



The use of anointed products during Covid-19 lockdown: An African Pentecostal spirituality experience

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Abstract

The use of anointed products such as anointing oil and anointing water within the broader Pentecostal movement in world Christianity has been documented in previous studies. Traditionally, the demand for these products is based on the quest to receive healing and deliverance from sicknesses, barrenness, witchcraft, and so forth. The products are also used to access job placement, promotion, a house, a car, and other material possessions. This paper worked within African Pentecostal spirituality of experience to explore the use of anointed products during Covid-19 lockdown. Regardless of many perceptions and misconceptions about the anointed products, they were used as a point of contact during the Covid-19 lockdown. The paper used Apostle Mohlala Ministries in Cape Town, South Africa as a case study to explore the use of these products during Covid-19 lockdown. The argument in this paper is that these products were used as a substitute for spiritual service during the Covid-19 lockdown. In other words, anointed products became a point of contact when members of these ministries could not meet physically during the Covid-19 lockdown. This changes how Pentecostal scholars study anointed products within the broader Pentecostal movement. Despite their challenges such as commercialization and other abuses, anointed products become a point of contact in Pentecostal spirituality of experience. For the believers that could not attend church during the Covid-19 lockdown, anointed products became a medium to connect spiritually.

Keywords: anointed products, African Pentecostal spirituality, Covid-19, Pentecostalism, lockdown.

Introduction

The use of anointed products among neo-Pentecostals and the broader Pentecostal movement is evidently a common practice (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005; Benyah, 2018; Kgatle and Mofokeng, 2020; Banda, 2020). These products are used as a medium to access material blessings by the followers of neo-Pentecostal churches in Africa. The products are also used for important needs in life such as inter alia visa applications and other applications for jobs, entrance to institutions of higher learning, and so on (Owusu Ansah, 2011; Benyah, 2020). The anointed products are also used to confront the spirit world and deal with evil spirits, witchcraft, misfortune, barrenness, and so forth (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2007; Banda, 2019; Tsekpoe, 2019; Kgatle, 2022a). Previous studies have reflected on the use of anointed products in sub-Saharan Africa among neo-Pentecostal Churches. Equally these previous studies have highlighted the challenges of the use of anointed products among neo-Pentecostals such as the exorbitant prices charged by the prophets for access to these products (Benyah, 2018; Kgatle, 2019). Others have condemned these products for competing with Christ in terms of bringing healing in Pentecostal Christology (Magezi & Banda,



2017; Kgatle, Nel, and Banda, 2021; Banda, 2021). In other words, some of the believers stop believing in the authority of Christ and start believing more in the use of such products. The argument in this article is that despite these challenges, the anointed products became a point of contact during the recent Covid-19 lockdown period. The study uses the Apostle Mohlala Ministries as a case study to illustrate that the anointed products became a point of contact for believers as they could not go to church at a time when Covid-19 infection was rampant. This article worked within the framework of Pentecostal spirituality which as opposed to other spiritualities within the Christian tradition, is based on experience. Thus, the article seeks to demonstrate that anointed products became a source of a spiritual experience within Pentecostal spirituality during the Covid-19 lockdown.

To achieve the research objectives, the article will give a brief overview of Pentecostal spirituality in an African context. The historical and traditional use of the anointed products within neo-Pentecostal churches particularly New Prophetic Churches will be outlined in the article. The article will also look at how Covid-19 lockdown affected the Pentecostal spirituality of the experience in these churches. Since this is a case study approach, the case of Apostle Mohlala Ministries will be introduced as one of the neo-Pentecostal and New Prophetic Churches in South Africa. The aim of this article is thus to demonstrate that anointed products were used as a point of contact with adherents of the faith in the Pentecostal spirituality of experience during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Historical and traditional use of anointed products and their challenges

The use of anointed products among neo-Pentecostals within the broader Pentecostal movement is a common practice in Africa in different countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, South Africa and others (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005; Benyah, 2018; Kgatle & Mofokeng, 2020; Banda, 2020). The practice is more prevalent among the New Prophetic Churches in Africa as opposed to other neo-Pentecostals. Ukah (2020) stated: "Pentecostalism has the perfect opportunity to demonstrate its theological and doctrinal refinement and articulation relative to this unprecedented demographic tragedy. Pentecostal organizations also have the context to motivate practical human action in response to the uncertain and existential precariousness that the pandemic is provoking".

Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) looked at the positive and the negative aspects of the anointed products, but his article concentrated more on western Africa in countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. Asamoah-Gyadu used his encounters with western Africans to reflect on the weaknesses and the strength of the anointed products in that context. Similarly, Benyah (2018) looked at the practice of anointed product and their relationship with the socio-economic conditions of believers in the Ghanaian context. Other scholars such as Banda (2020) worked within the context of southern Africa, however, did not outline the role that anointed products can play during times of distress. Banda (2020) highlighted some challenges of anointed products discussed below. Thus, this article is different since it works within the southern African region using the case study of Apostle Mohlala Ministries in South Africa to demonstrate the role of anointed products during a pandemic such as Covid-19.

These products are used as a medium to access material blessings by the followers of neo-Pentecostal churches in Africa (Benyah, 2018:116). Unlike the classical Pentecostals who would pray for blessings, the neo-Pentecostals would in addition to their prayers use the anointed products such as anointing oil, anointed water, spiritual candle and others to claim such blessings. Neo-Pentecostals particularly New Prophetic Churches have an idea that prayer alone is not enough to access the material blessing, it should be augmented using anointed products such as anointing oil and anointing water. Therefore, the anointed products are used in a belief to access a car, a house, promotion at work, and other material blessings (Bonsu & Belk, 2010). Banda (2019:3) explains that the same anointed products would be used to anoint the accessed blessings in the form of cars and houses to preserve and protect



them. This aligns in some ways with the Eastern Orthodox church where blessing homes of Orthodox Christians is carried every year by priests on or after the feast of Theophany (Epiphany). This act is a physical sign of God's sanctification of all things through Christ's baptism in the river Jordan and his Theophany to the world (Nicolaidis, 2019). The sanctification of the home takes place with prayer and the sprinkling of holy water. The products are also used for important needs in life such as visa applications and other applications for jobs, entrance to institutions of higher learning, and so on (Owusu Ansah, 2011; Benyah, 2020). It is the perception of what an anointed product can do in the life of a believer that causes them to demand these products at whatever costs for these believers. And in Africa where people have many needs, they are ready to do anything in desperation to deal with their problems and challenges.

This brings us to the next reason for the popularity of anointed products in an African context, which is the confrontation of problems caused by the malevolent spirit world. The anointed products are thus also used to confront the spirit world and deal with evil spirits, witchcraft, misfortune, barrenness, and so forth (Banda, 2019). White (2022:149) points out that "in the African context certain types of ill health, evil, or misfortune are usually explained in terms of the work of negative supernatural forces". Although this is common in other religions, Pentecostals emphasise this in the context of using anointed products. Kgatle (2022a:4) explains that among all other anointed products, the anointing oil is known for confronting different challenges including sickness, diseases, and other problems in the spirit world. Benyah (2020:615) explains further that it is believed that the anointing oil can wipe away challenges of misfortunes, bareness, and others. Therefore, believers in Africa have faith that the anointing oil can deal with any challenge that they face as pointed out by Tsekpo (2019:281) such as "poverty, infertility, miscarriages, and business problems". Believers in neo-Pentecostal churches would literally apply the anointing oil on their faces in the belief that it takes away misfortune and other problems. Others, go to an extent of drinking the anointing oil with the faith that it will deal with health issues in their lives. Asamoah-Gyadu (2007:444) points out that the application of an anointed products is not done haphazardly but during the anointing sessions with the prophet.

However, there are challenges with the anointed products that scholars have raised in different contexts. One of the challenges of the use of anointed products among neo-Pentecostals is the charging of exorbitant prices by the prophets for access to these products (Benyah, 2018; Kgatle, 2019). While a 1 litre bottle of normal olive oil can costs R100 (about 5\$) at retail shops in South Africa, a 250g bottle of anointed oil can costs about R200 (about 10\$) at some neo-Pentecostal churches. This has resulted in the commercialization and commodification of the gospel as these products are sold in the name of faith. Therefore, this raises an issue of the abuse of the people's belief system and the abuse of their faith because they access their God by paying a certain price. However, commercialization is not the only challenge, other scholars have condemned these products for competing with Christ in Pentecostal Christology (Magezi & Banda, 2017; Masenya & Masenya, 2018; Kgatle, Nel & Banda, 2021; Banda, 2021). In other words, as the demand and supply of anointed products increase, there is less focus on the person of Christ and his redemptive work on the cross of Calvary, and more focus on the person of the prophet who prays for the anointed products to carry power for healing and deliverance. However, this article argues that regardless of these challenges, the anointed products played an important role during the Covid-10 lockdown. Before the article delves into this role, it is important to introduce an African Pentecostal spirituality of experience.

An African Pentecostal spirituality of experience: theoretical framework

Spirituality in general terms refers to a belief in the supernatural as opposed to human effort in dealing with issues of life, more especially the vexing ones. Therefore, spirituality is basically enhanced by the relationship between the supernatural and human beings (Stark, 1999). Christian spirituality refers to the belief in the relationship between human beings and Christ



that enables believers to devote their lives to a Christian lifestyle. Christian spirituality is the practice of spirituality in a Christian way demonstrated by an adaptation to the life of Christ (Schnitker, Houlberg, Dyrness & Redmond, 2017). By African Pentecostal spirituality in this article, reference is being made to the practice of spirituality by African Pentecostals. An African Pentecostal spirituality goes beyond traditional Christian spirituality. An African Pentecostal spirituality of experience is a spirituality that is premised according to Nel (2020:2) on “the encounters between God and Human Beings”. In other words, it is not only a relationship between two entities but how such entities interact with one another. It is for this reason that Pentecostals emphasise the baptism of the Holy Spirit as they believe that the Holy Spirit is an enabler of such an encounter between human beings and their God (White & Niemandt, 2015). Pentecostals in Africa attend a spiritual church service, not as a routine or religious practice but to encounter the presence of God through the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 1991). Hence, the Holy Spirit is the centre of Pentecostal spirituality because, without the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals would not be able to have an experience with God. This might apply to other protestant churches, however Pentecostals put more emphasis on this kind of spirituality.

An African Pentecostal spirituality of experience is based on the practices of believers in Pentecostal churches (Anderson, 2002). Pentecostals in Africa want to experience something in their practice of spirituality than spirituality in an abstract or as a theory (van Dijk, 2012). It is for this reason that Pentecostals started as a movement with people experiencing various movements of the Holy Spirit than as an intellectual endeavor. It is a spirituality of worship, prayers, sermons, testimonies, deliverance, healing, and so forth. It must be reiterated that Pentecostal spirituality in Africa is commonly known for various prayer meetings, deliverance sessions, night prayers, worship nights, and other practices (Quayesi-Amakye, 2009). Even singing is not done to wind up time but in the belief to bring people to such an encounter with God. In addition, African Pentecostals believe in the practice of different spiritual gifts that also are part of Pentecostal spirituality in an African context (White, 2020). Therefore, it is common among African Pentecostals to practice the gift of speaking in other tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, gift of healing, miracles, and other spiritual gifts (Anderson, 2003; Mashau, 2013; Gunda & Obvious, 2018; Machingura, 2018). These kinds of gifts are the ones that produce pneumatic experiences within the practice of Pentecostal spirituality. Spiritual gifts are practice in other Christian denominations pneumatic expressions of these gifts particularly speaking in tongues are unique to Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

African Pentecostal spirituality confronts life challenges including the challenges of health or any other (Onyinah, 2002). When encountering problems, African Pentecostals use spirituality to deal with them. African Pentecostals do not practice spirituality as a separate matter to life situations and life problems but in conjunction with life realities (Wariboko & Afolayan, 2020). It is for this reason that challenges are confronted by Pentecostals through the same spirituality. Similarly, Pentecostals in Africa invest time and energy in the spiritual life because it is the essence of life and something they use to deal with the challenges of life. As discussed in the preceding section, neo-Pentecostals do not only confront life challenges through conventional prayer and preaching of the word only. But use different anointed products to confront sickness, diseases, evil spirits, misfortune, witchcraft, and so forth. Therefore, Pentecostal spirituality in Africa is not only known for encounters, Pentecostal practices, and spiritual gifts but also for confrontation with evil spirits in the spirit world (Anderson, 2006; Anderson, 2018; Nel 2019). When prayers are made during a spiritual service, it is not only in the acknowledgment of the presence of God but also in dismantling the powers of evil spirits in the spirit world. Hence, the Holy Spirit is perceived as the one having a higher power to deal with evil spirits that cause all kinds of problems in Africa as perceived by African Pentecostals.

African Pentecostal spirituality of experience can be summarized as the spirituality of the following:

- An encounter between God and human beings experienced during a spiritual service



- A spirituality demonstrated through the religious practices of Pentecostal believers in Africa
- A spirituality demonstrated through the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- A spirituality that can deal with the challenges of life including health problems

An African Pentecostal spirituality of experience and Covid-19 lockdown

By Covid-19 lockdown in this article refers to the restrictions imposed on people that managed their movements from one place to another in virtually all countries (Chirisa, Mutambisi, Chivenge, Mabaso, Matamanda, & Ncube, 2020). The Covid-19 lockdown at many different levels also meant that few people could meet indoors or not meet at all (Gittings, Toska, Medley, Cluver, Logie, Ralayo, Chen, & Mbithi-Dikgole, 2021). In addition, the Covid-19 lockdown also meant the closure of churches where there were no single churches allowed to congregate during the Covid-19 lockdown (Bryson, Andres & Davies, 2020). During the Covid-19 lockdown, the encounter between God and human beings in a spiritual service was interrupted. Molehe (2022:25) points out that Pentecostal believers could not have a meaningful encounter with God due to Covid-19 lockdown. As discussed previously, Pentecostals in Africa attend church in a quest to have an encounter with their God. However, the restrictions imposed by the government of South Africa and elsewhere in Africa demanded that churches be closed. The closure of churches meant that many Pentecostals who used to go to church to have an experience of God in a Pentecostal service could not do so because of restrictions. The atmosphere and euphoria of a Pentecostal church service responsible for activating divine encounters were interrupted during Covid-19 lockdown.

The Covid-19 lockdown also interrupted different Pentecostal practices that happen during a Pentecostal service. Frahm-Arp (2021:3) explains that during lockdown all the services which used to happen in the church building were moved into an online session. Frahm-Arp goes further to explain that this in a way changed the way the church does its business in terms of different activities that normally happen in a Pentecostal service. This means that the loud music, the in-person sermon, the testimonies, mass prayers, and other activities of Pentecostal spirituality were interrupted during the Covid-19 lockdown. Although some Pentecostal churches intervened using live streaming and the playing of songs online, this is not the same as live music in church. Some of the pastors tried to present their sermons online but this also is not the same as preaching in the church to the congregants who are present in a church setting. It became very hard for the Pentecostal pastors to maintain the days of physical worship during the Covid-19 lockdown (Mngadi, 2022:94). Things changed in terms of the Pentecostal liturgy of lively music and lively sermon as these could not be practiced in the same way.

The Covid-19 lockdown interrupted spiritual gifts such as prophecy, faith healing, miracles, tongues, and so forth. Frahm-Arp (2020:157) points out that Covid-19 lockdown hindered the Pentecostal charisma and what is known as being "slain in the spirit" including the experiences of being baptized and being filled with the Holy Spirit. The challenge is that most of these gifts are practiced in a church setting, thus the closure of churches during Covid-19 lockdown meant that the platform where various gifts are practiced was interrupted. Ukah (2023:250) adds that during Covid-19 lockdown the rhetoric of miracles, signs, wonders, prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues slowed down among Pentecostal and charismatic churches. One of the reasons it slowed down is because the audience to which these gifts are exercised was nowhere to be found as they were limited to their houses. Furthermore, the practice of gifts in Pentecostalism is proportionate to the level of numbers in the service or people who attend these services, so the limit to the number of people also brought some limitations. This means that even when some restrictions were relaxed such that few people could attend church, the experience was not the same as the pre-Covid-19 conditions.



Lastly, the Covid-19 lockdown also interrupted the traditional forms of praying for the sick such as laying of hands in dealing with sickness and other health challenges. During Covid-19 lockdown, pastors were not allowed to lay hands upon their congregants but only to pray for them. Mahiya and Murisi (2022) explain that “Covid-19 lockdown has affected the operations of churches of a clergy to receive the word, to pray, to be prayed for”. This disrupted many churches and their pastors as many are used to being prayed for during times of sickness and disease. What is important in this article is that the sicknesses and diseases could not be confronted as they are normally confronted in an African Pentecostal spirituality of experience. This means that Covid-19 lockdown affected this spirituality of confrontation in the context of sickness, disease, evil spirits, misfortune, barrenness, poverty, and so forth. This called for an alternative way in which forces of darkness could still be confronted by Pentecostal spirituality of experience. In the next section, the article introduces Apostle Mohlala Ministries as one case study for the confrontation of evil spirits using anointed products.

Apostle Mohlala Ministries and anointed products

Apostle Musawenkosi Joshua Mohlala was born on 27 July 1979 He was born in Likazi, Kanyamazane, at Mbombela in Mpumalanga, South Africa (Apostle Mohlala Ministries 2023). However, Mohlala has since moved to Cape Town to start ministry as per the instruction of God, that is, according to Apostle Mohlala Ministries (2023:1) “to set the captives free, be the funnel and God’s mouthpiece to his people”. Although Mohlala calls himself an Apostle, he operates more as a prophet who repeatedly calls people up to prophesy over their lives. Mohlala is popular in Cape Town as opposed to many other prophets who are popular in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Prophet Shepherd Bushiri used to be very popular in Pretoria and Pastor Alph Lukau in Johannesburg. Apostle Mohlala started Apostle Mohlala Ministries which is a prophetic ministry falling under the category of New Prophetic Churches and known for its emphasis on prophecy. Apostle Mohlala Ministries is a wing of a ministry under the umbrella of the main church ministry called the Shekinah Healing Ministries (Apostle Mohlala Ministries, 2023). The Shekinah Healing Ministries was started in 2002 by Apostle Mohlala and operates mainly in Cape Town but has other branches across South Africa (Kgatle 2022b:5). It is a propensity of pastors in South Africa to start a ministry under their own name that operates under the umbrella of the main church. This phenomenon is also common in the United States of America, particularly among the prosperity gospel ministers who often start ministries in their churches.

Apostle Mohlala Ministries is engaged in the sales of anointed products. In April 2020, a few days after the announcement of a Covid-19 lockdown, Mohlala started an anointing oil online service. This kind of service was streamed live on Facebook where people were granted an opportunity to order their own anointing oil online by calling the Apostle Mohlala Ministries landline (Apostle Mohlala 2020a). People could join in online with the expectation to receive the anointing oil which is normally prayed over by the Apostle for people to receive their blessings. In addition, although believers were not attending services during the Covid-19 lockdown, the Apostle Mohlala Ministries asked their followers to make appointments to buy the anointing oil. Therefore, the anointing oil became a point of contact for followers to meet their pastor or prophet. Soon, the anointed oil became popular during Covid-19 lockdown whereby people were ordering it from different countries including Swaziland and nearby countries. The anointed oil service in the Apostle Mohlala Ministries continued throughout 2020 and 2021. And these services during this time were not only streamed through Facebook but also through YouTube and Soweto TV. In one of the services, Apostle Mohlala explained that the different anointed products have different benefits:

- Money oil for financial breakthrough, battle oil for hardships, healing oil for sickness and diseases, victory oil for fighting witchcraft, and dangerous oil. Apostle Mohlala calls these five stones of fighting Goliath.
- spiritual honey to treat ailments/chronic diseases.



- anointing water to treat and protect against all bad luck, evil spirits, and prosperity in business.
- spiritual candles for prayer in households
- spiritual ribbons.
- anointing stickers, (for the blessing of your house, cars, business, and workplaces of various specifications)

The use of anointed products during Covid-19 lockdown

During Covid-19 lockdown, the anointed products were used as a medium through which believers could still come to church as individuals to have an encounter with God. Different Facebook users and followers of Apostle Mohlala made appointments to see their pastors for prayers (Apostle Mohlala, 2020a). But what drew their attention was the announcement for the purchase of the anointed products. It is demonstrated on the Facebook page of Apostle Mohlala that soon after the announcement, there was a demand for the anointed product from other provinces such as KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, and so forth (Apostle Mohlala, 2020a). These users wanted to visit Apostle Mohlala for the prime purpose of being prayed for and to have an encounter with God. This is because, in this period, most people were not going to church, thus purchasing an anointed product became a source of spirituality. Apostle Mohlala saw this gap early during Covid-19 lockdown and planned to advertise and sell the anointed products to his congregants and followers on various social media platforms.

The anointed products were used as the means through which Pentecostal practices of prayer, worship, and others could continue even during the Covid-19 lockdown. There was a need for an alternative, given the fact that believers could not congregate during the Covid-19 lockdown. One of the alternatives was the use of the anointed products to keep the prayers going among neo-Pentecostal believers. Therefore, it must be pointed out that during lockdown when most people could not go to church, they used anointed products such as spiritual candles to pray in their own homes. Hence, Apostle Mohlala Ministries did not only sell the anointed oil and water but also the spiritual candles for the purpose of prayer (Apostle Mohlala 2020b). In addition, pastors and prophets such as Apostle Mohlala organize candle online services for the purpose of prayer during Covid-19 lockdown. According to Mohlala, this is done so that believers could stay connected with their God even during hardships and tough times such as Covid-19 lockdown. Therefore, it was imperative for him to use anointed products such as spiritual candles to connect people through prayer.

The anointed products were used as the medium for the practice of spiritual gifts during the Covid-19 lockdown. The anointing oil is also used for praying for people to receive their healing and even to speak a prophetic word over their lives. On his Facebook page, Apostle Mohlala (2020b) shared a post with his followers saying “Don’t listen to naysayers who are demonizing the anointing oil and making it seem insignificant. There is power in the anointing oil to heal the sick, to drive out demons, to break the yoke, and to remove the burden”. Some of his followers responded by saying that indeed anointing oil has the ability to heal those who are sick and give life to them. Another Facebook user said that they will continue to use it because it gives them life. Mohlala (2020b) continued to say that the anointing oil has been there through ancient times and has been used even in the bible for the healing of the sick. Mohlala said that he will continue to use the anointing oil because he has a revelation about it and people who criticise it lacks the understanding and the revelation.

The anointed products became the means through which sickness and diseases could still be confronted during the Covid-19 lockdown. In addition, the anointed products were used in order to confront witchcraft and other evil spirits. One of the Facebook users responded to Mohlala saying that she will be in church to pick up her anointed oil so that she can defeat witchcraft (Mohlala 2020a). Therefore, the anointing oil in these churches is not only used as



a point of contact for a divine encounter but also used in the confrontation of evil spirits in the spirit world. Apostle Mohlala Ministries is selling an anointed oil for the prime purpose of defeating witchcraft, the anointed oil is called “*hlulabathakathi*” which is translated as “defeat the witches”. It is more correct to say that Apostle Mohlala other than his name, is also known as “*hlulabathakathi*”. Another oil is called “intense” according to their Facebook page, “Apostle Mohlala was instructed by the holy spirit to release a more powerful anointing oil that will destroy every stronghold and usher people to their prosperity” (Apostle Mohlala 2020a). It is also believed that the anointing oil is useful in casting out a demon from a possessed person. Hence, among neo-Pentecostal churches in Africa, the casting out of demons during deliverance sessions is done using anointing oil. But this is not the only way deliverance is done, other neo-Pentecostal churches use prayer sessions for deliverance.

Given the above, the use of anointed products needs to be revisited in Pentecostal scholarship. While the criticism of the commercialisation of anointed products and competing with Christ using these products might be valid, their use and significance during pandemics such as Covid-19 need to be further explored. This should not be misconstrued as the support for the commercialization of anointed products nor the competition with Christ but as a call for a more balanced approach towards anointed products considering an African Pentecostal spirituality of experience. Through this approach, the article did not only study the commercialization of the anointed products or the competition with Christ through the anointed products. It also explored the use of these products to maintain the divine encounters during Covid-19. Second, the anointed products were used to maintain the devotion of prayer when believers could not go to church to pray. Third, the anointed products were used to still practice spiritual gifts such as prophecy, healing, and so forth. Lastly, the anointed products were used in the confrontation of the spirit world particularly evil spirits, misfortune, witchcraft, bareness, and so forth. Therefore, it might be proper to explore ways of dealing with the commercialization of these products and their competition with Christ rather than being dismissive of them. “While some Pentecostals are aligning their message and actions in support of government activities and medical-scientific advice and also providing scarce materials and supplies for frontline healthcare workers, many are focused on extracting resources from suffering church members” (Ukah, 2020:458).

Conclusion

This study worked within the theoretical framework of an African Pentecostal spirituality of the experience to discuss the use of anointed products during Covid-19. The study argued that regardless of their challenges such as the commercialization of religion and competing with Christ among neo-Pentecostals, these products were used as a point of contact in an African Pentecostal spirituality. The article used the Apostle Mohlala Ministries as one of the ministries that were active during the Covid-19 lockdown in the use of anointed products. The study demonstrated that in ministries such as Apostle Mohlala Ministries, anointed products were not only used as a point of contact because Pentecostals longed for such an experience during the Covid-19 lockdown. When followers of these churches could not attend church and could not be prayed for conventionally, the anointed products became a substitute. Therefore, the condemnation of the anointed products should be done with the balance of what these products can offer within the framework of an African Pentecostal spirituality of experience. Scholars should not only look at the negative side of anointed products, but they should also consider the positive side such as the role these products played during the Covid-19 lockdown. Therefore, these kinds of products should be further studied so as to explore their role during pandemics within the broader Pentecostal movement in Africa and beyond.

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