kealotswe 1985:65). It also implies restoring good relations between individuals in an extended family or in a tribe or clan, together with the dead or ancestors who are believed to be present in the spirit form. In broader terms, healing means restoring good relationships between human beings, plants, animals, birds, land and ancestral spirits. These social relationships are healed at all levels of human existence while diseases, for example, such as coughing, headache, bad luck etc are associated with some form of disharmony in the whole process of nature, and healing means restoring this harmony in nature in order to maintain a situation of health.

From this broad definition of health and healing it is therefore clear that the aim of healing is to expel disease. The expulsion of disease brings back equilibrium and normality in the body, thereby creating harmony in an individual’s life. This healing which restores equilibrium in the body lengthens the duration of life of an individual, and in that sense, it creates happiness and harmony in the family of a sick person, society and nature as a whole. In other words, healing negates disease, which causes death, which results in sadness and disharmony in the family and society. Therefore, the main aim of healing is to maintain and sustain life. Again, in African culture, healing can also mean fortification against witchcraft, sorcery, accidents and the preservation of jobs. There is also a healing that can be directed towards what is perceived as bad luck, for example, that of not finding employment, gaining promotion at work, having a happy marriage etc. In short, it can be directed to misfortune of any kind. This underlines the fact that healing, in the African context, entails all areas of human life. It supports the fact that in the African worldview

things are related and connected. It is in this context that one can justifiably say that, in African culture, healing is holistic, broad and dynamic. Therefore, any African deals with the question of healing from this perspective.

The Zionists' African approach to healing and their perception of Western scientific medicine

The Zionists are Africans too, therefore they share the same perception of healing with other Africans. They know very well that there are some diseases, sicknesses, conditions and situations which can be healed and dealt with by Africans themselves. This is where the Zionists and traditional healers play a significant role in their communities. For instance, they help in situations of unemployment. They are also good at healing which is meant to cleanse one's complexion or to improve one's image in the eyes of other people, especially one's employers (Makhubu 1985:82). Again there is healing which is directed to situations of witchcraft, sorcery, accidents, calamities, misfortune or troubles befalling the family, society and nation (Anderson 1991:53). These are, in African culture, situations which are healed by the Zionists, in most instances, and for which they cannot at all refer their clients or patients to the hospitals or clinics for healing. The reason is that Western scientific healing does not address the said conditions. In short, Western scientific medicine is completely irrelevant.

One can justifiably claim that conditions such as witchcraft, bad luck, etc, are outside the realm of Western scientific medicine. But in African culture, such conditions need attention and healing. It is for this reason, in my observation as an African and priest, that the majority of African Christians of the Mission Churches continue to seek help from the Zionists and traditional healers often against the rules of their Churches, and often in contradiction to their stated beliefs. In the light of this analysis it is however clear that the service of Zionists in terms of healing is crucial and needed on a continual basis.

For instance, in rural areas, again, where health facilities such as hospitals, clinics and private doctors are miles away from the communities, the majority of people rely on the service of the Zionists and traditional healers for healing. I visited several bishops

and prophet-healers in rural areas outside Gaborone so as to interview them about their healing ministry and its success. I heard different views and opinions from both the healers and the patients I interviewed. Some healers and patients were very honest in response to the questions I posed to them. They responded this way, *“It would be absolutely preposterous for us to claim success in our healing ministry only on the basis of a big number of people who visit us for healing while we know that there are no hospitals and clinics in our area”*. They said, *“if such facilities were available in our areas maybe the situation would be different; hence we maintain that the big number of patients cannot necessarily be a true reflection of the success in healing”*. They said, *“in our situation the determining factor of our success in the said regard would be the healing of the diseases, sickness, conditions and situations for which the people seek help from us”*. They added: *“the majority of us prophet-healers, we treat all kinds of diseases, sickness and conditions but where the diseases and conditions do not react to our treatment, we refer the patient to the hospitals or clinic at the earliest convenience”*. One of them remarked that unfortunately, *“some patients who are referred to the hospitals or clinics do not do as they are told”*.

Then I asked one of the female patients why they do not do what they are advised to? she responded this way, *“it does not necessarily mean that we rural people do not do as we are advised but going to the hospitals and clinics implies the following. One has to pay for public transport to go to such health centers in urban areas, and in the case of emergency one has to hire a private vehicle, and rural people are financially struggling because the majority of them are unemployed therefore, in most instances, they cannot afford it. For those who can afford to go to the hospitals or clinics, on arrival they have to queue for registration and payment for treatment, thereafter, queue for treatment, thereafter queue for medicines. While queuing one has to buy some food because this process takes a long time. Later, in the afternoon or evening one goes back home exhausted. She added,, *“medical treatment is costly, time consuming and tiring, therefore the reluctance of the rural people to go to the hospitals and clinics must always be looked at in that context”*. From this interview, I realized that some Zionists recognize and accept the fact that they cannot heal all diseases, sicknesses and conditions. This is precisely the reason why, in some instances, they make referrals to the hospitals and clinics. It is in this context that one can justifiably claim that the Zionists perceive their religious healing method to be*

complementary to the Western scientific healing method, although the approach may be different. They also have the perception of these two methods of healing not only as complementing each other but also as co-existing in the African continent. However, some perceive things differently in the sense that they do not believe in Western scientific healing. They believe strongly in religious healing, to such an extent that they do not allow their patients and members of their churches to have treatment at the hospitals and clinics. But it must be borne in mind that these Zionists are so numerous these days. And my personal observation is that, on several occasions, when the health of a person who is not allowed to be treated at a hospital by his/her religious leaders deteriorates his/her family or relatives take him/her forcibly to a hospital, clinic or private doctor. Even the members themselves, once their health conditions deteriorate, secretly go to the hospitals and clinics but do not want their church leaders thereafter to know that they chose Western scientific healing. In this context one can justifiably say that all the people know that the two methods of healing complement each other and co-exist. It is for this reason that when one method fails they choose another irrespective of the fact that they are not allowed to.

However, the old people in rural areas who still believe strongly in a traditional way of life prefer to seek healing from the Zionists and traditional healers. They seem to be uncomfortable, so to speak, with the Western scientific way of healing, and this is how they were socialized. They feel comfortable with Zionists and traditional healers simply because they share the same worldview with them and this is crucial in a healing situation. The scholars too, who have conducted an in-depth research on healing, emphasize the centrality of the worldview in this regard (Bate 1995:142-144, Buhrmann 1986:29, Horton 1967:57, Mkhwanazi 1989:269). They maintain that people who share the same worldview understand each other's frame of reference, and hence they agree on many things. This is evident even in a situation where a patient is not able to name the disease or condition from which he/she is suffering but through the explanation and symptoms the healer can exactly understand and help to name the disease or condition, which alleviates the patient's anxiety and assures him/her that the healer is capable of dealing with his/her condition. And this psychologically marks the beginning of the healing process for the patient (Buhrmann 1986:16, Mkwanzazi 1989:269). Again, where a healer and patient share the same

worldview and frame of reference a sound and friendly relationship is easily established. This creates openness, which enables the patient to be actively involved in every step of the healing process. In other words, such a relationship enables the patient to be actively involved in every step of the healing process. This active stance of the patient towards his/her health and well-being is unlike the Western scientific healing method where the patients, in most instances, are passive.

The reason for the patient's passiveness is that, in most instances, the medical expert does not share the same worldview as his/her patient because of their differing cultural background or because of the expert's medical training. Their frame of reference in this case is different and as a result the relationship is minimal; hence the patient remains passive while the medical expert knows, and does, everything during the treatment of any condition (Giddens 2001:142-151). These are some of the reasons which cause people, especially in the rural areas, to prefer to consult the Zionists for healing as opposed to the Western medical healing at the hospitals and clinics. Again, from my respondents and my personal observation, the life-situation of the people in the rural communities described in the preceding paragraphs, determines and dictates the method of healing. Their socio-economic situation plays the key role in this regard, because even if they want to consult doctors or go to the hospitals or clinics but cannot make it financially, the option is to consult the Zionists who are in most instances, prepared to help for a small fee, or even when there is no money at all. The unavailability of health facilities and inaccessibility to medicines in rural areas leave people, in most cases, with no choice but to depend on the service of the Zionist healers. In general there is a commonly held assumption in the African societies, especially among the people who still strongly believe in the traditional way of life, that some diseases or conditions such as gonorrhoea, abscesses, schizophrenia and epilepsy are cured by Western medicine, but to stop their recurrence people consult the Zionists and traditional healers. From this analysis it is clear that, in some cases, people have sound and valid reasons for consulting the Zionists for healing purposes. One may therefore infer that the religious healing methods of the Zionists and Western scientific medicine complement each other. And it is in this context that the service of the Zionists regarding healing is needed on a continual basis. And prophecy, in most instances, plays the key role in their healing ministry.

The role of prophecy in the life and healing ministry of Zionist Churches in Botswana

Prophecy in the context of the Zionist Churches is broader, more dynamic and profound than it is in the Old Testament theology. It is, for instance, integral to the ministry of pastoral care, and as such deals more with diagnosis and therapy in faith healing than with predictions of the future as it is understood in the Old Testament (Anderson 1991: vi). Anderson (1991:53) is categorical that in the African Spirit type Churches prophecy is an essential aspect of the ministry it is the accepted way in which the Holy Spirit reveals its will for a specific situation. In this sense it forms part of pastoral care, for many different problematic situations encountered by Africans they are brought to the prophet for his assistance. Hence, Anderson (1991:53) argues that the prophet makes known the will of God for a particular situation, and thus through the Holy Spirit helps to bring about relief. In these Churches it is taken for granted that this form of communication between God and the human being belongs to the essence of Christianity (Anderson 1991:53). Now, in terms of diagnostic prophecy Joseph Dlamini, a Swazi prophet quoted in Anderson (1991:53), "*said that the Holy Spirit reveals to him the things and diseases that will befall other people. The Spirit also tells him the remedy and how to overcome such thing*". Daneel, quoted in Anderson (1991:53), remarks that a newly installed prophet will often diagnose not only the present source of people's problems but also predict the future spiritual attacks.

Yet prophesying usually means revealing God's will for a particular situation of pressing need, rather than predicting the distant future. It is in the light of this role of prophecy that the prophets are regarded and perceived as saviours and representatives of Christ who lead people out from debilitating entanglements and suspicion which destroy social relationships (Anderson 1991:54). Amanze (1998:149) maintains that the prophets operate under the power of the Holy Spirit, who calls them to that holy office to be God's mouthpiece. This closeness of the Holy Spirit in prophecy, as indicated above, makes healing possible since the prophet is pre-eminently a person of Charisma and Spirit (Anderson 1991:8). Hence, Sundkler in Amanze (1998:148) asserts that a prophet can have other leadership qualities but above all he must be a healer. This, according to Sundkler, is an indispensable requirement. This is justified by the fact that the majority of the prophets of the Zionist Churches are healers. The

majority of them use the Bible to prophesy and reveal the cause of the illness and the necessary treatment to a patient. For instance, in the Ezekiel Church of Botswana, according to the prophet Silas Moswela Nyathepane, each branch has a special Bible, which is already prayed over by the Bishop, and set aside for healing purposes.

The use of a Bible in prophesying in the Zionist Churches solves the problem of distinguishing between the traditional diviner and the prophets since their trade is basically the same (Amanze 1998:149, Daneel 1974:224-225, Sundkler 1961:256-257). However, Oosthuizen quoted in Amanze (1998:148), argues that prophesying by the diviner is by and large stimulated by the inspiring agency of the ancestors, while in the case of prophets the Holy Spirit is solely responsible. In the light of the above information it is clear that prophecy is a dominant phenomenon in the life and work of the Zionists in Botswana and elsewhere. There is no doubt that the success of the Zionist ministry is based on their prophetic nature (Amanze 1998:149). This is all the more true when it is taken into consideration that a substantial number of the Zionist Churches were founded by the prophets. These Churches claim that their prophetic activities are based on the prophetic nature of the Bible and that their prophets operate under the power of the Holy Spirit who calls them to that holy office to be God's mouthpiece (Amanze 1998:149). It is important, again, to bear in mind that many Zionists in Botswana are connected with the histories of many great prophetic figures in South Africa such as Mrs. Christinah Nku, Petrus Hlanyelo Moloji, Darius Kwape etc, who had great healing powers and were able to perform certain other miracles (Amanze 1998:151). In the context of Botswana, for example, Prophet Jacob Mokaleng Motswasele, the founder of the Spiritual Healing Church, is considered to have been one of the greatest prophets in the history of the new churches. The majority of his followers claim that he had tremendous healing power and that much of what he predicted was fulfilled during his lifetime (Amanze 1998:150). There are other influential figures whose prophetic activities and ministry has therefore placed the Zionist Churches on the religious map of Botswana. It is in this context that prophecy plays the key role in the life, work and healing ministry of the Zionist Churches (Amanze 1998:150). Now, having dealt thoroughly with prophecy and all it entails within the context of the Zionist Churches, I shall consider healing methods.

Healing methods: diagnosis of ailments

In a number of Churches diagnosis of ailments is done by divination through the Bible. This is part of a process and method of detecting the cause of the diseases, problems, troubles, misfortune, etc. Normally the healer, who is in most instances the prophet, begins the whole divination by reading a scriptural passage for the purpose. Thereafter, he begins prophesying to discover from God, the cause of the problem which has befallen his patients and clients (Amanze 1998:178, Makhubu 1988:77). The prophet through the Holy Spirit reveals the cause or nature of the disease, misfortune or other trouble befalling a family, society or a nation. Joseph Dlamini, quoted in preceding pages of this chapter, indicated. Once the nature of the disease is revealed by the prophet-healer to the patient, its treatment is also prescribed. However, treatment always depends on the nature of the disease in question and on the revelation by the Holy Spirit. But the following methods are fairly common. Praying for the sick during the service is a common method of healing which is practised by almost all the Zionist Churches (Amanze 1998:179, Anderson 1993:71-72). This takes place during the normal Church service where patients are placed at the center of the Church, specifically set aside for healing. The Bishop, prophet and other prophets normally form a circle around the patients while the congregation is singing and dancing. The members believe that singing and dancing help the prophet-healers and patients to be possessed by the Holy Spirit (Amanze 1998:180).

At the Emmanuel Christian Church in Zion, which is one of the Churches I visited the service for healing is characterized by rhythmic singing, clapping of hands, and emotional noises from the healers, which are an indication of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is during these healing sessions that the healers are heard and noticed to be speaking in tongues. This, again, according to the teachings of this Church, is an indication of the presence of the Holy Spirit. They pray for the patients, at the same time asking God to heal them. They pray while laying their hands on the patients and during this time the Holy Spirit reveals to the healers what diseases the patients are suffering from, and heals them. According to Bishop Molwantwa Rampete of Emmanuel Christian Church in Zion, when people are healed in this fashion they are considered not to be suffering from serious illness. On occasions like this they are given pure tap water that is being prayed over, by the bishop-prophet.

Water

Water is the most important element, which is regarded as God's greatest natural gift to be used for healing purposes (Amanze 1998:180-183, Makhubu 1998:78-80). In most cases, during healing sessions in the Zionist churches the sick are given the 'holy' or 'blessed' water to drink. The 'holy' or 'blessed' water in most instances is pure water which is mixed with '*shwaso*'¹ and prayed over by the bishop-prophet or any prophet-healer, and it is used for healing purposes. The congregation believes that this water acquires healing power from God and that it is actually God who heals the sick person through the administration of the water.

Sometimes in other Churches all members are given the 'holy' or 'blessed' water after the Church service no matter whether they are sick or not. They believe that water always ensures efficacy in all healing practices, and it is for this reason that it is a primary healing symbol (West 1975:95).

Again, water is used for inducing vomiting where it is boiled and allowed to cool down a little for the said purpose. Sometimes '*shwaso*' is added and the water is prayed over. Sometimes salt and a spoon of vinegar are added to the water. Amanze (1998:180) asserts that half a bucket of this water is given to a patient with a cup to drink until he or she starts vomiting. Normally the patient does this until the water is finished. This is meant to cleanse the stomach of its impurities. In cases where an enema is administered '*shwaso*' is added to the water. The water is intended to kill the diseases in the stomach and also to cleanse it of its impurities by purging (Amanze 1998:18, West 1975:108). Normally enemas and emetics for cleansing and purification of the body are administered to patients who are deemed to be seriously sick. This method of healing is also used for people who have experienced

¹ Shwaso is an ash/ashes from certain organs of the sacrificial animal, which are burnt and used mainly for healing purposes by the Zionist Churches. Sometimes branches from trees or cow dung are used for making this ash/ashes.

misfortunes, troubles, etc (West 1975:108). It is a powerful and effective method of treating all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. The use of enema and emetics is crucially important in the healing ministry of almost all the Zionist Churches in Southern Africa (Amanze 1998:18, West 1975:108). Those people who are used to this method of healing when they consult the prophets for healing or healing related purposes, normally request that their treatment should be accompanied by the administration of enemas and emetics (West 1975:108).

In the case of patients who are seriously ill the enema and emetic are normally followed by daily bathing, which is characterized by powerful prayers, said in an emotional way. The lighting of candles is very symbolic in the Zionist Churches especially in healing, because it is associated with light or brightness which in turn signifies healing and spiritual purity, hence the favourite chorus we are walking in the light of God (Re tsamaya leseding la Modimo) (West 1975:94). The number of candles is determined by the healing prophet, who in most instances uses his own discretion. Sometimes he does not use his own discretion but the Holy Spirit reveals to him the number of candles to be used (West 1975:94). Once the bathing sessions are completed or finished the patient is healed. At St Mark Christian Church in Zion seawater is added to water mixed with “*sehwaso*” for bathing, which is meant for body cleansing and healing. The seawater is sold in plastic bottles of 750 ml at the Indian chemists in most areas of Botswana. One cup is added to the water during bathing and it is believed to ensure efficacy in all healing practices. The members of the said church regard the seawater highly, hence they use it for healing purposes. This emanated from the traditional belief and practices in the African society, where seawater is regarded as of such great value that it can be used for a variety of reasons. This is precisely the reason why the majority of Africans whenever they go to the sea, bring back seawater in bottles and all sorts of other containers. This belief and practice is as old as humanity and it has been passed from one generation to the other. St. Mark Christian Church in Zion has appropriated it for its own good, especially in terms of healing.

When seawater is not used the patient is bathed at a spring where the water is constantly running and not stagnant. The church members believe that the running water is living and therefore it is efficacious (Anderson 1993:75). Hence, the patients

and other people who have in a way experienced misfortunes, troubles, etc in their lives, are often cleansed at such places. But the bishop-prophet, Joseph Khubalo Ndeya, maintains that it is through specific revelation from the Holy Spirit that he does the healing rituals at the springs (Byaruhanga 1990:9). This living water is seen by members to represent cleansing and purification from evil, sin, sickness and ritual pollution, concepts carried through traditional beliefs (Anderson 1993:75). Again, water is still an important symbol for healing during immersion of patients in a river, which is normally perceived as the river 'Jordan', or a stream (Daneel 1991:226). Amanze (1998:181) asserts that immersion, which is meant for healing, takes place in the context of worship. The healer stands in the river or pool and immerses the sick seven times in a form of baptismal ritual for healing. In this type of healing the doctrine of Trinity is not applied. However, the importance and frequency of the immersion of the congregants and patients vary from church to church although they share certain overall features (West 1975:92). For baptism, Churches that are in urban settings do not go frequently to rivers for this purpose. Some build themselves dams, pools or ponds for immersion and baptisms, like the Spiritual Healing Church (Amanze 1998:81), while others administer immersion and baptism in dams, pools and streams etc, after rainfalls (Daneel 1991:160-161, West 1975:98-99). The administration of immersion and baptism is also a powerful and effective method of healing. It is noticeable from this information that both immersion and baptism are and can, in most instances, be administered for the same purpose, healing. Hence, diseases that are treated and cured by immersion in some Churches can be treated and cured by baptism in others (Daneel 1991:160-161, West 1975:1998-1999). From this information, it is evident that in most Zionist Churches people are baptized more than once. The first baptism is for acceptance in the household of God or covenant making and administered in the name of the Triune God whilst others, for example, covenant renewal, cleansing and healing this doctrine does not apply; as people are dipped seven times into water. The Zionists believe that when a patient is immersed and blessed he/she is healed, even a person who is perceived to be demon possessed (West 1975:95). Daneel (1991:226) expresses this well by saying, "*in cases of spirit possession baptism may even be used as a form of exorcism. Hence, some prophet-healers insist on baptism as qualification for diagnosis and therapeutic attention*". It is for this reason that many patients or other sufferers undergo baptism for the sake of prophetic help rather than out of a need to belong to the Church (Daneel 1991:226).

This is precisely one of the reasons why immersion and baptism are administered frequently.

As shown above, immersion at times may be directed to heal a specific ailment or else it may be protective. Again, immersion is more general in the Zionist Churches and it occurs for a number of different reasons (West 1975:95). A prophet healer, for example, may direct the congregation to go to the river for purification after the death of a church member, or after illness or anything threatening the church (West 1975:95). This is exactly what the bishop-prophet of the New Jerusalem Church does. This is usually done at the beginning of the New Year. Zionists generally believe that purification in the river on the first day of the New Year signifies spiritual purification and newness of life for every individual member and the church as a whole. This, on the other hand, is understood as renewal by the members of the covenant with God. Nevertheless, similar general purification may take place at other important occasions, for example, during Easter, or a church conference. From this analysis it is evident that water is the most important element and symbol for healing in some Zionist Churches. The use of water is given biblical justification by referring to God's promise to cleanse his people from all their impurities by the sprinkling of clean water (Ezekiel 36:25). In most instances, sewasho is added to the water which is used for sprinkling whilst other Churches prefer to add some herbs into the water. In most cases the hand is used for sprinkling as it normally practiced by the Z.C.C. members at funeral services. This is done for cleansing as it was in the Old Testament times that any person polluted by contact with a corpse was to be purified and cleansed by sprinkling with water (Numbers 19:11-12). There are countless scriptural justifications for the use of water in healing. Nonetheless, there are other methods of healing.

Healing by Rubbing, Massaging, Wool Strings and Steaming

Healing by rubbing lotion specifically Blue Seal Vaseline onto the body is a form of treatment prescribed by the prophet-healer, as revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. In this case ordinary Vaseline is bought from the store and prayed for, before use. It is often used for painful legs, arms, waist, and many other parts of the body (Amanze 1998:183, West 1975:95). Secondly, healing through massaging is very common in the Zionist Churches. This is commonly practised in the case of pregnant women. This is mostly done by prophetesses and some women who are trained specifically for that purpose (Amanze 182). The reason for massaging is in most instances to enable the foetus to lie in the correct and comfortable position until delivery (Amanze 1998:182). At the New Jerusalem Church after every massaging session the pregnant women are given holy or blessed water to drink. They believe that this water is efficacious and as a result will ensure safe delivery. It is worth noting that rubbing and massaging are more or less one and the same thing. Hence, in other churches rubbing means massaging and vice-versa, and Vaseline is used in both methods of healing. Healing can also be achieved through the use of strings and ropes made out of wool (Amanze 1998:182, Anderson 1993:77). The string or rope may be made of wool of one colour, such as green, red, white, blue, yellow etc, as determined by the Holy Spirit through the prophet-healer.

Normally, the strings and ropes are tied onto various parts of the body to procure healing and ward off evil (Anderson 1993:77). For example, a string or rope is tied around the waist of a patient to treat any disease such as kidney disease, venereal disease, burning urine and similar conditions. In the case of a female patient it is believed that this helps in regard to a prolonged menstrual period (Amanze 1998:183). These strings and ropes, as shown above, are used for a variety of reasons within the context of healing. For instance, in Dipesalema Church these strings and ropes are used strictly for treatment of mentally ill patients. This justifies West's (1975:92) observation that the methods of healing vary from church to church although they share certain overall features. Another method to procure healing is by steaming, which is meant to cleanse complexions or improve one's image in the eyes of other people, especially one's employers (Makhubu 1988:82). Normally, a bowl of hot or boiling water is placed on the floor. Sometimes cold water is used but in this case a

heated stone is dropped in a bucket of that water and the patient is covered with the blanket and asked to steam his or her body with vapour. After the steaming the prophet-healer prays for the sick person that or he/she may be healed by God (Amanze 1998:182, Makhubu 1988:82). This is used for treatment of people suffering from flu or colds. On the other hand it is also believed to be cleansing out every scrap of ill-fortune (Makhubu 1988:82). Hence, people who are just released from prison are cleansed in this way. Job seekers, young men and women desiring marriage are treated this way. In fact, it can be said that it is used for many diseases and sicknesses. Another way of procuring healing is through animal sacrifices.

Healing through animal sacrifices and bread

This method of healing deals strictly with sacrifices of animals and birds (Lev. 1-17). The theological basis for this method of healing is found in the Old Testament since it has many references to this practice. The Zionists are mostly the churches among the AICs who prefer this method of healing. When the patient is diagnosed and instructed to follow this procedure for healing, the following are strictly to be adhered to. The patient is expected to buy a sheep, goat or a bull which is without any defect for the purpose (Lev. 1;3). When a sacrificial animal is slaughtered the patient places his/her hand on its head and makes all sorts of requests to God and the ancestors regarding healing. After the animal is slaughtered the prophet-healer takes the internal organs such as kidneys, heart, its fat and other parts and offers them to God as burnt offerings (Amanze 1998:181). At the New Jerusalem Church, according to the bishop-prophet, the bile of the sacrificial animal is used while bathing the patient. For a destitute patient who cannot afford to buy a sheep, goat or a bull, a chicken is used for a similar purpose (Lev.4:7-10). In all cases of healing through animal sacrifices the blood is not used for healing rituals. Although the Zionists believe strongly in the sacredness of blood they do not use it in this regard. This is unlike the traditional healers or Sangomas who in most instances expect the patients to drink the blood of the sacrificial animal. They do not even spill or sprinkle blood on the patients or on altars. Now, it is worth mentioning here that in fact all sorts of sacrifices mentioned in the whole book of Leviticus are offered for forgiveness of sins, not for healing. But the Zionists use this scripture, and apply it to their own life- situation and its

betterment. This perception emanates from the African traditional thoughts and practices, as shown above (Anderson 1993:75).

Likewise, the use of bread at the festival of unleavened bread in the bible is not related to healing at all. In the case of sacrifices the bread is also used in that sense. The Zionists have taken scriptural concept of the festival of unleavened bread and made it relevant and meaningful to their own needs and life-situation, and this is extremely important for them (Lev. 23:14, 24:5-9). According to the leadership of the New Jerusalem Church and St Mark Christian Church in Zion, the bread is used for healing. When the diagnostic prophecy is completed, at which the Holy Spirit prescribed the bread for healing, arrangements for treatment is made. The patient buys some bread or home-made bread is used, or a mixture of the two, depending on the prescription. This home-made bread differs with the unleavened one only in the sense that yeast is added to the former and this does not apply to the latter. In all cases the bread is sliced and smeared with jam for eating. This is normally done on Sundays during the worship service. Whilst the service is progressing, just before healing commences the congregation is briefed as to what is happening. Thereafter, the patient is afforded the chance to give some testimonies and later makes all sorts of requests to God and the ancestors. Whilst the requests are being made, the healing service begins, which is characterize by rhythmic singing, systematic hand-clapping, emotional prayers, prophecies and speaking in tongues, laying on of hands on the patient and candle lighting. When the healing is completed all the bread for the occasion is eaten by the congregation and there must be no left-overs. According to the leadership of the churches this method of healing is powerful and efficacious. The majority of their church members prefer this method of healing. But bishop-prophet, Joseph Khubalo Ndeya of St Mark Christian Church in Zion asserts that this method is strictly practised only when prescribed by the Holy Spirit, and it is not performed or administered now and then, like other methods. This analysis shows clearly that the Zionists are specialists in the field of healing (Anderson 1993:103-113, Daneel 1999:192). Lastly, on this subject of healing as it is currently practised by the majority of Zionists, I would like to conclude this chapter by critically looking at a controversial and debatable issue; the role of ancestors in the healing ministry of the Zionist Churches. In order to understand the role of the ancestors in the healing ministry of the Zionists one must acknowledge and look generally at their role in the

life of these churches. This will in itself throw more light on our understanding of the ancestors in relation to healing in the Zionist Churches in the context of Botswana.

The role of ancestors in the life and ministry of the Zionist Churches

The role of ancestors in the ministry of the Zionist Churches has been one of the most controversial and debatable subjects since their inception. Since the ground-breaking research of Bengt Sundkler, *The Bantu Prophets in South Africa* was published in 1948, the subject of the role of ancestors has been a bone of contention (Kealotswe 1994:4). There is no indication that researchers will ever reach consensus on the subject. Yet the controversy is as old as the existence of the Zionist Churches (Anderson 1991:79-99). Therefore, it is not the purpose of this study to deal with the controversy or to engage in a debate. But the role of ancestors will be dealt with specifically as it relates to healing in the Zionist Churches because, this chapter is basically about healing. Amanze (1998:162-163) asserts that Africans believe strongly in the existence of the ancestors and this is very central to their religion. In almost all African societies there is a belief that the ancestors are in control and influential in every sphere of their descendants' lives (Amanze 1998:10). This is the basis of the African traditional religion and its emphasis is on the fact that the ancestors are dead but at the same time alive. Amanze (1998:10) argues that because of their paradoxical nature they are known, in much recent literature in African traditional religions, as the living dead. This belief in the living dead is so inculcated in the minds of the Africans that it is part and parcel of their belief system, of who they are (Mbiti 1991:14). Therefore, it is unthinkable as an African to do away completely with one's ancestors. Hence, Mbiti (1991:14-16) has convincingly argued that even Africans who are converted to other religions do not completely forget their African roots and culture. This is exactly what happens with the Zionists; hence Mofokeng (1990:47) calls the Zionists the principal religious custodians of African culture and traditional religion. They still believe that ancestors are able to communicate with God since they are god-like and are also like people (Amanze 1998:10). Therefore, they are at the other end of a long chain of intercessors whose ultimate function is to intercede on behalf of humankind. This belief has passed from one generation of the African people to the next. The majority of the Zionist Churches in Botswana encourage their members to do whatever ancestor belief and veneration requires.

This practice is given theological justification and significance and it is one of the main attractions of the Zionist Churches for people (Amanze 1998:164, Makhubu 1988:60-62). For instance, the Citizens Apostolic Church's belief in the ancestors is preserved in the faith and practice of the church (Amanze 1998:164). The bishops maintain that in as much as the ancestors are in control over and influence every sphere of their descendants' lives, they also have power to help the church. On the basis of this understanding a number of Zionist Churches allow and encourage their members to pray to God through their ancestors in accordance with African culture (Amanze 1998:164). This is not surprising and strange at all in Botswana, considering the fact that Batswana understand their religious values as sacrosanct and on this account it is anathema to abandon them completely instead they can be practised side by side with Christianity (Amanze 1998:165). It is even argued by the Zionists that Jesus as a Jew prayed to his father, mentioning the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, his ancestors according to Jewish culture (Amanze 1998:165). According to the herbalist and prophet-healer of Temothuo Apostolic Church in Zion, Mr. Keabetswe Gabanamong, the belief in ancestral spirits persists in many churches because Jesus said that he came not to destroy the tradition of the people but to fulfil it (Mt 5:17). By and large a number of the Zionist Churches believe in the saving power of the ancestors. They maintain that the ancestors act as intermediaries between God and people (Amanze 1998:165). They claim that the arrival of the missionaries did not destroy the role of ancestors as intermediaries but provided an additional channel to God; hence, the ancestors' role as intercessors still continues (Amanze 1998:165). This appropriately justifies the fact that the Zionists believe in the saving power of the ancestors. They believe that the ancestral spirit's appearance in dreams and visions indicates the immortality of the human person, thereby assuring us that there is life after death (Amanze 1998:164).

In the light of this it is indisputable that the ancestors play the key role in the belief system of the Zionists in regard to the questions of immortality and the resurrection of the dead. This implies that the immortality of the ancestors as seen in dreams and visions is taken to be an indication that Jesus is alive and that we can also accept him as our Great Ancestor living here and now (Amanze 1998:165). Zionists believe that since the ancestors have direct impact on the lives of their descendants and

community, they need respect and honour from the living (Makhubu 1988:62). This is what ancestor veneration is all about; not worshipping them as was perceived by the Euro-American missionaries and other Western people (Anderson 1991:79-99). Hence, Mbiti (1969:9) is quite emphatic that Africans themselves know very well that they are not worshipping the departed members of their families. He maintains that it is almost blasphemous, therefore, to describe the act of family relationship as worship. The Zionists believe that inasmuch as the ancestors influence every sphere of their descendants, they also play a significant role in their health. Hence, the ancestors play a prominent role in the healing ministry of the Zionists.

The role of ancestors in the healing ministry of the Zionist Churches

The above analysis has clearly shown the role of the ancestors in the life and ministry of the Zionist Churches. This, as indicated in this study, is meant to broaden our theological horizon in understanding the role played by the ancestors in healing. For instance, in the Citizen Apostolic Church, belief in one's ancestors is preserved in the faith and practice of the church and they are perceived to be part and parcel of the ecclesiastical community. Daneel, quoted in Anderson (1991:89), asserts that the traditional beliefs concerning the ancestors are still prevalent among the members of the indigenous churches. At the Citizens Apostolic Church prayers and offerings are made to the ancestors to heal the sick. The offerings or ash (burnt offerings) are made to God, during which the names of the ancestors of the sick are mentioned, petitioning them to heal the sick people concerned (Amanze 1998:164, Makhubu 1988:61). This is more or less the same as what happens at the New Jerusalem Church and St Mark Christian Church, where the request for healing is directed by the sick to both God and the ancestors. It is in this context that Amanze (1998:164) argues convincingly that the leaders of the Zionist Churches believe strongly in the saving power of the ancestors. Therefore, there is no doubt whatsoever that the ancestors are directly involved in the healing ministry of the Zionist Churches in Botswana. It is unthinkable to deal with any matter of healing in these said churches without making a request to both God and the ancestors. It is believed that when the ancestral spirits appear in dreams and visions they help the sick to know the cause of their sickness and show them the proper medicine to cure them (Amanze 1998:165). This is a clear indication that the ancestors play a key or at least a significant role in the healing

ministry of the Zionist Churches. However, it must also be indicated that some churches claim that the ancestors are only interceding to God for the needs and prayers of the sick. The implication is that the ancestors are intercessors and God is the one who heals the sick.

Some churches insist that the ancestors, and Jesus who is the Great Ancestor, intercede to God for the needs and prayers of the sick. The fact that Jesus is a Great Ancestor is given a theological justification by the Zionists because he was killed and raised from the dead, according to scripture, especially the New Testament. In the context of this understanding it is logical that Jesus is also one of the ancestors (Amanze 1998:166). Therefore, logically speaking, he is perceived as one of the intermediaries between God and human beings, and as a result; he plays a role like the other intercessors who are communicating on a continuous basis with God on behalf of the sick people (Amanze 1998:163-165). However, it is interesting to note that this does not necessarily mean that ancestors always play a beneficial role in human society. This implies that there are some ancestors who sometimes play a negative or disastrous role in the society by inflicting various diseases on men and women. It is in this context that their role is considered evil, hence churches such as St Matthew Apostolic, during their healing services, make offerings which are meant to drive away the ancestors who are specifically causing diseases amongst the people in the community. The expulsion of these disastrous ancestors is carried out as follows: during the service for healing some prayers and utterances which are persuasive and aggressive are said by the prophet-healers, aimed at scaring and driving away evil ancestors. And in most instances, such persuasive and aggressive prayers and utterances are also made at the home of the sick person while the healers are sprinkling it with the 'holy' or 'blessed' water. Once this is done it is believed that the healing process is completed and the evil spirits are driven away. This shows clearly that the ancestors are both beneficial and harmful in human society. However, by and large this analysis is a clear reflection of the fact that the ancestors play a very significant role in the healing ministry of the Zionists. This is a fact that cannot at all be denied by anyone who understands the theology and ministry of the Zionist Churches in Botswana.